

Curriculum Seminar

Background:

Africa is larger than the USA and China combined, diverse, rich in natural resources, remarkable landscapes and mineral resources. Unlike Europe, Africa is characterized by a young population. Despite general negative media coverage, the economies of a number of African countries are developing dynamically and showing positive growth rates. At the same time, Africa is a scarred continent. The legacy and negative consequences of colonialism are still evident and have by no means been overcome. Political unrest, clan structures and corruption are the order of the day in many African countries. There are "failed states", countries in which the state has little or no monopoly on the use of force. In addition to that, climate change plays an increasing role in Africa, with natural disasters, droughts and floods negatively impacting the population

Why is it important for us, as people learning and working in academia, to talk about Africa? There are lots of reasons for this. One being the shared history, the colonial exploitation of Africa and the development of relations ever since. Furthermore, we live in a globalized world, meaning there are few phenomenon that do not require a global perspective to explain. All kinds of projects and institutions – from the supranational to the civil society kind – are getting increasingly connected.

Finally, we must recognize that there is a lot of scarcity and suffering in parts of Africa due to conflicts, persistent exploitative structures, unstable governments and natural disasters. social sciences are always obliged to contribute to the improvement of people's living conditions, so it is of utmost relevance to study the situation, understand the causes and work together on solutions.

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/2i0zXl6PflmOjGaN1AgL0E?si=41b1102b99b44733>

Compared to Germany, it is generally not the state or the economy that tackles current problems on the ground, or only to a limited extent. Instead, it is civil society that is active in a wide range of topics and problem areas, and often takes on a pioneering role in addressing and finding concrete solutions to problems that directly affect local people. Civil society is

often related to as the space between the individual and the state level, thereby encompassing all types of organisations, for religious groups to trade unions. It is as heterogenous as a nations population – provided they are allowed to organise. The development, the strength of civil society is dependent on a wide range of factors.

(In addition, even the use of the concept of civil society, which has its roots in the history of european ideas, is critically questioned)

Civil society is relevant for the resilience of societies – robust civil society brings about the context in which countries can thrive.

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/2i0zXl6PflmOjGaN1AgL0E?si=41b1102b99b44733>

The colonial experience determined civil society work in Africa for a long time and even today, and even today, the historical development of societies as well as other factors have an impact on their organizational form in the third sector.

Moreover, the topic of philanthropy has gained in relevance in African countries. The same applies to the positive development of social entrepreneurship, as a form of civil society involvement that is located between market economy entrepreneurship and public welfare orientation.

Increasingly, civil society work is taking place across borders and continents.

This is particularly true for Africa. In addition to many church groups that have been active in Africa for a long time, student initiatives have been founded and new forms of co-operation have emerged in the field of art and culture related to Africa.

This seminar is exemplary for the transnationality of civil society and its research. The study of civil society can be approached methodologically in different ways. In this seminar, students will develop a deep understanding of the concept of civil society through case studies and specifically expand their knowledge in the field of Sub-Saharan Africa. This methodology allows students to obtain a well-rounded picture of the respective cases and also gives them the opportunity to practice working in research groups.

In summary, the aim of the seminar is to gain a theoretical understanding of (cross-continental) civil society and to apply these ideas in practice using cases from Sub-Saharan

Africa. The focus will be particularly on cross-border and cross-continental civil society initiatives and groups.

The first step will be to take a closer look at and familiarise ourselves with civil society traditions. In a second step, we will turn our attention to the traditions and development of civil society in Africa. Finally we will focus more specifically on individual country contexts and students will have the opportunity to apply their knowledge and the methods they have learned.

Examination:

Students are required to independently prepare a presentation (poster or PPTX) on a civil society organisation of their choice or a political event that took place with the participation of civil society. Presentations can be prepared in groups of two (Academic Achievements).

A term paper (12-15 pages) on a self-selected topic from the spectrum of the seminar must be written for the examination (Final Examination).

Structure:

The seminar provides for 24 SWS, which are divided into 12 thematic blocks.

Seminar 1: Introduction to the basics of civil society

Civil society, known as the third sector alongside the state and the family, is diverse and growing. Some of these organizations actively work to promote democratic principles and bring about political change, while others operate in a complex arena, cooperating with the regime while also resisting its oppression. Others have little political agenda and simply work with and for their members on specific subjects. This seminar deals with the theoretical foundations of civil society in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. The focus will be on the transformation of the concept of civil society and the development of civil society organizations in Africa. Furthermore, we will look at civil society outside democratic systems and the special features of Sub-Saharan Africa. Some of the questions that will be discussed are; Is civil society in Africa different than in other parts of the world? How political is civil society? Which conditions are necessary for nonprofit organizations to thrive? How do we best analyze a social movement?

Compulsory Reading:

Muukkonen, Martti (2009): Framing the Field. In: *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 38 (4), pp. 684–700. DOI: 10.1177/0899764009333245.

Warren, M. (2011): Civil Society and Democracy, in: Edwards, M. (ed.): *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*, Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press, pp. 377-390.

Additional Reading:

Biekart, K., & Fowler, A. (2022): *A Research Agenda for Civil Society*. Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 1-14 (chapter 1: introduction).

Jarosz, Adam E. (2013): *Questions of Civil Society: Category-Position-Functionality*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 5-42 (chapter 1).

List, Regina A. & Dörner, Wolfgang (2012): *Civil Society, Conflict and Violence*. Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 1-34 (chapter 1 & 2).

Additional Material:

Ateki Seta Caxton (NewSETA) at Stanford 2019 (Draper Hills Summer Fellowship)
[Civil Society: State Relations in Africa, How can they improve? \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Seminar 2: Introduction to historical and political developments in Sub-Saharan Africa

This session serves as an introduction to the rich tapestry of historical and political developments within Sub-Saharan Africa. From pre-colonial times to the present day, African civil society has experienced and been shaped by very different regimes, traditions and movements. Students will explore key events, movements, and transitions that have shaped the region's trajectory, from pre-colonial times to the present day. The study of the development of African societies before colonization is based on texts by Walter Rodney. The period of colonization will be examined with the help of the phase model created by Martin Welz, with differences in the type of colonial rule depending on the country also being worked out. After a brief overview of the phase of the independence movements, the effects of the structural adjustment programs of the 1990s will also be discussed. The goal of this session is to develop a basic understanding of the Sub-Saharan context by looking at its history and focusing on the effects of colonization and the fight for liberation.

Compulsory Reading:

Welz, Martin. (2021): *Africa since Decolonization: The History and Politics of a Diverse Continent*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 23-67 (chapter 2 & 3), doi:10.1017/9781108599566.

Additional Reading:

Pieterse, Edgar (2015): *The Politics of Governing African Urban Spaces*, in: Ammann, Carole & Förster, Till (2015): *African Cities and the Development Conundrum*, Brill: Boston, pp. 26-54.

Smit, Warren (2015): *Urban Governance in Africa: An Overview*, in: Ammann, Carole & Förster, Till (2015): *African Cities and the Development Conundrum*, Brill: Boston, pp. 55-77.

Rodney, Walter. (2018). *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*. Verso Books.

Seminar 3: Historical development and theoretical anchoring of civil society

This session delves into the historical evolution of civil society and its theoretical foundations. Students will explore key concepts in political theory relating to civil society like freedom, the idea of a social contract, communitarism and individualism but also power and hegemony. The development of research on civil society will also be examined. Different approaches, from Tocqueville to Gramsci and Habermas, are presented so that students can form their own ideas about the ways in which civil society can be approached and examined. The goal of this session is to introduce students to the concept of civil society.

Compulsory Reading:

Ehrenberg, J. (2011): The History of Civil Society Ideas, in: Edwards, M. (ed.): The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society, Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press, pp. 15-25.

Shah, Ghanshyam (2019): *Democracy, Civil Society and Governance*, SAGE, pp. 25-50 (chapter "Civil Society: Historical Background").

Additional Reading:

DeLue, Steven M. (2021): *Political Thinking, Political Theory, and Civil Society*, Routledge, pp. 397-428 (chapter "Twenty-First Century Challenges for Civil Society").

Additional Material:

Presentation on political science perspectives on civil society (in German):

[Politikwissenschaftliche Perspektiven auf Zivilgesellschaft \(Dr. Roman Paul Turczynski\) - YouTube](#)

Seminar 4: Civil society in Sub-Saharan Africa - historical developments

In the fourth session, what has been learned about civil society will be combined with the information on Sub-Saharan Africa. Traditional small communities, anti-colonial liberation movements of the 1960s, Christian associations and groups - civil society in Africa is as diverse as the continent itself. Even today, this third sector is in a state of flux: in addition to professionalization and specialization, the third sector is also becoming more differentiated. This session will also address the question of whether the concept of civil society is even applicable to the African continent and what special features arise in the study of civil society as a result of the colonial past.

On the one hand, colonial influences continue in the form of economic dependency and intervention (also in civil society organizations), on the other hand, African civil society organizations have often served as origins of resistance, for example in the case of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

Compulsory Reading:

Fowler, Alan & Mottiar, Shauna (2022): Connecting African civil society to its roots. In: Biekart, K., & Fowler, A. (Eds.): *A Research Agenda for Civil Society*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800378155>, pp. 229-242.

Additional Reading:

Makumbe, John (1998): Is there a civil society in Africa? In: *International Affairs*, 74 (2), pp. 305-317.

Wamucii, Priscilla: Civil Society Organizations and the State in East Africa: From the Colonial to the Modern Era, in: Obadare, Ebenezer (2014): *The Handbook of Civil Society in Africa*, Springer Science: New York, pp. 109-124.

Turczynski, Roman P. (2024): Zivilgesellschaft in Subsahara Afrika: Perspektiven & Entwicklungen, *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen*, Special Issue.

Seminar 5: Methods I: Country studies and case studies

Methods in civil society research encompass a diverse array of approaches and techniques used to study the structure, function, and impact of the organizations and movements. These methods draw from various disciplines, including sociology, political science, anthropology, and public policy, and employ both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to explore the complexities of civil society dynamics. Students will be introduced to standard techniques of research in civil society research like interviews, case studies, surveys like the Afrobarometer on civic engagement but also more alternative methods like Participatory Action Research (PAR).

Compulsory Reading:

Brown, M. & Hale, K. (2014): *Applied research methods in public and nonprofit organizations*, Jossey-Bass, pp. 19-37.

Gerring, J. (2007): *Case study research: Principles and Practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 15-37.

Additional Reading:

Bickmann, L. & Rog, D. J. (2009): *The SAGE Handbook of applied social research methods*, Inc, pp. 254-282, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483348858>

Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A. & Sheikh, A. (2011): The case study approach, in: BMC, 11(100), <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2288/11/100>

Seminar 6: Transition and Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa: Current developments

This session examines the intricate relationship between transitions to democracy and counter developments. It builds upon the findings of session no. 2 and 4. Students will analyze the challenges and opportunities associated with democratization processes across the region, considering factors such as political regimes, governance structures, and socio-economic dynamics. A particular emphasis will be placed on the role of civil society organizations and social movements in advocating for democratic reforms, fostering civic engagement, promoting accountability and their role in times of war. This session will also serve as an opportunity for students to discover what they are particularly interested in as they will be asked to research a social movement / civil society organization and its role in a transitional context in Sub-Sahara Africa themselves.

Compulsory Reading:

Zürn, E. (2017): The Changing Roles of Civil Society in African Democratisation Processes, in: Solomon, H. & Liebenberg, I. (eds.): Consolidation of Democracy in Africa, London: Routledge, pp. 95-137.

Additional Reading:

Cheeseman, N. (2018): *Institutions and Democracy in Africa: How the Rules of the Game Shape Political Developments*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 41-60 (chapter 2), doi:10.1017/9781316562888

Cheeseman, N. (2021): *The Moral Economy of Elections in Africa*. Democracy, Voting and Virtue, CUP, pp.57-106 (chapter 2).

Kew, Darren & Oshikoya Modupe (2014): Escape from Tyranny, in: in: Obadare, Ebenezer (2014): *The Handbook of Civil Society in Africa*, Springer Science: New York, pp. 7-24.

Seminar 7: Contextual conditions: The eco-system of civil society in Africa

The landscape within which civil society organizations operate is shaped by a number of different factors. These factors can make it easier or harder for civil society to achieve their goals. Historical legacies, stemming from the era of colonialism and the subsequent post-colonial period, continue to exert profound influence on state-society relations across the continent. These legacies include patterns of governance, resistance movements, and the legacy of repressive regimes, all of which contribute to the complex terrain within which civil society functions today.

Moreover, the political systems in Africa exhibit considerable diversity, spanning from entrenched authoritarian regimes to nascent democracies. The extent of political openness and accountability directly impacts the space available for civil society to operate and advocate for change. Legal frameworks, including laws governing freedom of association, expression, and assembly, further shape the operating environment for civil society, with restrictions on these freedoms hindering the ability of civil society to function effectively.

Socioeconomic factors also play a pivotal role, as economic disparities, poverty, and social exclusion affect both the resources available to civil society organizations and the communities they serve. While civil society organizations often play a crucial role in addressing social and economic challenges, they themselves may face financial constraints and resource limitations. External influences, ranging from international donors to multinational corporations, also exert significant sway over civil society in Africa.

In this session, students will learn about this ecosystem, giving them the ability to mind these factors in their future analyses.

Compulsory Reading:

Baron, N., Mandavere, M., & Cheruiyot, R. (2023). *SE/NPO Ecosystems and urban Governance in Johannesburg*. Bauhaus-Universität Weimar.

Obadare, E. (2011): *Civil Society in Sub-Saharan Africa*, in: Edwards, M. (ed.): *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*, Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press, pp. 183-194.

Additional Reading:

Benit-Gbaffou, Claire (2012): Party Politics, Civil Society and Local Democracy – Reflections from Johannesburg, in: *Geoforum*, 43 (2), pp. 178-189, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2011.08.006>

Cheeseman, Nic (2022): African Civil Society and the external influences that shape it, in: Youngs, Richard (2022): *Global Civil Society in a geopolitical age*, Carnegie Endowment, pp. 21-28.

Cheruiyot, Roselyn & Mandevere, Melody (2024): Good practices and lessons derived through Johannesburg City Parks and Zoos' (JCPZ) non-profit organisations (NPOs) and cooperatives partnership programmes: A joint review by Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment and JPCZ, Centre On African Philanthropy And Social Investment, 2024, RR1, 1–22

Habib, A. (2005): State-Civil Society Relations in Post-Apartheid South Africa, in: *Social Research*, 72 (3), pp. 671-692.

Additional material:

Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment
[Plenary Session on Ecosystem Mapping \(youtube.com\)](#)

Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment
[Research Report Spotlight Series 4 \(youtube.com\)](#)

Seminar 8: Africa is not a country: cases from African countries

Politically, the Sub-Saharan Africa region comprises 46 countries with a population of around 1.1 billion people. An overall view of the region therefore quickly runs the risk of not sufficiently appreciating the geographical, historical, political and social diversity of Sub-Saharan Africa. The same applies to civil societies and the various forms of engagement: the different countries and regions follow different traditions of joint action and show significant differences in the level of engagement and organization of the population. By using case studies of three different social movements / civil society organizations this session will focus on the differences and similarities of civil society in Africa.

Compulsory Reading:

Chan, S. (2002): *Composing Africa: Civil Society and its Discontents*, Tampere, Finland: Tampere Peace Research Institute Occasional Paper 86.

Additional Reading:

Debrah, E. & Graham, E. (2015): Preventing the Oil Curse Situation in Ghana: The Role of Civil Society Organisations, in: *Insight on Africa*, 7(1), pp. 21–41, DOI: 10.1177/0975087814554067.

Prolific S. Mataruse & Sally Matthews (2022): Commercialising the struggle: the organisational and ideological effects of democracy assistance on opposition activism in Zimbabwe, *Review of African Political Economy*, 49 (173), pp. 452-471, doi: 10.1080/03056244.2022.2026314.

Seminar 9: Methods II

In this session, we will delve into the methodological intricacies of organizational analysis and expert interviews. Organizational analysis provides a structured framework for understanding the internal dynamics, structures, and processes of organizations, allowing researchers to uncover patterns, relationships, and challenges within these entities. Meanwhile, expert interviews offer a valuable means of tapping into the specialized knowledge, perspectives, and experiences of individuals who possess deep expertise in a particular field or domain. Throughout this seminar, we will explore the theoretical underpinnings, practical considerations, and ethical dimensions of organizational analysis and expert interviews, equipping participants with the skills and insights necessary to conduct these methods themselves.

Compulsory Reading:

Yin, R., K (2012): Applications of Case Study Research: Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Additional Reading:

Meuser, M., & Nagel, U. (2009). Das Experteninterview—konzeptionelle Grundlagen und methodische Anlage. *Methoden der vergleichenden Politik-und Sozialwissenschaft: neue Entwicklungen und Anwendungen*, 465-479.

Seminar 10: Social movements and conflict – the role of civil society

In this session we will examine the role of civil society in the context of social movements and conflicts. This session is intended to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of civil society. Civil society organizations can be conservative or progressive, they can instigate conflicts or resolve them. In the area of social movements, we will look at the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and other parts of the world. This movement will be examined not only in terms of its historical development but also with regard to its consequences for the emergence of global civil society. The students will develop a joint “case study” of the anti-apartheid movement, analyzing the context of its creation, the organizational structure, political activity as well as resources used and the impact the movement had on South African society.

Compulsory Reading:

Thörn, H. (2006). The emergence of a global civil society: The case of anti-apartheid. *Journal of civil society*, 2(3), 249-266.

List, Regina A. & Dörner, Wolfgang (2012): *Civil Society, Conflict and Violence*. Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 1-34 (chapter 2.2 & 3).

Additional Reading:

Meagher, K. (2007). Hijacking civil society: the inside story of the Bakassi Boys vigilante group of south-eastern Nigeria. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 45(1), 89–115.

Melber, H. (2021). “One Namibia, one nation”? Social cohesion under a liberation movement as government in decline.

Dupuis, P. (2018). Peacebuilding and Transitional Justice in Sub-Saharan Africa’s Post-Conflict Societies: The Role of Traditional Forms of Justice in Post-Civil War Sierra Leone.

Additional Material:

Centre for Strategic and International Security:

[Addressing Violent Extremism in the Sahel: The Role of Civil Society - YouTube](#)

Seminar 11: Trends and developments in civil society in Sub-Saharan Africa: Social enterprises

Social entrepreneurship appears to be a highly promising concept to foster development and social innovation, especially for the global south, where governments might lack the capability to do so. It is therefore no surprise, that social enterprises are mushrooming in Sub-Saharan Africa. South Africa has the biggest and most diverse SE sector in Sub-Saharan Africa and it is mainly home grown. However, social entrepreneurship reflects historical, cultural, environmental and national developments, which call for more concerted examination.

In this session the students will get an insight into the workings of social enterprises, we will discuss examples using learnt methods. The knowledge from earlier lessons will enable students to discuss under what conditions social enterprises work best, what they can achieve, who they should partner up with etc.

Compulsory Reading:

Rivera-Santos, M., Holt, D., Littlewood, D., Kolk, A. (2015): Social Entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa, in: AMP 29 (1), pp. 72–91, doi: 10.5465/amp.2013.0128.

Additional Reading:

Karanda, Crispin & Toledano, Nuria (2012): Social Entrepreneurship in South Africa: a different narrative for a different context, in: Social Enterprise Journal, 8 (3), pp. 201-215, doi: 10.1108/17508611211280755

Littlewood, David & Holt, Diane (2018): Social enterprise resilience in sub-Saharan Africa, in: Business Strategy and Development, 18 (1), pp. 53-63.

Additional Material:

Disrupters for Good. Social Entrepreneurs and Social Enterprises (Causeartist)

<https://open.spotify.com/show/7mdN8pJBYCEa0w1Ap5fp6o?si=072b43720eac4576>

Seminar 12: Presentation of case studies (academic achievements) and preparation for term papers

In this final session, students will present their case studies and thus qualify to take part in the exam. At the end there is the possibility to ask questions regarding the exam performance (writing a 12-15 page term paper)

Further Reading

The following journals provide comprehensive analyses on the topics of civil society and Sub-Saharan Africa:

[Review of African Political Economy \(ROAPE\) – ScienceOpen](#)

[Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen](#)

[International Review of Philanthropy and Social Investment](#)

[Stichproben - Vienna Journal of African Studies](#)