

African Judiciaries Research Network (AJRN) newsletter, no. 13, August 2024

If anyone has any information that they would like included in the next newsletter (to be circulated the week of 2 September 2024) please email g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk. Similarly, if you have suggestions of people who we should contact about joining the network or would like to unsubscribe from the newsletter please email g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk.

Afrobarometer launches the Africa Judicial Independence Fund

The new Africa Judicial Independence Fund is hosted by Afrobarometer and is dedicated to supporting initiatives to strengthen judicial independence in Africa, ensuring that judicial officers in target countries can execute their mandates in a fair, transparent, and independent manner. For further details see <https://ajif.online/>.

The AJIF has conducted a landscape scan and released its first report: [The Current State of Judicial Independence in Africa \(PDF 1.3MB\)](#).

Recent publications by network members

Marth Gayoye (2024). 'Constitutions without constitutionalism' and judicial leadership in Kenya. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 1–

21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2024.2375076>

Dan Kuwali (Editor), *Corruption Proofing in Africa: A Systems Thinking Approach*, Routledge, 2024, available at: <https://www.routledge.com/Corruption-Proofing-in-Africa-A-Systems-Thinking-Approach/Kuwali/p/book/9781032353852>

Lynch, G. (2024) Driving together: Shared car journeys as research space. *Qualitative Research* - <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/14687941241255251>

Mavedzenge, Justice A. (2024) The Price They Pay for Their Independence: Understanding the Persecution of Judges in Africa as Retribution for their Impartiality. *Southern African Public Law*, <https://unisapressjournals.co.za/index.php/SAPL/article/view/15061>

African Studies Association of UK (ASAUK) Conference AJRN stream

AJRN is excited to have a stream on African Judiciaries at the ASAUK Conference in Oxford, 29-31 August 2024 with the following panels. The timings of panels are yet to be confirmed, but it would be great if AJRN members who are going to be at ASAUK could come and support their colleagues. There will also be AJRN drinks on the evening of 29 August so please put that in your diary!

Panel 1: The judicialization of mega-politics

Of legal diplomacy, megapolitics and getting SADC'ed: Towards understanding judicial empowerment in Africa's sub-regional courts, Diana Kisakye

Judicial Interventionism: Analysing the Role of Courts in Electoral Justice in Malawi, Dorothy DeGabriele

Judicial Peacemakers: The Role of Courts in Preventing Onsets of Electoral Violence, Thalia Gerzso

Panel 2: Oppositional judges

'Constitutions without Constitutionalism' and judges' safeguarding of rule of law in Africa, Martha Gayoye

Dissenting judges in Southern Africa's transforming judicial cultures, Peter Brett

Judges on X: The case of Kenya's Chief Justices, Gabrielle Lynch

Panel 3: Judges promoting rights

Reimagining judgments: an African feminist perspective, Mariam Kamunyu

Swimming Pools, Segregation, and Supreme Courts: Legal Challenges to Segregation in Southern Rhodesia, 1950-1965, Trishula Patel

Panel 4: Justice professionals

When judges make policy: Exceptional criminal courts and the judicialization of politics in Benin, Sophie Andreetta

Fighting terrorism in African courts. Findings from the work of Benin's prosecutors, Pauline Jarroux

Middlemen as Interagency in between Vulnerable Women and the Formal Justice System: Experiences from Addis Ababa City Administration, Ethiopia, Yihunbelay Teshome Sime

Opportunities to write opinion pieces/blogs on African judiciaries

AJRN has teamed up with [Democracy in Africa](http://democracyinafrica.org) to launch a series of opinion pieces on African judiciaries and democracy. For details on how to write an article for **Democracy in Africa** go to <http://democracyinafrica.org/join-the-new-african-judiciaries-research-network-ajrn-today/>.

The AJRN has also been in touch with **The Conversation Africa** and **The Elephant** and is happy to report that:

The Conversation Africa welcomes articles on African judiciaries that are based on research. These can be republished anywhere in the world under a Creative Commons licence, giving your work a wider reach and introducing it to new audiences. You can pitch your idea for an article [here](#). You can subscribe to the Conversation Africa newsletter [here](#).

The Elephant welcomes articles of 1,500-3,500 words on African judiciaries. The Elephant is a popular online Kenyan news platform which seeks well researched, honest critiques, critical essays and sharp-eyed perspectives on a broad range of topics addressed from a Pan African lens. For details on how to submit a pitch and write for *The Elephant* see <https://www.theelephant.info/write-for-us/>.

AJRN member profile of the month



Dr. Thalia Gerzso is a Lecturer at the University of York in the United Kingdom. Thalia's research focuses on political institutions, democratic processes, and African politics. Her current book project, *Judicial Resistance: The Role of Courts in the Fight for Democracy* explores the conditions under which judiciaries can resist incumbents' attempts to manipulate the electoral process and hinder the democratic process. Leveraging quantitative and qualitative data from several African states, Thalia argues that judicial resistance can only occur with the help of efficient institutional reforms and the mobilization of judicial support networks. Her article on judicial resistance presenting evidence from the Kenyan case won the Alexander L. George Best Article Award from the American Political Science Association. In addition to this project, Thalia is interested in exploring how legal traditions affect courts' behaviour but also citizens' attitudes towards the judiciary.

In parallel, Thalia's research also investigates how institutional manipulations can enhance or undermine the state of democracy. In published articles, she shows how African autocrats have manipulated the composition and organization of their legislature for their own political game. In collaboration with Nicolas van de Walle and Siri Gloppen, she elaborated a typology of legal strategies autocrats can use to consolidate their power.

Prior to joining the Department of Politics and International Relations at York, Thalia was a postdoctoral fellow at the London School of Economics. She holds a Ph.D. in political science from Cornell University, an LL.M. from Cornell Law School, a Master in International Public Law, and a Bachelor of Law from Universite Paris 2 Pantheon Assas. Admitted to the New York Bar, Thalia worked as a lawyer and human rights advocate before starting her career in academia.

You can contact Thalia at thalia.gerzso@york.ac.uk and read more about her work at www.thaliagerzso.com.

AJRN webpage

The AJRN has a webpage (<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/ajrn>) where we will be uploading the newsletters as well as information on events, opinion pieces and members. **If you want to be included in the list of network members on the website and future newsletters, then please send a photograph and a bio in the standard format (see below)** with details of positions and institutional/organisational affiliation, up to 5 keywords on relevant research interests, and contact email/Twitter handle to g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk. E.g.

Prof. Gabrielle Lynch, Professor of Comparative Politics, University of Warwick, UK; judicial behaviour, election petitions, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia; g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk; @GabrielleLynch6.

If you have already sent a bio for the newsletter, then please do send a photo for inclusion on the webpage.

Network members

NB: If you want to be included in the list of network members in future newsletters and the website, please send a photo and bio in the standard format (see below) with details of positions and institutional/organisational affiliation, up to 5 keywords on relevant research interests, and contact email/Twitter handle to g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk.

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