



Program Point Sud 2017

Decolonization and the Politics of Wildlife in Africa 26-30 September 2017, Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study

Report



1 Organisers

Dr Bernhard Gissibl (Modern History), Leibniz-Institute of European History Mainz, Germany

Dr Felix Schürmann (Modern History), University of Kassel, Germany

2 Themes and Objectives

The establishment of European colonial rule on the African continent not only involved the colonization of nature, but essentially meant colonization through nature. The conference started from the observation that the politics and territorialities of wildlife, but also wildlife as individual species, are largely missing from current narratives about decolonization in Africa. How encompassing has decolonization been as a world historical phenomenon, and in how far are animal-sensitive histories reasonably conceived of within the categories, parameters and turning points of human, respectively political history? What has decolonization meant for the scientific study of various species of wildlife, the circulating bodies of knowledge about them? In how far did decolonization affect their territorialities, their commoditization, and their role in a global economy of images and imaginaries? Is decolonization a category that can be meaningfully deployed for the writing of more than human-histories of Africa since the second part of the twentieth century? Papers and discussions centered around the question in how far decolonization across sub-Saharan Africa affected the spheres of ecology and relationships between humans and wildlife. They asked what consequences this transfer of power had for the politics, the economy and the surrounding discourses of wildlife and conservation in individual African states.

3 Methodology and Results

In order to enhance the quality of discussions at the conference, we pre-circulated all papers weeks before to allow participants to read and prepare. In addition, we chose to invite established senior scholars from various disciplines – geography, environmental history, development studies, and animal studies – to provide input in the form of several keynote lectures. They also acted as commentators and provided short summarizing inputs for the final discussion. Putting together the conference program from the more than fifty proposals we received, we chose carefully to arrive at a scholarly composition that was both balanced and diverse with a view to disciplinary background (history, political sciences, geography, animal studies, anthropology, literary studies, etc.), gender, and scholarly status.

The conference discussed the problems and potentials of ‘decolonization’ as an analytical category and approached the historical macro-process of decolonization via a number of concrete analytical perspectives. We asked how decolonization can be meaningfully studied and applied to the wildlife sector and wildlife resource management, the long-term development of conservation paradigms, or the transnationalization of wildlife governance in the decades after independence. Further perspectives were developed on the transformations of human-animal relations and the effects of decolonization on individual species, on vernacular representations and practices of human-wildlife relations, the controversial relationship between hunting and conservation, and on post-independence politics of wildlife and the governance of conservation areas. Thanks to the interdisciplinary composition of the conference, it was possible to link these highly specialist discourses with wider debates on the

‘Anthropocene’, on animal agency and animal history, and on the contested relations between nature and culture, environment and society, and humans and nonhuman species. A detailed synopsis of the conference with further outcomes of the discussions and a summary of the main arguments of presented papers can be accessed at the website of the H-Africa network.¹

Conference Program:

Tuesday, 26 September 2017

01:30 pm – 02:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks, Issa Fofana (PointSud)
Introduction, Bernhard Gissibl & Felix Schürmann

02:00 pm – 03:30 Panel 1: Exclusion, Media, Communities: Key Themes in Long Views

Chair: Raf de Bont (University of Maastricht)

- The Path Dependency of the Conservation Paradigm in Southern Africa: How Systematic Exclusion of Communities Facilitates Poaching and Wildlife Trafficking, Annette Hübschle-Finch (University of Cape Town)
- From Savage Splendor to Mysterious Castles of Clay: A Genealogy of Wildlife Filmmaking in East Africa, 1949–1978, Katie McKeown (University of Johannesburg)
- ‘Lineage Husbandry:’ Local Wildlife Management under a Colonial Protectorate in Northern Rhodesia and Zambia (1930–1980), Stuart A. Marks (University of Richmond/University of Bloemfontein)

04:00 pm – 05.30 Opening Keynote: Decolonization and the Politics of Wildlife in South Africa: Reflecting on Past and Present
Jane Carruthers (University of South Africa)

Wednesday, 27 September 2017

09:00 am – 10:30 Panel 2: Wildlife Governance between Endogenous and Exogenous Actors

Chair: Felix Schürmann (University of Kassel)

- Eating Game: International Conservation and the Rebranding of African Wildlife, 1955–1965, Raf de Bont (University of Maastricht)
- Parks and Recreation: Wildlife Tourism to Kenya and Tanzania in the 1960s and 1970s, Dörte Lerp (University of Cologne)
- A Political Ecology Perspective of Governance of the Table Mountain National Park, Cape Town, South Africa, Brett Myrdal (South African National Parks)

11:00 am – 12:30 Panel 3: Conceptualizing and Managing Wildlife in East African Decolonization

Chair: Daniel Brockington (University of Sheffield)

- Shifting Human-Elephant Relations and Landscape Transformation in Tsavo, Kenya, Peter N. Kamau (Louisiana State University Baton Rouge) [paper submitted, but not presented in person]

¹ <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28765/discussions/1113476/conference-report-decolonization-and-politics-wildlife-africa> (20 Dec 2017)

- How Elephants Became a Keystone Species: Moral Jurisdictions of Human- Elephant Entanglement in Postcolonial Tanzania, Celeste Alexander (University of Princeton)
- Decolonization and the Sciences of Wildlife: The Making of the Serengeti Research Institute, Bernhard Gissibl (Leibniz-Institute of European History Mainz)

02:00 pm – 03:30 Panel 4: Species of Decolonization

Chair: Sandra Swart (University of Stellenbosch)

- West African Pygmy Hippos between International Zoological Enigma and National Icons, Stephanie Zehnle (University of Essen-Duisburg)
- The (De)Colonization of Mountain Gorillas: Interlinked Histories of Tourism and Conservation in the Greater Virunga Landscape, Esther Marijnen (University of Sheffield)
- The Impacts of the Tranquillizer Gun on Late-colonial and Early-independence Rhino Conservation Policies, 1955–1972, Felix Schürmann (University of Kassel)

04:00 pm – 05:30 Keynote Lecture: Animal Agency in Wildlife Encounters
Mieke Roscher (University of Kassel)

Thursday, 28 September 2017

Excursion to Table Mountain National Park and Boulders Beach Penguin Colony

Friday, 29 September 2017

09:00 am – 10:30 Panel 5: Vernacular Representations and Practices

Chair: Maano Ramutsindela (University of Cape Town)

- Fagunwa's Weird Life as Wildlife Consciousness in African Creative Imagination, Oluwole Coker (Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife)
- "They Must Use the Old Line": Contested Memories of Decolonization in Chilotlela, Southeastern Zimbabwe, Richard Mtisi (Luther College, Decorah/Iowa)
- Mediating the Moyowosi: Game Scouts, Locals, and Tourists in Western Tanzania, Julie Weiskopf (University of Wisconsin La Crosse)

11:00 am – 12:30 Keynote Lecture: Decolonizing Borders through Peace Parks?
Historical and contemporary Evidence
Maano Ramutsindela (University of Cape Town)

02:00 pm – 03:30 Panel 6: The Great Debate: Hunting and Conservation

Chair: Bernhard Gissibl (Leibniz-Institute of European History Mainz)

- Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Conservation in Kenya, 1951–1977, Reuben M. Matheka (Egerton University) [paper submitted, but not presented in person]
- The Portuguese Had no Elephant Policy? Contested Histories of Portuguese Conservation Policies in Mozambique, 1920–1975, Richard Mtisi (Luther College, Decorah/Iowa)
- "We've Stopped with this Killing": The Hunting Ban and Postcolonial Shifts in Botswana's Wildlife Regime", Annette A. LaRocco (Florida Atlantic University)

04:00 pm – 05:30 Keynote Lecture: Epistemological Divides? Contrasting approaches to Understanding Wildlife Conservation in Social Sciences
Dan Brockington (University of Sheffield)

Saturday, 30 September 2017

09:30 am – 11:00 Panel 7: Decolonizing Policies and Governance?

Chair: Jane Carruthers (University of South Africa)

- “Their Heart Abroad Obeying their Master’s Voice”: Kenya’s Wildlife Merger and Decolonization after Independence, Jeff Schauer (University of Nevada, Las Vegas)
- Black Rhinos, White Elephant? - Greater iMfolozi Biodiversity Economy Node and Decolonised Conservation?, Adrian Nel (University of KwaZulu-Natal)
- Performance on Communities Bordering the Gonarezhou National Park in independent Zimbabwe, Baxter Tavuyanago (Great Zimbabwe University)

11:15 am – 12:45 Concluding Keynote: The Lion's Historian: Writing Animal-sensitive Histories in Africa
Sandra Swart (University of Stellenbosch)

13:45 pm – 15:15 Final Round Table
Jane Carruthers, Mieke Roscher, Sandra Swart, Maano Ramutsindela, Bernhard Gissibl, Felix Schürmann

4 Sustainability of the Event

Undeniably and in line with the overall targets of the PointSud-programme, the conference’s main achievement has been to bring together scholars from various continents, disciplines, and backgrounds in a promising and emerging field of research. Moreover, it served as the initial impetus for a number of follow-up activities. In order to continue the discussions initiated at the STIAS in Stellenbosch, a select number of conference participants will reconvene for a joint panel at the 52nd Biannual Meeting of the German Historical Association (VHD) in Münster, Germany in September 2018. Several key issues already debated at Stellenbosch will be presented and discussed again in order to gain deeper insights into the linkages between conservation, science, and tourism in twentieth century East and Central Africa.² Two Africa-based participants of the conference, Dr Oluwole Coker (Obafemi Awolowo University) and Prof Sandra Swart (University of Stellenbosch), are preparing extended research fellowships at German institutions to expand co-operations with German scholars and networks partially initiated at Stellenbosch. Thanks to a fellowship of conference participant Julie Weiskopf at the University of Daressalam, further links have been established since the conference between German participants and PhD-students researching decolonization and wildlife in Tanzania. In order to make the cutting-edge papers presented at the conference accessible to the broader academic community, the conference organizers plan to publish a selection of thematically coherent papers in one, perhaps two special issues of

² The panel is entitled: “Decolonization and the Politics of Wildlife: Conservation, Science, and Tourism in East and Central Africa, 1950s-1990s”, and will bring together five participants of the Stellenbosch conference.

peer-reviewed journals in the field of African History, respectively Environmental Studies. A detailed proposal has just been submitted to the editorial board of a high-profile journal in the field of African studies.

5 Participants

- Celeste Alexander, MA (Anthropology, Princeton University, US)
- Raf de Bont, Dr (History, University of Maastricht, Netherlands)
- Dan Brockington, Prof. Dr, (Development Studies, Sheffield Institute for International Development, United Kingdom)
- Jane Carruthers, Prof. emeritus (History, University of South Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa)
- Oluwole Coker, Dr (Literary Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria)
- Bernhard Gissibl, Dr (History, Leibniz Institute of European History Mainz, Germany)
- Annette Huebschle-Finch, Dr (Criminology/Political Science, University of Cape Town, South Africa)
- Peter N. Kamau, MSc (Geography/Anthropology, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, US) [paper submitted, but not present in person]
- Annette A. LaRocco, Dr (Political Science, Florida Atlantic University, US)
- Dörte Lerp, Dr (History, University of Cologne, Germany)
- Esther Marijnen, Dr (International Development, Sheffield Institute for International Development, United Kingdom)
- Stuart A. Marks, Prof emeritus (Anthropology/Environmental Sciences, St. Andrews College, Laurinburg US)
- Reuben M Matheka, Dr (African History, Egerton University, Kenya) [paper submitted, but not present in person]
- Kathleen McKeown, Dr (History, University of Johannesburg, South Africa)
- Richard Mtisi, Prof (African Studies, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, US)
- Brett Myrdal (Environmental Planning Research, South African National Parks)
- Adrian Nel, Dr (Geography, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa)
- Maano Ramutsindela, Prof (Geography, University of Cape Town, South Africa)
- Mieke Roscher, Prof (History/Human-Animal Studies, University of Kassel, Germany)
- Jeff Schauer, Dr (History, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, US)
- Felix Schürmann, Dr (History, University of Kassel, Germany)
- Sandra Swart, Prof (History/Human-Animal Studies, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa)
- Baxter Tavuyanago, Dr (History, Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo, Zimbabwe)
- Julie Weiskopf, Dr (History, University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, US)
- Stephanie Zehnle, Dr (History, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany)