

A NATIONAL CONFERENCE

CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN MIGRATIONS TO CANADA

New Directions, Approaches, Theories

The University of Winnipeg
September 19 - 21, 2024

OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Dr. George J. Sefa Dei

Professor, Social Justice Education
University of Toronto

Lecture: "Thinking Through Black/African Futurity"



Dr. Joseph Mensah

Professor, Environmental and Urban Change
York University

Lecture: "Strangers in Our Midst: Confronting
Popular Stereotypes of Africa and Its People"



Dr. Philomena Okeke-Ihejirika

Professor, Women's and Gender Studies
University of Alberta

Lecture: "International Migration as
a Social Contract - Canada's Report Card"



Dr. Paul Ugor

Professor, English Language & Literature
University of Waterloo

Lecture: "African Popular Arts and
the Discourse of Migration"

This is a first-of-its-kind national conference that brings together academics, students, and community organizations to discuss contemporary African migration to Canada. This 2024 conference is timely as it coincides with the end of the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), providing an opportunity to consolidate conversations in the field of African migration and diasporic studies, with a specific focus on Canada.

Scan for more details




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CONFERENCE

About

“Contemporary African Migrations to Canada: New Directions, Approaches, Theories” is a national conference bringing together academics, students, community organizations, and policy makers to discuss contemporary African migration to Canada. The conference is particularly timely as it coincides with the end of the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), providing an opportunity to consolidate conversations in the field of African migration and diasporic studies, with a specific focus on Canada.

The conference will be held over three days at the University of Winnipeg and will explore African migrations to Canada over the past twenty years. Presentations and discussions will cover a wide-range of topics based on the conference theme and will involve over 50 experts including academics, graduate students, community organizations, NGOs, and policymakers from across Canada.

The conference program includes four invited keynote lectures, six focused panel discussions, two roundtable conversations, and a workshop for graduate students and early-career scholars in the field of African/African Diaspora Studies.

Objectives

The overall aim of the conference is to engage academics, students, and other stakeholders to collaboratively discuss current studies about African immigrations to Canada since the twenty-first century. The conference has four specific objectives:

- to facilitate interdisciplinary scholarly discussions on contemporary African migration to Canada;
- to promote partnerships and networks among scholars, students, and stakeholders from different sectors and disciplines;
- to identify common themes and methodologies across various disciplinary understandings of African migration to Canada; and
- to utilize the networks and partnerships established during the conference to create collaborative works including but not limited to publications, improved curricula/pedagogies, and policy recommendations for African immigration to and settlement in Canada.

Context

Recent studies on African migrations to Western countries have shifted their focus from linear explanations of why Africans settle in the West to broader transnational understandings of migration flows. These flows are influenced by global political, economic, and cultural forces. In this emerging discourse, there is an increasing emphasis on the formation of “new” diasporas, the relationships African diasporic communities establish with their homelands, and the complex cultural and social identities of these transnational communities, which are often shaped by multiple intersecting factors such as race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexuality, age, and social class. This discourse on African migrations presents at least three main challenges. Firstly, African migrant experiences in Canada have received little attention in scholarly work. Most studies on African migrations to the West have focused on African migrant experiences in the US and certain European countries like Britain, Germany, and France, but Canada has been neglected. Secondly, the existing studies on African migrations to Canada are fragmented across different disciplines and rarely inform each other. This lack of

knowledge sharing means that Canadian contexts have not made significant contributions to theories and transnational understandings of African migrations, despite the increased migration of Africans to the country over the past two decades. Lastly, there has been a lack of adequate attention in Canadian and other studies on the microdynamics of African migrant experiences. Specifically, there is a need to examine the complex nature of African diasporic formations in different Canadian contexts, the social and psychological conditions of African settlements in different parts of Canada, the relationships between African immigrants and their continental African communities as well as other diasporic communities in Canada (especially Black communities), and the diverse mobility patterns of African immigrants as Canadians.

The existing studies on African migrations to Canada have yet to robustly capture the complexity of identity formations among these migrants. Some previous scholarship, as well as official Canadian government data on African migrants, tends to categorize Africans as a homogenous migrant group or includes them within the larger Canadian immigrant population or the overall Black Canadian population. By conflating African migrants within the larger immigrant and/or Black diasporic populations in the country, their unique histories and experiences are often unfairly condensed with other histories and experiences. This oversimplification poses a risk of neglecting the distinct challenges faced by recent African immigrants in the country, as well as the systemic barriers they encounter and the privileges that many of them possess (such as being part of the middle class, having a high level of education, and having professional backgrounds). The consequences of this oversimplification are significant, and often result in considerable loss of skills, financial difficulties, domestic violence, conflicts between parents and children, mental health issues, and intra-group tension among African immigrants in Canada. These gaps in the scholarship have also highlighted the need for new and alternative approaches to understanding African newcomers to Canada, a gap that has significant implications for NGOs and policies that impact these populations.

Moreover, scholars and students in this field seldom have the opportunity to collaborate and share their work in a cohesive manner. This conference aims, therefore, to foster research partnerships and facilitate discussions across various humanities and social sciences disciplines (such as History, Literary Studies, Law, Sociology, Geography, Black Studies, Cultural Studies, Political Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, Education, among others) as well as community practice in order to comprehensively address research, and teaching related to African immigration to Canada, which, in turn, may impact Canadian policies.

From the Conveners

We are deeply honoured to host this conference and are incredibly grateful for the positive response from our colleagues who have agreed to participate and share their insights. This conference has been organized because, as far as we know, there has not been a national conference in Canada focused on exploring African migration from multidisciplinary perspectives in the humanities and social sciences. The discourse on African migration to Canada is strangely limited especially considering the increasing number of Africans settling in the country.

We have invited scholars at different career levels and graduate students from across Canada who are currently researching the topic from diverse humanities and social sciences disciplines. We have also invited community leaders who are actively working with different migrant populations in Canada. Our invited speakers are eminent in their respective fields. Our aim is to foster generative conversations among these scholars and community leaders in order to explore new directions and approaches in the field of African migration to Canada. Rather than seeking

new discoveries, we intend to generate new interdisciplinary insights and paradigm shifts by bringing together existing assumptions and ongoing studies.

Importantly, our overall goal is to connect people working from different disciplinary and community positions. The conference offers numerous opportunities for knowledge mobilization, potential collaborations, and knowledge sharing. We anticipate that the knowledge generated at the event will not only contribute to ongoing and future research, but also to pedagogical practices, knowledge exchange, mentorship, and community engagement and participation.

The University of Winnipeg's culture of community dialogue make it an ideal location for this pioneering national conference. We hope that the conversations at the conference will further encourage the university administration to prioritize African/African Diaspora and Black Studies in the university and address the huge underrepresentation of African/Black academics at the institution.

We are grateful for the incredible support and sponsorship we received from different funders and organizations including UW Riley Fellowship, UW Research Office, Research Manitoba, the African Movie Festival in Manitoba, among several others.

Ifeoluwa Adeniyi, U of Winnipeg
Chigbo Anyaduba, U of Winnipeg
Eliakim Sibanda, U of Winnipeg

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Times indicated in the schedules below are Central Daylight-Saving Time (Winnipeg)

Day I: Thursday, September 19, 2024 | Convocation Hall [2W16] 8:30-9:00 AM (Registration & Coffee) | 9:00-9:30 AM (Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, Opening Remarks) | 15-min break between sessions | 12:15-1:15 PM Lunch

<p>9:30 AM - 10:45 AM</p>	<p>KEYNOTE 1</p>	<p>“Strangers in Our Midst: Confronting Popular Stereotypes about Africa and its People” Dr. Joseph Mensah (York University)</p> <p><u>Chair/Moderator:</u> Dr. Eliakim Sibanda (University of Winnipeg)</p>
<p>11 AM - 12:15 PM</p>	<p>PANEL 1</p>	<p>Addressing African Immigrant Mental Health</p>
		<p>“The Burden of Cultivating Wellness among Immigrant African Families: Thrownness, Transcendence, and Freedom” (Dr. Grace Ukasoanya, University of Manitoba)</p> <p>“Addressing Social Determinants of Mental Health Among African Migrants in Canada” (Dr. Sophie Yohani, University of Alberta)</p> <p>“African Immigrants and Blacks in Canada and the Question of Belonging” (Adey Mohamed, University of Manitoba)</p> <p>“Contours of Joy in the Diasporic Fiction of Téa Mutonji and Djamila Ibrahim” (Dr. Uchechukwu Umezurike, University of Calgary)</p> <p><u>Chair/Moderator:</u> Abdikheir Ahmed (Aurora Family Therapy Centre, U of Winnipeg)</p>
<p>1:30 PM - 2:45 PM</p>	<p>PANEL 2</p>	<p>Addressing Structural Barriers and Access</p>
		<p>“Building Inclusive Workplaces: Tackling Black-Coded Racism and Discrimination Faced by Resettled African Migrants in Canada” (Dr. Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi, University of Manitoba)</p> <p>“Canadian Labour Market: Immigrants’ Employment and Credentialing Barriers” (Dr. Ayodeji Osiname, Brandon University)</p>

		<p>“Accessing Justice in the Canadian Legal System: Experiences of Sierra Leonean Immigrants” (Dr. Mohamed Sesay, York University)</p> <p>“A Literary Autoethnography of Diasporic Hunger” (Olajide Salawu, University of Alberta)</p> <p><u>Chair/Moderator:</u> Dr. Sunday Taiwo (University of Winnipeg)</p>
3 PM - 4:15 PM	PANEL 3	Home and Belonging
		<p>“(Re)conceptualizing Home among Ghanaian Immigrants in Canada: Narratives of Ghanaian Canadians on their Return Visits to the Homeland” (Vivien Bediako, York University)</p> <p>“‘Go to the Land I Will Show You’: The Expansion and Religious Integration of African Christian Immigrant Churches in Canada” (Dr. James Kwateng-Yeboah, Saint Mary’s University)</p> <p>“Representations of Transnational Migration in Afrobeats Music: Home Constructs and the Politics of Return” (Adesoji Babalola, Queen’s University)</p> <p>“Promoting Equitable and Peaceful Integration: Examining the Relevance of Language Proficiency Tests for African Immigrants Educated in Canada” (Joshua Okyere, University of Manitoba)</p> <p><u>Chair/Moderator:</u> Dr. Etienne-Marie Lassi (University of Manitoba)</p>
4:30 PM – 5:45 PM	PANEL 4	Migration, Identity, and Status
		<p>“Colonial Aggression and Contemporary Africans’ Migration: Two Sides of White Supremacist Violence?” (Christiane Essombe, U of Cape Town / U of Montreal)</p> <p>“Complex Implication: Privilege, Positionality, and Racialised Immigration in Canada” (Dr. Sakiru Adebayo, University of British Columbia)</p> <p>“Black in Canada (Abroad), African at ‘Home’” (Dr. Benjamin Maiangwa, Lakehead University)</p>

		<p>“Experiences of African Women Migrants during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic in Canada: A Scoping Review Protocol” (Dr. Abiba Yayah, University of Calgary)</p> <p><u>Chair/Moderator:</u> Dr. Sally Ogoe (University of Manitoba)</p>

DAY II (Friday, September 20, 2024) | Keynote 3 will be at the Eckhardt-Gramatté Hall, U of Winnipeg Campus | All other sessions are at the Convocation Hall [2W16]

8:00-8:30 (Coffee & Opening Remarks) | 11:45 AM – 12:45 PM (Lunch) | 15-min break between sessions

9 AM - 10:15 AM	KEYNOTE 2	<p>“Thinking Through Black/African Futurity” Dr. George J. Sefa Dei (University of Toronto)</p> <p><u>Chair/Moderator:</u> Dr. Nathan Andrews (McMaster University)</p>
10:30 AM - 11:45 AM	PANEL 5	<p>Addressing African Immigrants and Education in Canada</p> <p>“‘Colouring’ International Students Migration to Canada: Critical Race Analysis of the Financial Requirements for Canadian Study Visas” (Dr. Gideon Christian, University of Calgary)</p> <p>“Neoliberal Fatigue: Exploring Educational Challenges Faced by Young Adult Refugees in Canada's Private Sponsorship Program” (Zahro Hassan, University of Alberta)</p> <p>“African Canadian Women Students Race and Gender-Based Violence in Postsecondary Institutions” (Dr. Domale Keys, University of Alberta)</p> <p>“Evidence-Driven Strategies for Successful Educational Outcomes of Learners of African Descent” (Dr. Joyline Makani, Dalhousie University)</p> <p><u>Chair/Moderator:</u> Dr. Kishi Anderson Leachman (University of Winnipeg)</p>
1 PM - 2 PM	WORKSHOP	<p>Professionalization Workshop for Grad Students and Early-Career Scholars</p> <p><u>FACILITATORS:</u></p> <p>Dr. Nduka Otiono (Carleton University)</p> <p>Dr. Sophie Yohani (University of Alberta)</p>

2:15 PM - 3:30 PM	PANEL 6	African Migrations to Canada in Arts and Cultures
		<p>“The Poetics of Migration: Poetic Assemblage of Unbroken Monologues and Sporadic Dialogues in an African Migrant’s Storytelling of Canadian Immigration Experience” (Paul Akpomuje, Queen’s University)</p> <p>“Creating a Welcoming and Safe Environment for Culturally Diverse Learners’ Success” (Dr. Aloysius Anyichie, Brandon University)</p> <p>“Transnational, Afro-Canadian Cinema and the Aesthetics of Contiguity in Pascal Atuma’s Clash” (Babatunde Onikoyi, University of Regina)</p> <p>“‘Unsolicited mourning:’ Grieving and the Sonic Worlds of Africans in the Western Diaspora” (Dr. Joy Chadya, University of Manitoba)</p> <p><u>Chair/Moderator:</u> Dr. Saidah Namayanja (University of Winnipeg)</p>
3:45 PM - 5 PM	ROUNDTABLE I	African Studies in Canada: Teaching, Research, Administration
		<p>Dr. Nduka Otiono, (Carleton University)</p> <p>Dr. Nathan Andrews, (McMaster University)</p> <p>Dr. Mohamed Sesay, (York University)</p> <p>Dr. Grace Ukasoanya, (University of Manitoba)</p> <p><u>Chair/Moderator:</u> Dr. Chigbo A. Anyaduba (University of Winnipeg)</p>
6 PM - 8 PM	KEYNOTE 3 @ Eckhardt- Gramatté Hall, U of Winnipeg	<p>“International Migration as a Social Contract – Canada’s Report Card” Dr. Philomena-Okeke Ihejirika (University of Alberta)</p> <p><u>Chair/Moderator:</u> Dr. Ifeoluwa Adeniyi (University of Winnipeg)</p>

DAY III (Saturday, September 21, 2024) | Gas Station Arts Centre (445 River Ave., Winnipeg)

8:00-9:30 (Coffee, Welcome, & Opening Remarks)

9:30 AM - 10:45 AM	KEYNOTE 4	<p>“African Popular Arts and the Discourse of Migration”</p> <p>Dr. Paul Ugor (University of Waterloo)</p> <p><u>Chair/Moderator:</u> Dr. Chigbo A. Anyaduba (University of Winnipeg)</p>
11 AM - 12:30 PM	ROUNDTABLE II	<p>Immigration, Community, and Belonging in Canada</p> <p><u>SPEAKERS:</u></p> <p>Maggie Yeboah (ACOMI)</p> <p>Chuks Ojidoh (ACOMI)</p> <p>Art Miki (Asian Heritage Society)</p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> Chigbo A. Anyaduba (University of Winnipeg)</p>
12:30 PM - 9 PM	AM-FM FILM SCREENINGS	<p>See AM-FM website for film screening schedules: https://www.am-fm.ca/</p>

SPEAKERS

SPEAKER BIOS & ABSTRACTS

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Professor George J. Sefa Dei | University of Toronto



Ghanaian-born George Sefa Dei is a renowned educator, researcher and writer who is considered by many as one of Canada's foremost scholars on race, anti-racism studies, Black and minority education, African Indigeneity and anti-colonial thought. He is a widely sought after academic, researcher and community worker whose professional and academic work has led to many Canadian and international speaking invitations in US, Europe and Africa. Currently, he is Professor of Social Justice Education & Director of the Centre for Integrative Anti-Racism Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). On May 6, 2024, Professor Dei will receive an honorary doctorate from the University of South Africa at the University's convocation ceremony. Dr Dei has been asked to give an address at the University's convocation. Professor Dei is the 2015, 2016, 2018-19 Carnegie African Diasporan Fellow. In August of 2012, Professor Dei also received the honorary title of *'Professor Extraordinarius'* from the Department of Inclusive Education, University of South Africa, [UNISA]. In 2017, he was elected as Fellow of Royal Society of Canada, the most prestigious award for an academic scholar. He also received the *'2016 Whitworth Award for Educational Research'* from the Canadian Education Association (CEA) awarded to the Canadian scholar whose research and scholarship have helped shaped Canadian national educational policy and practice. He is the 2019 Paulo Freire Democratic Project, Chapman University, US - *'Social Justice Award'* winner. In April of 2021, Professor Dei received the 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Ontario Alliance of Black School Educators [ONABSE] for how long-standing work promoting Black and minority youth education. Also, Professor Dei in October 2023, was named by Silvertrust Media as one of the 100 most influential Black Canadians nationwide. He received this award at the African History gala where he was chosen as the keynote speaker. In March of 2023 Professor Dei has received the highly prestigious *'2023 President's Impact Award'*, given to a University of Toronto scholar whose work has reached beyond walls of academia to significantly impact local communities, nationally and internationally. In April 2023, Professor Dei was given an *Honorary Research Associateship* in The Centre of Excellence in Disabilities, University of South Africa, [UNISA]. Professor Dei has forty-four (44) books and over eighty (80) refereed journal articles to his credit. Finally, in June of 2007, Professor Dei was installed as a traditional chief in Ghana, specifically, as the Gyaasehene of the town of Asokore, Koforidua in the New Juaben Traditional Area of Ghana. His stool name is Nana Adusei Sefa Tweneboah.

Keynote lecture title: "Thinking Through Black/African Futurity"

Abstract: 2024 marks the final year of the UN's International Decade of Peoples of African Descent! It is important to ask how far we have been accomplished for Black advancement in the Canadian context? In celebrating the Black and African historic presence in Canada, more often the preference is to focus on our achievements. Yet, we do not usually speak more to the obstacles and systemic barriers to continuing presence on Canadian landscape. My address will reflect on some of the deeper structural barriers and systemic issues affecting our communities: anti-Blackness and anti-Black racism in education, law and the criminal justice system, media and media technology, lack of Black representation within the top echelons of our societal

institutions, notable health care disparities, and the continuing colonial legacies and impacts on Black mental health and trauma. In the face of these challenges how can we, as a people, think through solutions to our solutions grounded in “our own home-grown cultural perspectives” (Yankah, 2004; p. 25)? How do we build Black and African solidarities for social change? How do we deploy a critical understanding of Land and its Earthly teachings [literacies] of relationality, sharing, reciprocity, connections, mutual interdependence, building relationships, social responsibility and accountability to enrich conversations to subvert colonial hierarchies [see Dei, 2008]? How do we reclaim Black subjectivities for resistance so as not to betray our Ancestors? What role do we see for our African Elders? How do we acknowledge the past, reflect present conditions and project transformative outcomes onto future? What epistemic and political practices are required for new African futurities that get us out of the “clutches of coloniality”? As African scholars, how do we embark upon an epistemic turn that affirms our subjectivities rather than doing violence on our subjectivities? What modes of thought, action and agency in terms of self-definition, collective actualization is required? It is contended the search for answers to some of these questions lie in the pursuit of Black fugitivity and Black radical hope.

Professor Joseph Mensah | York University



Joseph Mensah is a Professor and former Chair of Geography at York University. His research focuses on globalization and culture; race, gender, and employment; and African development. Best known among his publications is *Black Canadians: History, Experience, and Social Conditions* (Fernwood, 2002, with second edition in 2010). His latest book (co-authored with Christopher Williams) is *Boomerang Ethics: How Racism Affects Us All* (Fernwood, 2017).

Keynote lecture title: “Strangers in Our Midst: Confronting Popular Stereotypes about Africa and its People”

Abstract: As the world gets smaller and multicultural, due primarily to globalization and international migration, it is important to understand other people and their cultures. The goal of this presentation is to get to know Africa(ns) better, in an effort to subvert the prevailing negative stereotypes and dehumanization surrounding Africans, especially those in our midst in Canada. With insights from multiple disciplines, including history, geography, philosophy, cultural studies etc., the presentation will show that many of the stereotypes that people have about Africa(ns), through the popular media (notably TV shows, movies, and social media) are over-simplifications, if not utterly erroneous.

Professor Philomina Okeke-Ihejirika | University of Alberta



Dr. Philomina Okeke-Ihejirika is a full professor in Women’s and Gender Studies, University of Alberta. She is also the Director of the \$2.5 million SSHRC-funded Partnership on Research with African Newcomers and the Pan African Collaboration for Excellence (PACE), as well as the Co-lead, Central Region, for the federal government’s \$5 million Black Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (BEKH). Her research spans transnational, post-colonial, and intersectional feminist theories, and community-based participatory methodologies, and investigates gender and international migration, and gender and development in Africa. Among many awards, Dr. Okeke-Ihejirika is a Killam scholar, Carnegie fellow, a founding member of the College of Mentors for African Universities, and a collaborating researcher with the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

Keynote lecture title: “International Migration as a Social Contract – Canada’s Report Card”

Abstract: Newcomers are attracted to Canada by what should be reasonably held as a mutually beneficial social contract: Canada needs to boost its aging population, labor supply and cultural diversity; newcomers, in turn, seek a better life and a chance to contribute to a host society, its economy, and its multicultural heritage. At 23% of the national population in 2021, from close to 200 countries, featuring a diversity of cultures, and representing between 2016-2021, four-fifths of Canada’s labor force growth – newcomers are actively fulfilling their own part of this social contract. But how well is Canada doing? Based on the experiences of recent immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, Dr. Okeke-Ihejirika demonstrates how, at every turn, the neoliberal, Eurocentric, status quo sabotages Canada’s social contract with newcomers at the level of policy, practice and research agendas - with serious and far-reaching consequences for both parties.

Professor Paul Ugor | University of Waterloo



Dr Paul Ugor is a Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. His research and teaching interests are in the areas of Modern African Literatures and Cultures, Anglophone Postcolonial World Literatures, Cultural Studies, Global Black Studies, and New Media Cultures in the Global South. He is the author of *Nollywood: Popular Culture and Narratives of Youth Struggles in Nigeria* (2016) and co-editor of several collections including, *Youth and Popular Culture in Africa: Media, Music, and Politics* (2021); *African Youth Cultures in the Age of Globalization: Challenges, Agency, and Resistance* (2017); Special Issue of *Critical African Studies* on ‘African Youth, Popular Culture, and the Ethnographic Sense’ (2023); *Postcolonial Text*, Vol. 8, No. 3 & 4, 2013; and a special issue of *Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies* 31:4 (2009). He is currently working on three edited volumes, *The Postcolonial Bildungsroman: Youth, Representational Politics and Aesthetic Reinventions* (co-edited with Dr Arnab Roy of Florida Gulf Coast University, currently under contract with the University of Alberta Press); *The Postcolonial Bildungsroman and the Character of Place*, co-edited with Arnab Dutta Roy, Paul Ugor & Maria Puleo, Simone, and under review with the University of Nebraska Press; and *Narrating Transitional Justice: Memory in the Age of Truth and Reconciliation* (co-edited with Bonny Ibhawoh of McMaster University, and under review with McGill-Queens University Press, and a monograph tentatively entitled *Afropolitan Humanism: Popular Cinema and Humanist Advocacy in Nigeria*. The latter project examines the humanitarian uses to which Femi Odugbemi, Nollywood’s leading film director and television producer, has put his screen media work as a socially-committed filmmaker. He has also authored more than three dozen journal articles/book chapters published in reputable African Studies’ journals and edited books. Prof. Ugor is an Alumnus of the National Humanities Centre in North Carolina, US.

Keynote lecture title: “African Popular Arts and the Discourse of Migration”

Abstract: Although significant scholarly work has been done in the area of transnational migration in postcolonial African literature, especially in relation to what has now come to be known as Afropolitan literature, very little critical attention has been paid to the ways in which popular expressivity in Africa engages with the discourse of migration. Building and drawing on the extant scholarship on African popular arts and transnationalism, I examine how Nollywood cinema, Nigeria’s popular video film industry, narrativizes modern-day experiences of transnational migration for most Africans.

PANEL SPEAKERS

Dr. Sakiru Adebayo, University of British Columbia

Dr. Sakiru Adebayo is an Assistant Professor of African Literature in the Department of English at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan. He is the author of *Continuous Pasts: Frictions of Memory in Postcolonial Africa*.

Presentation title: “Complex Implication: Privilege, Positionality, and Racialised Immigration in Canada”

Abstract: This paper is an autocritical exploration of privilege, positionality, and racialized immigration in Canada. It examines how Black African immigrants are discriminated against – yet implicated – in Canada’s settler-colonial project. It investigates what it means to not simply see oneself as a victim but also as one who, in turn, participates in oppressive structures (Gopal 2021). It argues that the position of privileged African immigrants in Canada's settler-colonial order is that of ‘complex implication’ (Rothberg, 2019) because they are incorporated into a system that is founded on and sustained by the dispossession of Indigenous people while they are, at the same time, faced with regular experiences of exclusion and racist marginalization in that same system. This paper, therefore, asks: how does one hold together the conflicting thoughts about one’s privilege and precarity in a settler-colonial regime? How does one negotiate the imbricated feelings of implication and victimisation in a settler-colonial project? When does the implicated immigrant become an object of exploitation in the perpetuation of settler colonial ambitions? This paper concludes that acknowledging one’s implication requires an uncomfortable self-reflexivity and that it involves having a demanding relationship with history. Ultimately, this paper reinforces the necessity – while being cognizant of the limitations – of solidarity in the experiences of (racialized) immigration and indigeneity in Canada.

Dr. Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi, University of Manitoba



Dr. Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. Her teaching and research are grounded in anti-colonial and anti-racist perspectives. Dr. Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi’s areas of research include gender studies, intimate partner violence and family violence, migration and health, racial injustice, and homelessness. She has presented her research findings nationally and internationally.

Presentation title: “Building Inclusive Workplaces: Tackling Black-Coded Racism and Discrimination Faced by Resettled African Migrants in Canada”

Abstract: Migrants globally face numerous challenges during the resettlement process, with significant barriers being workplace racism and discrimination, particularly when compounded with the intersectionality of race. This study examines the experiences of migrants in resettlement and their encounter with black-coded workplace racism and discrimination, focusing on the unique challenges faced by individuals of African descent seeking employment and disability benefits. Through a qualitative research approach, this study sheds light on the nuances of discrimination faced by black migrants in the workplace, exploring how stereotypes, biases, and systemic inequalities contribute to their health issues. This research contributes to the broader discourse on intersectional discrimination.

Paul Akpomuje, Queen's University



Paul Akpomuje is a PhD student in the Faculty of Education, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. He is a research fellow with the Revolutionary Demand for Happiness (RDH) Working Group, Department of Black Studies, Queen's University. His research is on visa stories and the poetics of migration as he seeks to explore the migration experiences of Nigerian immigrant students in Canada. Prior to and since joining Queen's University, Paul has maintained a vibrant and robust academic agenda which lie at the intersection of education and learning, migration, Black studies, and social justice. He engages these subjects through a combination of creative, critical, transformative, and transgressive lenses. Paul taught in the Department of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria before moving to Canada. He, together with Dr. Katherine McKittrick, is the convener of *The Poetics of Migration*.

Presentation title: "The Poetics of Migration: Poetic Assemblage of Unbroken Monologues and Sporadic Dialogues in an African Migrant's Storytelling of Canadian Immigration Experience"

Abstract: Migration storytelling has always been critical and creative. What it has, perhaps, not always been is poetic. The works of Patel (2010), Khan (2018), and Serpa (2022), have aroused my curiosity about how, beyond traditional prose, poetry can be used to articulate the ongoing struggles of migration and movement, mobility and immobilities, exile and belonging, and borders and boundaries. As such, as I craft poetry and convene a community event which I call the Poetics of Migration, I think of poetry as a way African immigrants in Canada connect and tell stories of their experiences that relate to not just the layered paper works and oppressive algorithms of the Canadian immigration system, but also the racialization and despatialization of African migrants within different spaces. Accordingly, I wonder how anti-blackness, and hegemonic structures are tied to scripts of belonging that are woven into Canadian institutions and society, and how visas, and passports, job opportunities, etc. reify exclusion and social injustice. I therefore seek to theorize how poetry is crucial to migration narratives and knowledge-making among African immigrants in Canada. I conclude that poetry can help to revitalize visa stories by situating the pains and (dis)pleasure of the Canadian migration experience.

Dr. Aloysius C. Anyichie, Brandon University



Dr. Anyichie is an Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology at Brandon University. He completed his PhD from the University of British Columbia. Aloy developed a *Culturally Responsive Self-Regulated Learning Framework* that guides educators in designing supportive practices for all learners' success in multicultural classrooms. His novel research that focuses on supporting culturally diverse students' regulation of learning, engagement and motivation received awards from: the Canadian Association for Educational Psychology, American Educational Research Association (SSRL- SIG), and European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction. He founded [Loy Excellentia Initiative](#) that supports African/Black students in Canada to excel through mentorship programs.

Presentation title: "Creating a Welcoming and Safe Environment for Culturally Diverse Learners' Success"

Abstract: Canada is a multicultural country with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These students, especially Africans, bring rich lived experiences into the learning

environment, which can be leveraged to enhance the quality of teaching and learning for everyone. However, this opportunity is often missed due to the multilayered challenges these students face, including systemic racism, language barriers, and a mismatch between their home culture and school culture, creating obstacles to a successful positive learning experience both in and out of the classrooms. Some approaches are beneficial in addressing these challenges. For example, within the learning environment, educators can adopt culturally inspired asset-based frameworks, such as the culturally responsive self-regulated learning framework, which recognizes and values students' cultural backgrounds, empowers them to take ownership of their learning process by integrating diverse perspectives into the curriculum, and fostering an inclusive classroom atmosphere. Additionally, community-based initiatives, like the Loy Excellencia Initiative, has potentials of addressing broader societal issues that impact students' school experiences by providing support networks and mentorship opportunities. This session will delve into these approaches and create an interactive platform for attendees to lend their voice on supporting a sense of belonging for African students in Canadian higher education, fostering a collaborative effort towards inclusivity and equity.

Adesoji Babalola, Queen's University



Adesoji Babalola is a PhD candidate in the Cultural Studies Interdisciplinary Graduate Program, and Teaching Fellow in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures at Queen's University. His ongoing doctoral research explores the linguistic and cultural strategies of resistance, resurgence and decolonial politics in Indigenous hip hop music in Nigeria and Canada, to better understand how youth cultures contribute to the global movement of decolonization and language revitalization, especially in both exploitative and settler (post)colonial sites. He has published widely in reputable journals. His new publication entitled "Theorizing Intimacies and Articulation in Nigerian Hip Hop Music" is in *the journal of Asian and African Studies*, published by Sage, United Kingdom. His forthcoming article and book review are in *MUSICultures* (Canada) and *Language in Society* (United Kingdom) respectively. His research interests include (African)popular cultures, postcolonial literature, cultural studies, Black Studies, sociolinguistics, and raciolinguistics.

Presentation title: "Representations of Transnational Migration in Afrobeats Music: Home Constructs and the Politics of Return"

Abstract: Nigerian immigrants abroad have often been depicted by the dominant media as "uprooted" beings due to ongoing multidimensional violence, e.g., hunger, insecurity, and corruption in their home country. This narrative tends to place the Nigerian diaspora within the politics of transnational homelessness. Through the lens of transnational migration, Afropolitanism and Afrofuturism, and drawing on the works of Glick-Schiller, Mbembe, Adeniyi-Ogunyankin, and Ugor, I explore the ways Afrobeats artists recognize the aforementioned (post)colonial violence in their songs; yet offer a compelling opposing-narrative of home constructs with new possibilities, hopes and futures. I argue that a decolonial reading of Afrobeats songs by Sound Sultan and Adegunle Gold has the potential to illuminate our understanding of home, to include ideology, philosophy, identity, intimacy, (be)longing, family, and community of care. I conclude that while Afrobeats is developing into a global cultural movement, its sociopolitical narratives compel us to reimagine home and transnational migration as a complex attitude of the mind that resists coloniality and the disposable configurations of Africa.

Vivien Bediako, York University



Vivien Bediako is a Ph.D. candidate in the Graduate program in Geography at the Faculty of Environment and Urban Change at York University, Toronto. Her research interests span migration and transnationalism, Black diaspora issues, and African development. Her current research deals with the intersections between migration and tourism. She has extensive working experience in Ghana with the Ghana Tourism Authority and Conservation International (Ghana). She holds an MPhil in Social Change (Development Geography) from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and a BA(Hons) in Geography & Resource Development from the University of Ghana.

Presentation title: “(Re)conceptualizing Home among Ghanaian Immigrants in Canada: Narratives of Ghanaian Canadians on their Return Visits to the Homeland”

Abstract: What is home? What does home mean to you? Where do you perceive and consider your home? How deeply do you identify yourself with your homeland? Do you have a special affinity and attachment to your homeland? These are some of the questions I explore in my doctoral dissertation. Over the years Ghanaian immigrants in Canada regard their ancestral homeland as their true and ideal home. Kinship relations, fond memories and nostalgia have been part of their identity and imagination in their host country Canada. Their ultimate longing to visit their homeland for vacation, visit friends and relatives, and reconnect with their roots persists throughout their stay in Canada. Adopting a cultural geographic perspective, I explore the social and cultural processes associated with Ghanaian immigrants’ return visits to their homeland from a gendered, generational and spatiotemporal lens. Drawing on my ongoing research, I am using qualitative semi-structured interviews on first-generation Ghanaian immigrants living in Canada, and their second-generation adult children, to discuss the meanings these immigrants attach to home, how they describe, construct, negotiate and reconceptualize home during their return visits to the homeland. The differences and similarities in how these two sets of generational cohorts perceive their sense of belonging and attachment to the homeland are also teased out.

Dr. Joy Chadya, University of Manitoba

I am a twentieth-century social historian whose interests are in Africa in general, but Southern Africa in particular. I am interested in transnational histories of liberation struggles, cross-border migration of labor in the Southern African region; women and urbanization; Zimbabwean the shifting practices in the Zimbabwean deathscape since the inception of colonial rule and African diaspora.

Presentation title: “‘Unsanctioned mourning:’ Grieving and the Sonic Worlds of Africans in the Western Diaspora”

Abstract: TBA

Dr. Gideon Christian, University of Calgary



Dr. Gideon Christian is an Associate Professor of AI and Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Calgary. Prior to joining the University of Calgary, he was technology lawyer with the federal Department of Justice where he deployed technology in high profile litigation involving the Government of Canada. His research interests are in artificial intelligence and law, legal impacts of new and emerging technologies among other areas. Dr. Christian’s research seeks to identify elements of racial bias in laws, policies and in emerging technologies. His current research seeks to develop the concept of algorithmic racism which is defined as race-based bias arising from the use of AI-powered tools in the analysis of data in decision making resulting in unfair outcomes

to individuals from a particular segment of the society characterised by race. Dr. Christian has appeared before the House of Commons Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CIMM) as an expert in the use of AI in immigration decisions. He is the Ontario Bar Association 2024 Chief Justice of Ontario Fellow in Research. His fellowship aimed to develop ethical guidelines for the use of Generative AI in the legal profession. He was named by the Calgary Herald as one of the top 20 Compelling Calgarians to watch in 2024.

Presentation title: “Colouring” International Students Migration to Canada: Critical Race Analysis of the Financial Requirements for Canadian Study Visas

Abstract: This presentation leverages critical race theory to study the financial requirements for Canadian study visa under the Canadian immigration law. Despite the ostensibly race-neutral language of these requirements, our analysis, grounded in critical race theory, aims to reveal underlying racial biases in how the legislative provision is interpreted and implemented by the Department of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The presentation will seek to uncover the ways in which these financial requirements in the legislative provisions serve as a form of systemic barrier, disproportionately impacting students from marginalized racial backgrounds. By scrutinizing the intersection of race, socioeconomic status, and legal frameworks, the analysis will highlight the broader implications of these financial requirements on access to education and the perpetuation of educational inequity. Through this analysis, the presentation aims to highlight the need for a more equitable and inclusive approach in the application and interpretation of Canada's immigration laws, advocating for reforms that ensure equal educational opportunities for all international students.

Christiane Ndendi Essombe, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Chris (she / her) is an Afro-cosmopolitan: not really from here or there, she lives and questions the manifestations of the colonial status quo wherever she is. Chris has been involved in anti-racism and anti-oppression for almost 10 years and is expected to finalize her PhD in psychology at the University of Cape Town by mid-2024. Her research focuses on racism against Black people in African contexts, and the afterlives of colonial violence.

Presentation title: “Colonial Aggression and Contemporary Africans’ Migration: Two Sides of White Supremacist Violence?”

Abstract: In this talk, I interrogate whether racial violence informs Africans’ migration patterns. To this end, I use a decolonial Africa(n)-centered psychological approach to assess whether colonial identity erosion fuels a need to reclaim superiority over other Africans when they migrate from the diaspora to the continent, within the continent, or from the continent to the diaspora. I anchor those reflections in an analysis of the trajectory of Americo-Liberians and the creation of Liberia as a colonial state in the late 19th century and the ongoing violence between Black South Africans and foreign Black Africans in South Africa.

Zahro Hassan, University of Alberta



Zahro Hassan is a doctoral candidate in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. She is also an educator, advocate, and EDI consultant with extensive community development experience in Toronto, Ottawa, and Edmonton. Her main research project involves a qualitative exploration of young adult refugees' experiences accessing post-secondary education in Canada.

Presentation title: “Neoliberal Fatigue: Exploring Educational Challenges Faced by Young Adult Refugees in Canada's Private Sponsorship Program”

Abstract: This study explores how neoliberal fatigue among sponsors impacts young adult refugees (YARs)' educational aspirations in Canada. Despite the success of the Private

Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program, a research gap exists on refugees' education challenges. Through qualitative data from interviews with privately sponsored refugees in Ontario and Alberta, the study reveals obstacles, including sponsors' limited understanding of refugee resettlement, financial pressure, and a lack of educational pathways. YARs often struggle with these challenges within the PSR program, leading to the abandonment of their educational goals. The study prompts a broader inquiry into private citizens' role in refugee resettlement and the government's dependence on their involvement.

Dr. Domale Keys, University of Alberta



Domale Dube Keys, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Alberta. She is a transborder Black feminist scholar whose work aims to reshape discourse around issues of organizing, race, gender, and sexuality to support movement-building in the U.S. and around the globe for economic and environmental justice. Her research has documented the experiences of Black women and immigrants who are involved in transnational nonviolent organizing. Her recent work pushes for a critical theory of violence based on her work with Black indigenous communities and research on sexual violence organizing in higher education. Her current book manuscript was awarded the National Women's Studies Association's First Book Prize. She also earned a fellowship from the International Center for Nonviolent Conflict.

Presentation title: "African Canadian Women Students Race and Gender-based Violence in Postsecondary Institutions"

Abstract: In 2022 student leaders across Canada released the "Our Campus, Our Safety" action plan which emphatically called for institutions to simultaneously deal with anti-Black racism and gender-based violence using an intersectional approach that would address the recommendations of the 2020 Scarborough Charter drafted by Black members of Canadian post-secondary institutions. Our qualitative study draws on in-depth interviews with 10 African Canadian women to capture their intersectional experiences of race and gender-based violence during their time at a postsecondary institution. Findings will greatly enhance current understandings about Black women students' experiences of violence and establish the need to examine the issue of campus gender-based violence with attention to Black women's perspectives.

Dr. James Kwateng-Yeboah, Saint Mary's University



James Kwateng-Yeboah is an Assistant Professor of Christianity in the African Diaspora in Canada at Saint Mary's University, Halifax. His research employs quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the nature and role of religion in migration and development processes. He has published on Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and development in Africa, particularly in Ghana and Nigeria. His current research examines the role of Christianity in the historic and contemporary migrations of African-descended peoples to Canada, exploring how Christianity has shaped the image of Canada as a haven, formerly for enslaved Africans and currently for aspiring migrants of African descent.

Paper title: "Go to the Land I Will Show You': The Expansion and Religious Integration of African Christian Immigrant Churches in Canada"

Abstract: Since the 1990s, extensive research has been conducted on the rise of African-initiated churches in Europe and North America. However, the Canadian context has received limited attention. In 2016, Statistics Canada ranked Africa as the second-largest source continent of recent immigrants, surpassing Europe, yet the religious integration of African immigrants

remains underexplored. This paper addresses this gap by examining the proliferation of African Christian immigrant communities in Canada, focusing on two churches in Toronto and Kingston, Ontario. Drawing on surveys, observations, and interviews, it explores how these communities navigate their complex identities as ‘Canadian,’ ‘African,’ and ‘Christian.’ Findings reveal that African and Black-initiated Christian communities continue to experience marginalization, lacking public recognition and scholarly Canadian attention, compared to the historic English Protestant and French Roman Catholic establishments. Despite marginalization, these churches assert their agency by challenging stereotypes, integrating diverse identities, and enriching the religious and cultural landscapes in Canada. Overall, this paper highlights the dynamic contributions of African Christian immigrants in decolonizing contemporary ‘Canadian Christianity.’

Dr. Benjamin Maiangwa, Lakehead University



Benjamin Maiangwa is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Lakehead University, Ontario, Canada. Maiangwa’s projects and research explore notions of contested belonging, mobility, and how people experience conflict and peace in everyday life. He is the author of “The Crisis of Belonging and Ethnographies of Peacebuilding in Kaduna State, Nigeria” (Lexington Books, 2021) and the editor of “The Paradox(es) of Diasporic Identity, Race and Belonging” (Palgrave

Macmillan, 2023).

Presentation title: “Black in Canada (Abroad), African at ‘Home’”

Abstract: In this paper, I explore the significance of the question “where are you (really) from?” and its impact on African migrants in Canada. While this question may appear harmless and well-intentioned, I argue that it reflects an unspoken desire to maintain rigid lines of difference in the imaginaries of the colonial subjects (Mbembe, 2017), who seek to uphold a “bipolar [racist] structure” (Wilkerson, 2020). Drawing from my own migration journey from Nigeria to Canada, I contend that this fixation on the “Black body” in both the postcolony and colonial metropolises, perpetuates a neocolonial condition of displacement and disorientation (Williams, 2021). The urge to always confine individuals to specific geographical locations based on their appearance or accent restricts the innate human inclination to explore beyond arbitrary identities. Like James Baldwin (1961) conceptualizes his own journey, mine is also a process of becoming and reaching toward something that I may not fully comprehend. Yet, my meaning and growth lie in the spaces between each step of this pilgrimage.

Dr. Joyline Makani, Dalhousie University

Dr. Joyline Makani is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Management at Dalhousie University. She teaches undergraduate, graduate and executive level courses. Her award-winning research work has been published in a variety of leading journals including *The Journal of Knowledge Management*, *European Journal of Innovation Management*, and *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*. She has received numerous funding awards for her research: most recently, she received Partnership Engage Grants from SSHRC in 2021 & 2020 (\$25,000 each year), and in 2018, an Insight Development Grant (\$52,233) from SSHRC and an Inter-University Research Network Research Grant (\$18,000) from The Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Her current research activities sit at the intersection of information science, data management, and knowledge management, as well as, virtual teams, collaboration, entrepreneurship and innovation. She focusses on exploring how organizations, in a bid to align and sustain innovation, growth and success, continuously learn and build or deploy systems to effectively and efficiently create new knowledge. Dr. Makani is a graduate of the University of Zimbabwe and Dalhousie University where she earned MLIS, MBA and PhD degrees.

Presentation title: “Evidence-Driven Strategies for Successful Educational Outcomes of Learners of African Descent”

Abstract: The United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal 4 calls for countries to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Though ideals of inclusion and equity have been extensively adopted by education systems across different provinces of Canada, extant research has established that Black Canadian students struggle in public schools, and a persistent achievement gap exists as compared to their peers. One of the critical lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic and the aftermath is how vulnerable we are as humans and the urgent need for inclusive systems that provide opportunities for us to learn better together and leave no one behind. Developing these systems presents challenges, including a mindset to drive transformative change. Strong partnerships amongst various stakeholders are critical to examine the systems in place and identify areas for improvement. To this end, research collaborations in Nova Scotia envision designing evidence-driven strategies for improving the schooling outcomes of Black learners.

Adey Mohamed, University of Manitoba

Adey Mohamed is a social worker, and PhD Candidate in the Peace and Conflict Studies program at the University of Manitoba. Adey currently works at Aurora Family Therapy as a Clinician, Psycho-Social Settlement Needs Assessment Program from trauma informed lens. Adey supports community learning, healing, and growth through bridgebuilding and storytelling. She has been involved as a community researcher since 2015.

Presentation title: “Africa Immigrants and Blacks in Canada and the Question of Belonging”

Abstract: Canada is a country that is heavily divided based on race, which makes the question of belonging extremely important. African/Black Canadians and immigrants in Canada are one of the racialized groups that face significant challenges due to structural and systemic racism in the country. As several studies have shown, despite being legal residents and/or citizens, they are often made to feel they do not belong because of the racial exclusionary practices of the dominant racial group (Sefa Dei 2018). In my presentation, I aim to explore the intersection of race and belonging in Canada, focusing on the question: What factors are essential for the integration of African/Black Canadians in a nation-state that is divided by race? To answer this question, I will draw on my experience as a social worker on the frontline and relevant literature.

Joshua Okyere, University of Manitoba

Joshua Okyere is a Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Scholar and a doctoral candidate in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Manitoba. His research interest spans across young people affected by violence, conflict and peacebuilding in Africa, conflict and gender, using emancipatory peacebuilding approaches to foster sustainable peace. For his thesis, he seeks to delve deeper into the entrenched social and institutionalized cultural practices that enable violence against children, especially in Africa, to be able to devise suitable interventions against such violence using the frameworks of peacebuilding. He obtained his master’s degree in international studies from Ohio University and his undergraduate degree in Political Studies from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. He is currently a volunteer at the Newcomer Ethnocultural Youth Council of Winnipeg and an associate member of the Pan-African Scientific Research Council.

Presentation title: “Promoting Equitable and Peaceful Integration: Examining the Relevance of Language Proficiency Tests for African Immigrants Educated in Canada”

Abstract: Research has established that proficiency in language and literacy play a crucial role in the integration of migrants in their destination country, particularly in the labour market (Auer,

2018; Bussi & Pareliussen, 2017; Dustmann & Fabbri, 2003). However, the language proficiency requirements for immigrants educated in Canada seeking permanent residency raises concerns regarding the relevance and fairness of these tests in assessing their integration capabilities. This study will focus on examining the relevance of such tests for African immigrants educated in Canada and their implications for promoting equitable and peaceful integration. While these language proficiency requirements are commonly imposed on immigrants in Canada, the study specifically targets the African immigrant population educated in Canada. As a form of new direction and approach I will argue that African immigrants who have completed their schooling in Canada should be exempted from language proficiency tests as a requirement for permanent residency, as their education already demonstrates their language skills and integration capabilities. Additionally, the study will advocate for a fair and culturally sensitive integration policies that acknowledge the diverse backgrounds and experiences of African immigrants. The significance of this research lies in providing insights for policy deliberations and advancing fair inclusion for African immigrants educated in Canada. The study will utilize secondary sources and personal experiences.

Babatunde Olamitundun Onikoyi, University of Regina



Babatunde Onikoyi serves as Sessional Lecturer in the film department, University of Regina, Canada where he is researching into Transnational African Cinema for a PhD. He taught Nollywood/African, Transnational and Indigenous Cinemas Screen Media and Postcolonial Studies, Popular culture, Drama and Literature at Kwara State University, and Adeleke University in Nigeria, between 2013 and 2021. He was a Member of Jury of the African International Film Festival and is currently Film Reviews Editor, *African Studies Review*, the flagship journals of African issues in the United States of America. He is widely published in international journals including; *African Studies Review*, *African Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of African Cinemas and Diaspora Studies*, *Journal of African Cinemas*, *African Notes*, *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, *Africology: Journal of Pan-African Studies*, *Quint: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly From the North*, and *Black Camera*. His essays have also appeared in a good number of book volumes such as, *African Migration Narratives: Politics, Race and Space* (Edited by Cajetan Iheka and Jack Taylor, 2018) *Media Studies in Nigeria* (Edited by Onookome Okome and Marcel Okhakhhu, 2016) *Regulating Nollywood in a Global Economy*. (Edited by Victor Duga 2020) and others. He co-edited with Taiwo Afolabi, *The Cinema of Tunde Kelani: Aesthetics, Theatricalities and Visual Performance* (2021); the first definitive compendium on one of Africa's most distinguished filmmakers. He is currently co-editing a manuscript on Nollywood Film Industry and the city of Lagos in the 21st Century.

Presentation title: “Transnational, Afro-Canadian Cinema and the Aesthetics of Contiguity in Pascal Atuma’s *Clash*”

Abstract: The presentation will explore the dynamics and processes of how cultural heritage functions in transnational African films produced in Canada. Transnational filmmakers draw on issues and challenges they are faced with back at home and even in their host societies, to comment on their own experiences and the new identities they take on in order to forge new visions through the universes of their cinema (Naficy, 2001; Ricci 2020 and Petty 2022). Journeys that transnational African filmmakers embark upon are not only “physical or territorial”, but also “psychological and philosophical” (2001). While negotiating new identities they still maintain a hold on their original identities and cultural worldviews. These realities are not only illustrated in their films but also testify to how they uphold the values and mores of African cultures in transnational spaces. How do transnational African filmmakers safeguard cultural heritage in their films and what narrative and cinematic strategies do they employ to perform this function? This presentation shall rely on Naficy’s concept of *Accented Cinema*

(2001) which defines diasporic films as possessing a collective memory and multiple identities, and Ngugi Wa Thiongo's concept of *Globalectics* (2012) which theorizes how phenomena such as, oral performances, festivities, culture and language manifest in global sense. By applying both concepts to Pascal Atuma's film titled *Clash* (2021), I will analyze the cinematic narratives and aesthetic structures of the film to uncover its cultural significances-leading to the construction of an "aesthetics of contiguity" *a concept that offers innovative ways to understand coexistence and mutual relations in a global context*. The film suggests possible ways of looking at specific virtues through the safeguarding of one's cultural heritage and community values.

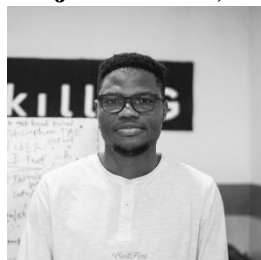
Dr. Ayodeji Osiname, Brandon University

Ayodeji Osiname, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Leadership and Educational Administration in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University, Brandon Manitoba, Canada.

Presentation title: "Canadian Labour Market: Immigrants' Employment and Credentialing Barriers"

Abstract: This qualitative case study facilitates an understanding of how immigrant professionals in Brandon Manitoba, Canada, interpret the local labor markets' expectations required to navigate and identify appropriate employment opportunities. This study addresses concerns with credentialing, ensures equity in the recruitment/employment process, and identifies the supports that are required to build bridges between the immigrant professional population and local employers.

Olajide Salawu, University of Alberta



Jide Salawu is a PhD candidate at the Department of English and Film Studies, University of Alberta, Canada. His research interests include internal African migration, diasporic narratives, and African digital expressive culture.

Presentation title: "A Literary Autoethnography of Diasporic Hunger"

Abstract: A Literary Autoethnography of Diasporic Hunger argues that the African-Canadian foodway is a problematic racialized and identitarian route in which Black migrants are further exposed to anti-Black racism and subjected to perpetual social anxiety of belongingness. In explaining further the concerning site of foodscape, I foreground my own exodus to Canada during the buffering period of Covid-19 pandemic in January 2021 by self-reflecting. I will complement this self-narration with an analytic reading of Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike's "Driving Through the Blizzard for a Taste of Home," published in 2022 as a CBC First Person as an autoethnographic documentation.

Dr. Mohamed Sesay, York University



Mohamed Sesay is an Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the African Studies Program in the Department of Social Science, York University (Canada). He is also the Vice President of the Canadian Association of African Studies (CAAS) and a member of the UKRI GCRF Gender Justice and Security Hub hosted at the London School of Economics. His research focuses on the rule of law, legal pluralism, customary justice, transitional justice, international criminal justice, and postconflict peacebuilding in sub-Saharan Africa. His work has appeared in several peer reviewed journals.

Sesay is the author of *Domination through Law: Internationalization of Legal Norms in Postcolonial Africa* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2021).

Presentation title: “Accessing Justice in the Canadian Legal System: Experiences of Sierra Leonean Immigrants”

Abstract: The legal system is central to the processes of immigration and resettlement across the world. Focusing on Sierra Leoneans who have immigrated to Canada, this paper examines their experiences with the Canadian legal and judicial system in terms of their ability and capacity to use the law to deal with everyday legal matters such as resolving inter-personal disputes, protecting their rights and liberties, and accessing public services. For a variety of regular encounters with the law (such as legal status, family matters, child support, domestic violence, petty offences, rent/home ownership, employment benefits, insurance, etc.), this paper asks what legal resources are available to Sierra Leonean immigrants and whether they can effectively access and utilize them. Among the issues examined are (i) common ways immigrants encounter the law, (ii) their knowledge of existing legal and judicial remedies, (iii) their ability to afford and utilize the law, (iv) the challenges encountered in accessing legal and judicial systems, and (v) their alternative mechanisms to seek redress.

Dr. Grace Ukasoanya, University of Manitoba

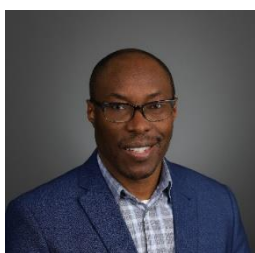


Grace Ukasoanya is an associate professor in the Counselling Psychology program at the University of Manitoba. She is a former Fulbright scholar and a Carnegie fellow. Her main focus in teaching is to promote wellness as a crucial aspect of the counselling process and its outcome. Her current research agenda places importance on wellness, career development, and symbolic culture within marginalized communities. She currently investigates the experiences of racial minority individuals and groups in terms of their health and well-being as fundamental human rights. In her research, teaching, and mentoring of graduate students, she applies salutogenic, existential, and socio-ecological approaches. Grace enjoys playing board games, laughing, meditating for wellness, and taking walks in the neighbourhood.

Presentation title: “The Burden of Cultivating Wellness among Immigrant African Families: Thrownness, Transcendence, and Freedom”

Abstract: Promoting mental well-being among immigrant African families should extend beyond the emphasis on behavioral actions and instead prioritize existential and humanistic connections and experiences. It should begin by recognizing and appreciating the complex interplay of thrownness, transcendence, and the reframing of ‘freedom.’ This presentation will emphasize the value of an existential-humanistic theoretical lens in creating mental health education and clinical practices that assist newcomer African families in their quest for well-being in Canada.

Dr. Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike, University of Calgary



Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike is an assistant professor in the Department of English, University of Calgary, Canada. His critical works have been published and are forthcoming in journals such as *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*, *Journal of African Literature Association*, *Metacritic*, *Men and Masculinities*, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, and *Postcolonial Text*, amongst others. Umezurike is the author of literary works such as *there’s more* (2023), *Double Wahala*, *Double Trouble* (2021), *Wish Maker* (2021), and a co-editor of *Wreaths for a Wayfarer* (2020).

Presentation title: “Contours of Joy in the Diasporic Fiction of Téa Mutonji and Djamila Ibrahim”

Abstract: Mourning and nostalgia seem to be the affective forms that structure the narratives of home and belonging by some diasporic African writers in Canada. In pondering the following questions: where is the place of joy in African Canadian diasporic fiction? how is it articulated in this fiction? and under what circumstances does it manifest?, I examine two short story collections: *Shut Up You Are Pretty* by the Congolese Canadian writer Téa Mutonji and *Things Are Good Now* by the Ethiopian Canadian writer Djamila Ibrahim. This paper appeals to an orientation away from an over-emphasis on abjection and toward an aesthetic of joy illustrative of African diasporic interiority and life.

Dr. Sophie Yohani, PhD.RPsych. is Professor, Counselling Psychology, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Alberta

Presentation title: “Addressing Social Determinants of Mental Health Among African Migrants in Canada”

Abstract: This presentation will delve into the intricate relationship between attending to Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) and nurturing mental health and wellbeing among African migrants in Canada. Drawing from research, we will see how factors such as anti-black racism, educational attainment, employment opportunities, housing stability, and financial security significantly influence the mental health landscape of this community. Through clinical observation and research narratives, the presentation will underscore how interventions targeting practical needs—such as facilitating access to childcare, securing stable employment, and providing in-home family support—not only alleviate immediate stressors but also serve as efficacious mental health interventions. Moreover, emerging areas of concern urge a heightened attention towards marginalized sub-groups within the African migrant demographic, including refugees and individuals identifying within the 2SLGBTQ+ spectrum. By recognizing the complexities of intersecting identities, the presentation will advocate for the development of more inclusive and tailored support frameworks for African migrants. Furthermore, the presentation highlights the pivotal role of social support structures in navigating SDOH. Overall, the presentation will advocate for a comprehensive approach that integrates SDOH considerations into intervention strategies while concurrently addressing structural inequities at the policy level.

Dr. Abiba Yayah, University of Calgary



Abiba Yayah is a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Political Science Department of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Calgary. She holds a Doctorate in Political Science from Stellenbosch University in Cape Town, South Africa and a master’s degree from the University of Ghana, Legon. Her research interests include examining the gendered pathways to African legislatures, political behaviour and democracy. Her current research looks at understanding the policy process

in education reforms in Ghana using a feedback perspective.

Presentation Title: “Experiences of African Women Migrants during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic in Canada: A Scoping Review Protocol”

Abstract: The positionality of women is fundamental in adapting to a new country and the sustenance of their families. However, little is known of the intersection of African women immigrants and the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact on their experiences in Canada. This study uses a scoping review technique in a comprehensive examination of academic literature, encompassing scholarly articles and books to identify and amalgamate key themes, theoretical

perspectives, and methodological approaches evident in research since 2019. The investigation will cover important aspects, including gender roles and expressions within communities, and how these have shaped social interactions and cultural integration since the pandemic. This study seeks to enhance the understanding of current disparities and thus become an additional source of invaluable insights to scholars and policymakers in areas of migration and integration. Finally, this intersectional study of identity and COVID-19 contributes to strategies geared towards improved outcomes for populations at disproportionate risk of the adverse impacts of disasters.

ROUNDTABLE SPEAKERS

Dr. Nathan Andrews, McMaster University



Nathan Andrews is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at McMaster University. One aspect of Dr. Andrews' research focuses on the global political economy/ecology of natural resource extraction and development. Publications on this topic have appeared in journals such as *International Affairs*, *Resources Policy*, *World Development*, *Energy Research & Social Science*, *Africa Today*, *Business & Society Review*, and *Globalizations* among others and including books such as *Gold Mining and the Discourses of Corporate Social Responsibility in Ghana* (Palgrave, 2019) and *Natural Resource-Based Development in Africa: Panacea or Pandora's Box?* (University of Toronto Press, 2022). A second aspect of his research revolves around the scholarship of teaching and learning, in particular critical international relations, epistemic hegemony, racism and whiteness in knowledge production and dissemination. His publications on these themes can be found in *Journal of Pan African Studies*, *Third World Quarterly*, *International Studies Perspectives*, etc.

Dr. Arthur Kazumi Miki, C.M., O.M., Asian Heritage Society



Mr. Art Miki is an active leader in the Japanese Canadian community having served as president of the National Association of Japanese Canadians from 1984-1992. He led the negotiations to achieve a just redress settlement for Japanese Canadians interned during the Second World War. He and his family were forcibly relocated to Manitoba sugar beet farms in 1942. Art is past-president of the Japanese Cultural Association of Manitoba and the Asian Heritage Society of Manitoba promoting cross cultural and anti-racism activities. He is advisor to the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and was on the Community Council for the Landscapes of Injustice Project with the University of Victoria. For his efforts nationally, provincially and locally, he has received this country's highest recognition, the Order of Canada, the Order of Manitoba and the Order of the Rising Sun from the government of Japan. He received Honourary Doctorate degrees from University of Winnipeg and St. Johns College, University of Manitoba. He is author of a memoir *Gaman – Perseverance: Journey of Japanese Canadians' Journey to Justice* (2023), *The Japanese Canadian Redress Legacy: A Community Revitalized* (2003) and co-author of *Shaku of Wondrous Grace: Through the Garden of Yoshimaru Abe* (2007). Art is a former teacher and principal, a Canadian Citizenship Judge and a lecturer at the University of Winnipeg.

Chuks John Ojidoh, African Communities of Manitoba Inc. (ACOMI)



Mr. Ojidoh is a grassroots mobilizer and community development practitioner with over 30 years of experience in international development. As the Director of Community Programs at the African Communities of Manitoba Inc. (ACOMI), he leads initiatives that foster cross-cultural partnerships and promote multiculturalism within Manitoba's ethno-cultural communities. Mr. Ojidoh's extensive career spans Africa, where he has managed projects on human rights, civic engagement, youth empowerment, and participatory development in over 16 countries. His work in poverty reduction and financial empowerment has also taken him to Asia, including India, Thailand, and Indonesia. With a strong expertise in election management, civic education, and community organizing, Mr. Ojidoh is passionate about building inclusive communities where immigrants feel a sense of belonging. He has an academic background in literary criticism and theatre for development, and enjoys reading, family time, and traveling.

Dr. Nduka Otiono, Carleton University



Nduka Otiono is a writer, Associate Professor and Director of the Institute of African Studies, Carleton University, Canada. Prior to a career in academia, he was for many years a journalist in Nigeria, General Secretary of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), and a founding member of the board of the Nigeria Prize for Literature as well as of UNESCO's National Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage for Nigeria. He is the author and co-editor of twelve books of creative writing and academic research which include *Oral Literary Performance in Africa: Beyond Text* (2021) and *Polyvocal Bob Dylan: Music, Performance, Literature* (2019). His research has appeared in top-ranked academic journals and his monograph on *Street Stories in Africa* is on contract with McGill-Queens University Press. His professional honors include a Capital Educator's Award for Excellence in Teaching; Carleton University Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), Research Excellence Award; Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Early Career Award for Research Excellence; Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship (twice); and 2018 Black History Ottawa Community Builder Award. His creative writing works include *The Night Hides with a Knife* (short stories), which won the ANA/Spectrum Prize; *Voices in the Rainbow* (Poems), a finalist for the ANA/Cadbury Poetry Prize; *Love in a Time of Nightmares* (Poems), and most recently, *DisPlace: The Poetry of Nduka Otiono*, which won the African Literature Association Book of the Year Award for Creative Writing (2023) and was a finalist for the Archibald Lampman Award for poetry. He has co-edited three celebrated anthologies of creative writing, including most recently, *Unbound: An Anthology of New Nigerian Poets Under 40* (2024). A former President of the Canadian Association of African Studies, Otiono is currently President of Canada's Arc Poetry Society and member of the board of the Canadian Authors Association (CAA). In 2023, he was shortlisted for the Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Awards sponsored by Western Union and his scholarly and creative oeuvre have been the subject of a new multi-author scholarly volume, *Critical Perspectives on Nduka Otiono* (2024).

Dr. Mohamed Sesay, York University



Mohamed Sesay is an Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the African Studies Program in the Department of Social Science, York University (Canada). He is also the Vice President of the Canadian Association of African Studies (CAAS) and a member of the UKRI GCRF Gender Justice and Security Hub hosted at the London School of Economics. His research focuses on the rule of law, legal pluralism, customary justice, transitional justice, international criminal justice, and postconflict peacebuilding in sub-Saharan Africa. His work has appeared in several peer reviewed journals. Sesay is the author of *Domination through Law: Internationalization of Legal Norms in Postcolonial Africa* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2021).

Dr. Grace Ukasoanya, University of Manitoba



Grace Ukasoanya is an associate professor in the Counselling Psychology program at the University of Manitoba. She is a former Fulbright scholar and a Carnegie fellow. Her main focus in teaching is to promote wellness as a crucial aspect of the counselling process and its outcome. Her current research agenda places importance on wellness, career development, and symbolic culture within marginalized communities. She currently investigates the experiences of racial minority individuals and groups in terms of their health and well-being as fundamental human rights. In her research, teaching, and mentoring of graduate students, she applies salutogenic, existential, and socio-ecological approaches. Grace enjoys playing board games, laughing, meditating for wellness, and taking walks in the neighbourhood.

Maggie Yeboah, African Communities of Manitoba Inc. (ACOMI)



Maggie Yeboah was born and raised in Ghana, West Africa. She holds a Bachelor of Social Work degree from the University of Manitoba and has a deep interest in community development and family services. Maggie has been actively involved in various community and cultural organizations since she settled in Manitoba. Before moving to Canada in 1981, she was a teacher. She obtained a diploma in Early Childhood Education and Special Needs Child Care from Red River College in Winnipeg and worked in that field for 12 years. Since ACOMI's inception in 1997, Maggie has been a dedicated member and volunteer, serving in numerous roles. As the new Executive Director, she aims to bridge cultures, connect generations of Manitobans, and further ACOMI's aims, objectives, and successes in the wider society. With decades of experience in community leadership and development, she is dedicated to improving the lives of people of African heritage in Manitoba. Her work, among others will include promoting programs, projects, and activities that support and advance our community. Maggie has been repeatedly recognized for community contributions. She is the receipt of the Lieutenant Governor's Make a difference Community Award; the Malayika Award, for dedication, compassion and leadership in the area of immigrant services and contributions to enhancing the lives of refugees or immigrants; the Black History Month, Wade Kojo Williams Sr. Human Rights Award; and was nominated as a Volunteer of Outstanding Merit in the Province of Manitoba by the Premier. Family and community are central to Maggie's life. She is married with four adult children. Outside of her professional pursuits, she enjoys cooking, sewing, volunteering, and attending church with her family.

Conference Organizing Team

Conveners

Dr. Ifeoluwa Adeniyi is an assistant professor in the Department of English at the University of Winnipeg, specializing in Afrofuturism, Black women's literature, and literature of the African/Black diasporas.

Dr. Chigbo Anyaduba is an associate professor in the Department of English at the University of Winnipeg with interests in genocide and mass atrocity literature and literature about African transnational migrations.

Dr. Eliakim Sibanda is a professor in the Department of History at the University of Winnipeg specializing in African liberation movements, oral history, and migration/migrant labour histories of southern Africa.

Research Assistant

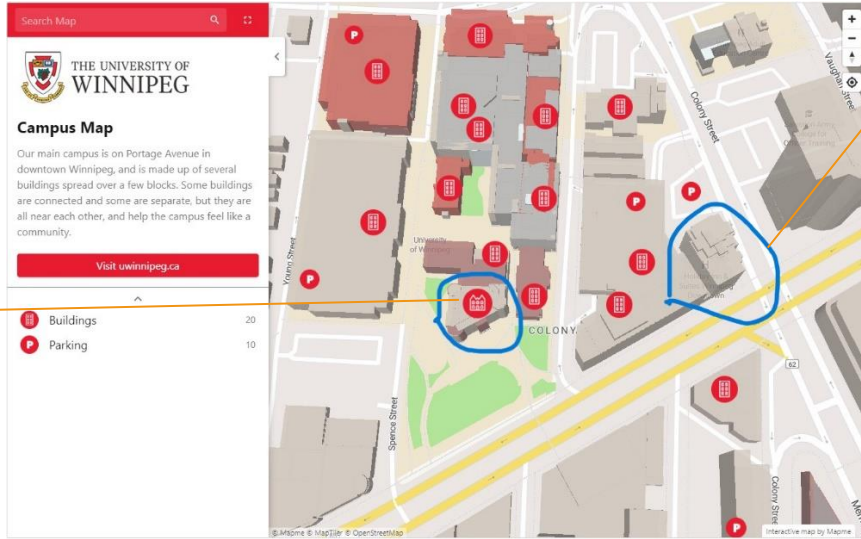
Bukola Afuwape-Ajayi recently graduated from the University of Winnipeg's MA in Cultural Studies.

Directions and Maps

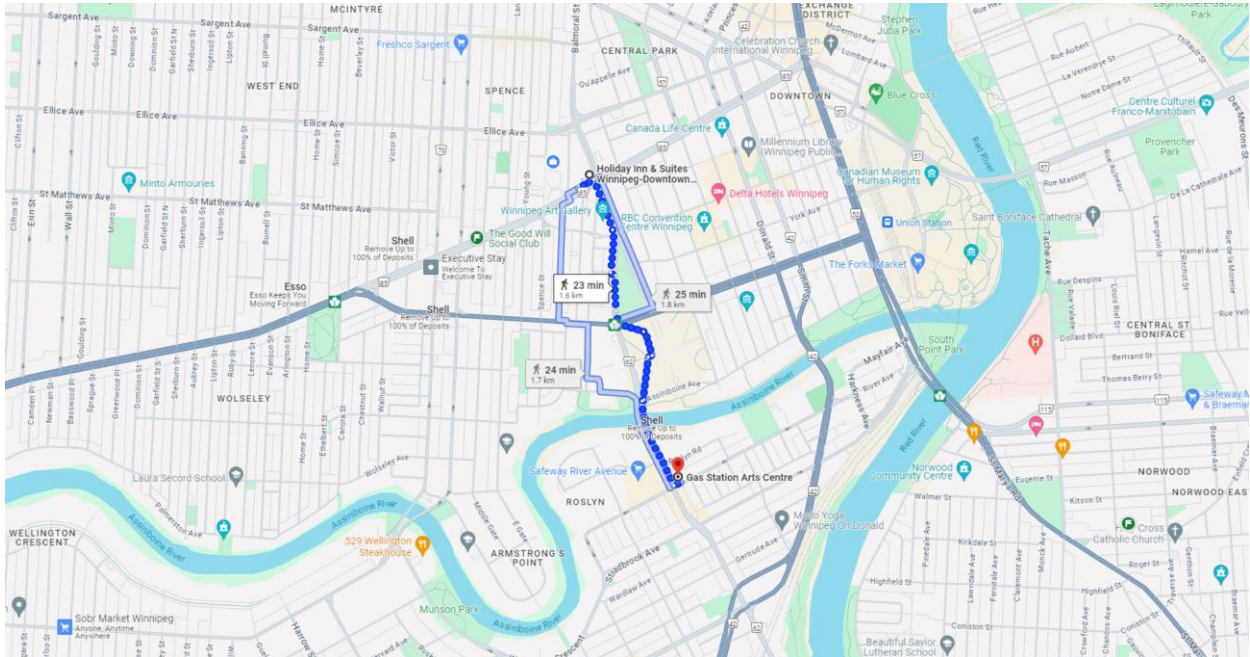
Holiday Inn

Downtown Hotel

Conference venue –
Wesley Building



Holiday Inn & Suites Winnipeg-Downtown, an IHG Hotel, 360 Colony St, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2P3 to Gas Station Arts Centre, 445 River Ave unit 1, Winnipeg, MB R3L 0C3



Walk 1.6 km, 23 min

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