

The 108th ASC Seminar

Meeting of Kanto Branch of Japan Association for African Studies

“Waithood in Motion: Imagined futures, (im)mobilities and waiting among Cameroonian and Ethiopian migrants”

【Speaker】 Dr. Henrietta NYAMNJOH

(Resercher at University of Cape Town, Visiting Professor at African Studies Center, TUFS)

Dr Henrietta Nyamnjuh is a researcher with the Mobility and Migration Hub at the University of Cape Town. She is a former researcher with the South-South Migration, Inequality and Development Hub at the University of Cape Town. She holds a PhD and an MPhil from Leiden University, the Netherlands. She has researched and published widely on Hometown Associations, the migrant economy and everyday lives, the appropriation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), among migrants in South Africa, and Pentecostal religion in the context of migration and transnational mobilities in search of faith and spiritual healing.



【Abstract】

This paper examines “waithood” – the prolonged period of waiting and uncertainty experienced by young people – among Cameroonian and Ethiopian migrants in Cape Town, South Africa. Drawing on multi-stage research conducted in both home and host countries, I trace how waithood manifests across the entire migration journey, from the aspirations of youth in Cameroon and Ethiopia to the realities faced by those already established in South Africa.

Challenging the idea of waithood as a static, pre-migration phase, this analysis reveals it as a dynamic process characterized by motion and change. I argue that waithood extends throughout the migration journey, encompassing various forms of waiting and uncertainty that are actively navigated by young migrants. By adopting a gendered and long-term perspective, I show how young men and women strategically adapt their planning and leverage factors like imagined futures and migration networks in pursuit of their goals.

Ultimately, this research sheds light on the complex nature of waithood, demonstrating that it is not simply a period of stagnation but one of significant productivity. It fosters resilience, collective action, and strategic planning as young migrants maintain hope, resilience and actively shape their lives in the face of challenging circumstances.

Keywords:

Waithood in motion, migration, aspiration, imagined futures, gender, South Africa, Cameroon, Ethiopia.

Language: English Admission: Free

Register in advance



2025

11/14 (Fri)

5 : 40 p.m. ~

7 : 10 p.m. (JST)

Venue: **【Hybrid】**

Online: Zoom

Onsite: Room102

(TUFS Research and Lecture
Building 1F / Fuchu campus)



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