

Understanding South Sudan: Questions of Knowledge and Representation Photo Essay

A photo essay by Kara Blackmore on the “Understanding South Sudan: Questions of Knowledge and Representation” held at LSE on 30 November 2017.

“Let this dialogue be merely a punctuation mark in the ongoing conversation around today’s South Sudan and the broader crisis of representation in the cosmopolitan era.” -Kara Blackmore (curator)



On November 30, 2017 a group of twenty scholars joined together at the PhD Academy (LSE) to discuss what it means to ethically engage in research during ongoing crisis in South Sudan. Drawing on disciplinary fields such as media, political science, history and anthropology ignited debates around the consequences of different approaches and impacts of research in polarized contexts.



Nearly 70 attendees congregated in the Senior Common Room to experience the exhibition, film and dialogue around faith, culture and arts as a place to explore the everyday experiences of conflict, exile, and the aesthetics of spirituality. Attendees watch a short of [Our Bright Stars](#) that traces the creative responses to becoming the new nation of South Sudan.



Date originally posted: 2018-01-25

Permalink: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2018/01/25/understanding-south-sudan-questions-of-knowledge-and-representation-photo-essay/>

Blog homepage: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/>

Speakers Martin Ochaya Lino Agwella (priest and PhD Researcher at the University of Bradford) [Frédérique Cifuentes Morgan](#) (multimedia producer and filmmaker) Aru Muortat (economist and grandson to political resistance leader Gordon Muortat Mayen Maborjok), discussed the realities of understanding and representing South Sudan. Chaired by [Zoe Cormack](#), a Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow in the African Studies Centre at Oxford University.



The audience listens to the panel's reaction to the exhibition and their further interrogation into the intimate experiences of navigating guiding through faith,



Cambridge University's Adut Ayik challenged commentary that reduced the exhibition to a Pentecostal experience. She asserted that faith is a critical part of dealing with crisis and seeing catholic, protestant and other denominations can help to gain deeper understanding of South Sudanese coping mechanisms.



During the long dialogue one participant expresses the challenges of being part of the South Sudanese diaspora. She is explaining the sense of rejection experienced by being on the outside and concerns around how to meaningfully support a transition to peace as a young diasporian woman.



An audience member follows the cartoon narrative on display. Eight [panels](#) trace the evolution from peace into civil war. Artist [Victor Ndula](#) illustrated the characters and negotiations between actors. Drawing on research from [Alex de Waal](#) done during the Justice and Security Research Program, Ndula leaves the narrative with the haunting aftermath, "The site of a Massacre is not just a human rights violation but a spiritual disaster."



Date originally posted: 2018-01-25

Permalink: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2018/01/25/understanding-south-sudan-questions-of-knowledge-and-representation-photo-essay/>

Blog homepage: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/>

LSE Master's student Atem Kuek reflects on the difficulty of navigating research and demands of those impacted by war. This was taken from the workshop held on the afternoon of the 30 November at LSE to look into the ethics of doing research in conditions of ongoing conflict.



Director of the Firoz Lalji Centre for Africa, Tim Allen and co-founder of the [Sudd Institute](#), Jok Madut Jok continued the conversation after the closing remarks.

Bulletin for this workshop and exhibition will be available on the LSE Africa Blog in March of 2018. The LSE PhD Academy and the Firoz Lalji Centre for Africa provided support for this event; they have impact and research funds from both the ESRC and AHRC.

This article is part of our Displacement and Return series, which features blog posts around the themes being explored in two Firoz Lalji Centre for Africa projects. Politics of Return is an AHRC/ESRC PaCCs-funded project which explores the dynamics of return and reintegration of refugees in Central and Eastern Africa. Trajectories of Displacement is a multi-disciplinary exploration into return and social repair after mass displacement in northern Uganda, funded by a ESRC-AHRC research grant from the Global Challenges Research Fund. Follow all updates on the project on Twitter and Instagram through the hashtag #LSEreturn.

Find out more about the [Politics of Return research project](#).

Kara Blackmore is an anthropologist, curator and writer who works at the intersections of art, heritage and reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict. She is currently undertaking a PhD at the LSE focusing on the relationships between memorialisation and transitional justice in Uganda. As part of the Politics of Return project, she curated [Enduring Exile: Lived Realities of South Sudanese Women in Uganda](#) (Uganda Museum, Kampala, May-June 2017).

The views expressed in this post are those of the author and in no way reflect those of the Africa at LSE blog, the Firoz Lalji Centre for Africa or the London School of Economics and Political Science.