

Migration and Linguistic Integration: The Case of Chinese Immigrants in Africa.

Jocelyne Kenne Kenne

Abstract:

In recent years, the presence of Chinese migrants in Africa has significantly increased, driven by both economic opportunities and China's growing influence on the continent. This talk investigates their professional activities and language learning experiences prior to migration. Given the crucial role that language proficiency plays in the professional and social integration of immigrants, it is essential to understand how Chinese migrants prepare linguistically for their new environments. The presentation will explore the diversity of their professional profiles as well as their lack of linguistic preparation before migration. This could hinder their ability to integrate into both their professional and social contexts. By focusing on these language learning experiences, this talk will highlight the importance of proactive language acquisition initiatives and the role that both migrants and host governments play in fostering better integration.

***Dr Jocelyne Kenne Kenne** is a research associate in the English Department at Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany. Her work focuses on migration, intercultural communication and multilingualism, with a particular emphasis on African and transnational contexts. She holds a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Bayreuth, Germany, and has published research on language practices among mobile populations, language ideologies and integration processes. Her current project investigates the linguistic integration of Chinese immigrants in Africa in various settings.*

Constitutional Design Matters! Management of Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia, Kenya and Nigeria

Moges Zewiddu Teshome

Abstract:

In this talk, Mr. Teshome delves into an intricate issue: the nexus between ethnic conflict management and institutional designs. Conflict has been a persistent element throughout human history, as has its management. As such, devising effective institutional interventions is as paramount as understanding the cause and nature of conflict. Drawing on his ongoing research project, Mr. Teshome examines how and under what conditions constitutional design facilitates the management of ethnic tensions and contributes to nation-building efforts in societies characterised by deep divisions in Africa. To this end, three African nations- Ethiopia, Kenya, and Nigeria- have been selected to understand whether Constitutional design makes a difference. The study transcends the immediate focus on legal provisions and endeavours to elucidate the background knowledge (as enacted through political culture and everyday politics) that has informed particular designs. In this process, I have adopted a theoretical framework that encompasses a ‘thicker view of Constitution’ and utilised a multi-level mixed methods approach. Preliminary findings indicate that, among other factors, these countries have developed distinct constitutional models—ethnic federalism in Ethiopia, devolution of power in Kenya and a centralised federal system in Nigeria— despite facing the same challenge of recurrent ethnic conflicts. This design variation partially explains the existence of differing political (dis)orders within the three countries.

Mr. Moges Teshome is from Ethiopia and is a doctoral candidate at the University of Vienna, Department of African Studies. In his prior academic pursuits at the University of Dundee and the Vienna School of International Studies, he specialised in international human rights, criminal law, diplomacy, and peace and conflict studies. Before moving to Vienna, he served as a law lecturer at Haramaya University College of Law for four years. His current research project focuses on managing ethnic conflicts through institutional interventions in deeply divided African societies. Besides academia, he is active in media through his popular podcast known as Buffet of Ideas.

From Margins to Mainstream: The emerging Role of African Women in Regional and Global Diplomacy

Fatma Abdullatif Abdallah

Abstract:

This session explores the transformative journey of African women from peripheral figures to influential actors in regional and global diplomacy. Historically marginalized by patriarchal structures and colonial legacies, African women have increasingly asserted their presence in international affairs, breaking down cultural and systemic barriers through leadership in higher echelons of foreign service, regional organizations, multilateral negotiations, peacebuilding, and global policy advocacy. Drawing on case studies, policy analysis, and qualitative interviews, the session inter alia investigates the key factors enabling this shift, including gender mainstreaming efforts and institutional and constitutional reforms. The session argues that African women (Kenya as case study) are not merely participants but are rather, redefining the architecture and diplomatic norms in the 21st century. By highlighting both progress and persistent barriers, the session contributes to a nuanced understanding of gender dynamics in global politics and calls for sustained investment in the empowerment and visibility of African women in diplomatic spaces.

Dr. Fatma Abdullatif Abdallah is a Kenyan female diplomat, currently serving as Minister-Counsellor at the Kenya Embassy/Permanent Mission to the UN Office in Vienna. She holds a PhD in International Relations from Shandong University in China and is also an alumna of the 2023 International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP)-Washington DC'. Dr. Abdallah tries to blend between diplomacy and academia. Amongst her contribution to engendering diplomacy includes a publication on 'Challenges to women's representation in Kenya's foreign service'. Besides diplomacy, she volunteers as a mentor with the Global Give Back Circle-Mastercard Foundation Scholars program and The Mawazo Institute (PhD) Fellowship Programme-- an African women-led organization supporting early-career women researchers in finding local solutions to global development challenges.