

African Judiciaries Research Network (AJRN) newsletter, no. 14, September 2024

If anyone has any **information that they would like included in the next newsletter** (to be circulated the week of 7 October 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.

European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) 2025

The ECAS 2025 conference will be held in Prague on 25-28 June 2025. The ECAS deadline for panel proposals is 15 September 2024 (<https://www.ecasconference.org/2025/234-2/>). If you are interested in presenting a paper as part of an AJRN stream or already have a panel in mind, please do get in touch with me (g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk) by **Monday 9 September 2024** with details of author(s), paper title(s), and abstract(s) and I'll then group people into panels ahead of the deadline. It would be great to have a strong AJRN turnout next summer!

Junior Law and Politics research community and seminar series – call for proposals

The Junior Law and Politics research community and seminar series is a vibrant network of junior researchers (graduate students, post-docs, assistant professors, other non-tenured faculty) in the fields of public law, law and courts, and legal studies across institutions. We host seminars throughout the academic year via Zoom in bullet talk and public law panel formats which are detailed below. Submissions are open to all subfields, and we encourage a diversity of methods and approaches. In the Fall of 2024, we will be hosting sessions on September 18, October 2, October 16, October 30, and November 13. All sessions will be from 11:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M ET. Senior scholars are welcome to attend! **Please submit your proposals by 4 September 2024 for full consideration.**

Bullet talks will be a total of 25 minutes. Presenters will give a short 3-minute presentation about a potential research idea or question with the remaining time dedicated to discussion and Q&A. If you are looking to workshop an idea to your peers in a relatively low stakes and informal environment, this format is for you.

Public Law Panels will be a total of 50 minutes featuring public law faculty from diverse institutions as discussants, facilitators, commenters, and audience members. Presenters will give a 10-minute presentation and be assigned a faculty discussant who will provide feedback for 10 minutes. The remaining time will be dedicated to discussion and Q&A. If you have a developed research project and are looking for additional fora to present and receive feedback, this format is for you.

Additionally, if you would like to serve as a discussant or be an audience member for our sessions, please sign up below! Lastly, if you would like to be more involved in the planning and facilitating of these meetings or have any questions, reach out to juniormlawandpoliticsresearchco@gmail.com. The Junior Law and Politics community is also associated with the Global Law & Politics Network and the Building Convergent Research Communities in Global Legal Studies project. To sign up go to https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd2cf1udj4XYO3aNtW4dgcXs5wmNALbyLSglG7LU7L7bh_SHw/viewform

AJRN @ the African Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK) conference, 29-31 August 2024

Thank you for everyone who made the AJRN stream of panels at ASAUK 2024 such a success! Details of the final panels below.

The judicialization of mega politics

Chair: Peter Brett

Diana Kisakye, Of Legal Diplomacy, Megapolitics and Getting SADC'ed: Towards Understanding Judicial Empowerment in Africa's Sub-Regional Courts

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

Mikhail Nyamweya, The Kenyan Courts and Political Narratives

Gabrielle Lynch, The Kenyan judiciary and the court of public opinion



Oppositional judges

Chair: Gabrielle Lynch

Martha Gayoye, 'Constitutions without Constitutionalism' and Judges' Safeguarding of Rule of Law in Africa

Peter Brett, Dissenting Judges in Southern Africa's Transforming Judicial Cultures

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



AJRN drinks



Judges Promoting Rights

Chair: Gabrielle Lynch

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

Mariam Kamunyu, Reimagining Judgments: An African Feminist Perspective

Mahlubandile Ntontela, The South African Courts' Readiness to Hear Evidence of Persons with Communication Disabilities



Justice Professionals

Chair: Thalia Gerzso

Pauline Jarroux, Fighting Terrorism in African Courts. Findings from the Work of Benin's Prosecutors

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

Sophie Andreetta, When Judges Make Policy: Exceptional Criminal Courts and the Judicialization of Politics in Benin

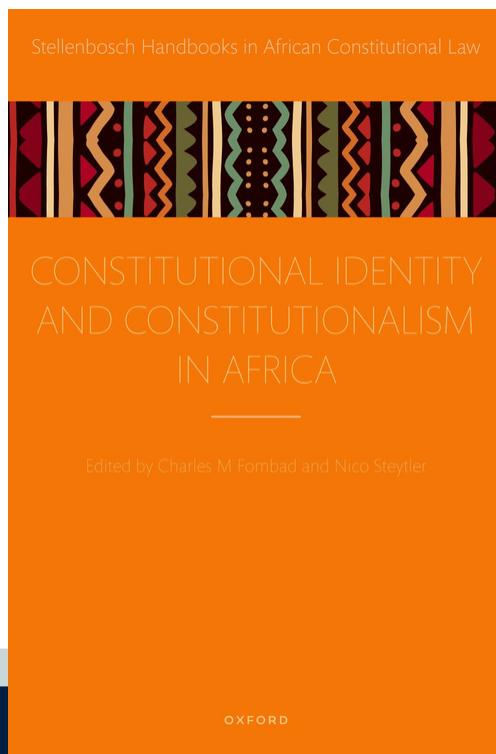


Recent publications

Mavedzenge, J. A. (2024) A critical review of jurisprudence on the adjudication of presidential election petitions in Africa. *Journal of Comparative Law in Africa* 11(1): 1-30

Schultz, U., M. Tabeth and A. Sherr (2024) Women judges: Appointments, career chances and barriers. Abingdon: Routledge. With chapters on Nigeria and South Africa. For information and a 20% discount code go to file:///Users/poskam/Downloads/Author%20Flyer_%20Women%20Judges%20GBP.pdf.

Constitutional Identity and Constitutionalism in Africa



The book examines a number of important research questions. First, whether the concept of constitutional identity provides a useful optic with which to look at and appreciate African constitutions. Is it something more than the main characteristics of a constitution (unitary or federal, presidential or parliamentary)? Is it about the relevance and aspiration of the constitution? Is it nominal or effective, descriptive or transformative? Is it about the way the constitution relates to a country's culture(s) and history? The second question concerns the role of path dependency in forming constitutional identities. To what extent have colonial heritages shaped the constitutional identities that surfaced in independence and post-independence constitutional ordering? A third issue relates to the widening gap between most African constitutions – which in many cases incorporate fundamental principles of modern constitutionalism – and the actuality of practice. Does this gap exist because these constitutions lack an authentic constitutional identity? Do African constitutions need to be 'decolonised' to give them an African identity? If so, how would they be decolonised in form and content? A fourth question is whether African traditional authorities and institutions are part of national constitutional identity-building or merely a sentimental cultural relic of the past with little relevance today? Closely related to this is the question of whether constitutionalism, embodying limited government, should form part of an African constitutional identity.

THE AUTHOR:

Edited by **Charles M. Fombad**
and **Nico Steytler**



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Bristol University Press brings AJRN members' attention to two of their journals: *Gender and Justice* and *Global Social Challenges Journal*

Gender and Justice is a new international and transdisciplinary journal dedicated to advancing critical feminist scholarship on justice in the social sciences, and from different methodological perspectives. The journal aims to showcase innovative contributions that are theoretically-driven and/or empirically-grounded approaches to various forms of gender inequality, injustice and exclusion which influence and shape individuals' lives across diverse and global contexts. The editors' conception of justice is comprehensive. It encompasses economic, social, criminal, distributive, environmental, cultural and political dimensions.

Global Social Challenges Journal is a non-profit open access publication with a mission to address urgent global social issues across disciplines, fields and geographies. We publish on 16 themes which are linked to, but not limited by, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. We currently have an open call for abstracts: Approaches to Global Social Challenges by Early Career Researchers in the Global South and Diasporas. [Read more here](#).

Opportunities to write opinion pieces/blogs on African judiciaries

AJRN has teamed up with *Democracy in Africa* 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



Mariam Kamunyu is a feminist legal scholar and currently a [British Academy International Fellow](#), at Cardiff University's School of Law and Politics. While at Cardiff, Mariam's research project entails the theorisation of African feminist judgments and rewrites.

Mariam holds an LLD (Pretoria) on the gender responsiveness of the African human rights system, an LLM (Pretoria) in Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa (Pretoria), an LLB (CUEA) and she is qualified as an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya.

Her expertise comprises research, teaching, training, advocacy and coalition building geared towards visibilising discrimination and influencing the gender transformation of laws, institutions and practices. Mariam is particularly interested in the nexus between human rights, democracy and governance and their implications for the realisation of human rights in Africa.

Prior to this, Mariam taught 'international human rights law' and 'gender and the law' to undergraduates at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA); and still teaches 'gender equality and the African human rights system' to postgraduates and practitioners at the University of Pretoria as a visiting lecturer.

As a practitioner, Mariam has 15 years' experience working with civil society organisations on the pursuit of state accountability and narrowing the policy and practice gap that hinders the realisation of human rights. This work has included: programme design and implementation; research; advocacy and capacity enhancement of civil society actors, state actors and key human rights and judicial institutions at national and regional levels.

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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