



**MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (CHUSS)**

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITIES CONFERENCE

23–26 August 2022

**THEME: Knowledge Revolutions and Practices: Area, Cultural and
Global Studies**

Since 1945, scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences has witnessed three major knowledge revolutions. The first revolution relates to the ascendancy of Area Studies as an American enterprise that was aimed at knowing, analysing and interpreting the cultures, politics and economic life of other peoples of the world. This saw a proliferation of Area Studies experts who appropriated traditional disciplinary theoretical perspectives to understand and explain the realities of the *others* as Africans, Arabs, and Indians.¹

Whereas Area Studies enabled the understanding of the other areas of the world, the Cultural Studies revolution was set in motion to understand the role and capacity of social institutions in shaping culture(s). Traced from the 1950s and gaining prominence in the 1960s, the specific focus of this approach to Humanities and Social Sciences scholarship was on issues of gender, class, ethnicity, and race. In the quest to embrace the agenda of cultural studies, scholars, particularly in the disciplines of Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy, Political Science, History, Literature, Literary Criticism, Art, and Art Criticism, aligned their teaching and research to the demands of the cultural revolution.² In addition, there was the Global Studies revolution that targeted the analysis of the forms of globalized life and its challenges. This was popularized in the United States in the early 2000s. The outcome of this revolution has been multi-pronged. However, the agenda of Global Studies has enabled the internationalization of teaching and research about the globalized challenges.³

The founding of African universities such as the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, University of West Indies in Jamaica, the University of Khartoum in Sudan, and University of Ghana in Ghana coincided with the period that the academy was witnessing the ascendancy of the knowledge revolution of Area Studies. The academy associated the Modern University system, which began in 1945, in a sense, has traversed the three knowledge revolutions.

In the light of these knowledge revolutions and practices across universities and commemorating the centennial existence of Makerere since 1922, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS), Makerere University, is organizing a three-day International Conference scheduled for **23–26 August 2022** at Makerere University.

¹ Szanton, David L., ed. (2004). *The politics of knowledge: Area studies and the disciplines*. University of California Press. See also Diouf, Mamadou. (2012). "African history/History in Africa: academic, vernacular histories and area studies." *CODESRIA Bulletin* 3-4: 8-11.

² Mazrui, A. M., (2016). *Cultural politics of translation: East Africa in a global context*. Routledge. See also Jameson, Fredric. "On 'Cultural Studies'", *Social text* 34 (1993): 17-52.

³ O'Byrne, Darren J., and Alexander Hensby (2020). *Theorizing global studies*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

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The overriding thrust of the Conference is to explore how the knowledge revolutions have impacted university practices and transformed the teaching of and research in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The conference will also act as a discursive zone to interrogate innovative ways through which Humanities and Social Sciences scholarship has refocused beyond the knowledge revolutions to imagine the inevitable future economic, social, biological and political challenges to humanity.

Conference Thematic Clusters

Area, Cultural and Global Studies

Contributions to this theme may focus on the following questions: Did the Area Studies revolution enable the self-understanding and determination of the subaltern - formerly colonized “Areas” - or did they entrench the civilizational project of the West? Are Cultural Studies a reincarnation of Marxism as a theoretical project? How has this wave transformed the teaching of and research about their disciplines of concern? What and who influences the positions that scholars take on feminisms, linguistics, political processes, historical justice and injustice, artistry, religion and the religious, national literature, psychologies and histories? How has transnationality transformed the teaching and research about your discipline of concern? Are political processes, language, gendered concerns, justice, biological concerns such as infectious diseases, and all aspects of human progress better addressed at the global, national, regional, or local level?

Multiple H(er/i)-stories and Continuities

Contributions to this theme may focus on the history of the academic disciplines in Universities in Africa and beyond. The thrust should be on what has shaped the trajectory of the specific disciplines. How far has the decolonization of disciplines moved or how much hybridity is there? In what ways have the epistemological hierarchies endured? Are there epistemological binaries? Should the academic disciplinary curricula designs be pitched at the local, national, regional, or global levels?

Innovation and progress

This theme will focus on the tensions and concerns of the knowledge revolutions, particularly the historical agenda of the Humanities and Social Sciences in the liberation of humanity. Scholars and practitioners should discuss the innovative ways through which they have or are trying to empower humanity from the vantage point of the philosophies of their different disciplines and callings. The cluster will also emphasize the ways and moments that the Ivory Towers converge with humanity.

Humanistic knowledge in times of crisis

Participants will explore the role of humanities and humanistic knowledge in shaping the understanding of the social tensions and dilemmas of crises. The discussions will interrogate how humanities and humanistic knowledge, skills, and approaches are significant in confronting and dealing with crisis. The debates will focus on how the humanities and humanistic knowledge and skills enable the generation of solutions to contemporary challenges such as pandemics and epidemics, refugee-generating situations, climate change, and the predicament of internally displaced and stateless persons.

Feminist scholarship, inclusion and exclusion debates

This cluster seeks to explore the discourses on gender, feminisms, identities, sexualities, inclusions, exclusions and how these have shaped knowledge production and scholarship in the Global South. Discussions on feminisms may focus on the change in debates from liberal

to radical, Marxist feminist and currently standpoint theories emphasizing recognition of subjectivities and or objectivities of situated knowledge(s). Presentations may critically analyze the significance of the politics of location, power, capitalism, racism, the intersectionality of oppressions, and how women and other oppressed groups have fought to overcome various oppressions. The tensions between academia and civil society, as well as the partnerships harnessed and their effect on gender and development in Uganda and all over the world will also be discussed.

Patterns and trends of Digital humanities in the Global South

Contributions will explore the knowledge evolution and research trends in digital humanities as a recent discipline focusing on the Global South. Participants will explore the digital culture in developing countries⁴, specific developments in the field, and the extent to which university humanistic fields have embraced this knowledge within the conservative humanities departments; how digital technologies are impacting the social, economic, and political contexts/activities, the challenges encountered and the role of the Global North in enhancing the field in the Global South.

Archiving, Memory, and Method

Contributions will examine the relationship between archives and the Humanities, especially concerning collective memory. What is the meaning of “archive” in the Humanities as understood from the Global South? How should Humanities scholars engage critically with colonial archives? What role do Humanities scholars have in supporting and building community archives? How are archives used in the pursuit of justice or historical accountability, such as redressing colonial-era violence? Presentations may also address the work of archivists and librarians within universities in the Global South to preserve and manage the records, and how interdisciplinary approaches within the Humanities expand can foster understandings of non-material archives that are embedded in oral histories, dance, and music.

The future of Humanistic scholarship

Contributions under this theme will reflect on the future of humanities and humanistic scholarship. The presenters may choose to debate on any of the following questions: What should be the focus of scholars of humanities and social sciences? What methodologies and pedagogical approaches should they privilege? What human challenges should be emphasized and committed to addressing? How should the question of knowledge and power as reflected in how political, cultural, and economic hierarchies and actors constrict our epistemic zones be addressed?

Participation and Submission of Abstracts

The Scientific Committee invites abstracts of paper proposals (300 words), panel proposals (600 words), and posters (200 words) targeting **academic communities and practitioners** from universities, researcher institutions, non-profit organizations, as well as government and business sectors. Submissions should be in Microsoft Word using Times New Roman and 12-points format. The author(s) should indicate the cluster to which the submission corresponds.

⁴ Babalola Titilola Aiyegbusi, (2018). *Decolonizing Digital Humanities: Africa in Perspective*, pp. 434-446. Retrieved from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctv9hj9r9.26>

Please send your abstracts, panel and poster proposals to: chuss.conference2022@mak.ac.ug not later than **Monday, 16 May 2022**. Contributors will be notified of the decisions on their submissions by 30 May 2022.

Conference Structure

The three-day international conference will be blended to enable physical and virtual engagements, presentations, and insightful and vibrant discussions. It will consist of keynote addresses, individual and panel presentations, and graduate student panel discussions.

Important Dates

1. Deadline for submission of abstracts: 16 May 2022
2. Feedback on abstracts and panel proposals: 30 May 2022
3. Conference Registration: 1 June 2022
4. Conference Dates: 23–26 August 2022