

Session Title: Beyond the Deficiency Narrative: Postcolonial Histories of LTS in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Organizers: (i) Dr. Jethron Ayumbah Akallah

Maseno University, Kenya

Email address: *ayumbajetty@yahoo.com*

(ii) Frank Edward

University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Email Address: f38edward@yahoo.co.uk

Description

In the 1960s and 1970s, technology was seen as an avenue, through which Africa could be equal among 'gods', a platform to build hubris narrative. The nations were still newly independent full of euphoria and vigour to denounce the long colonial underdevelopment episode. On one hand, the new independent nations had a mission to disprove the former colonial powers that they were capable of unbridling underdevelopment by themselves. On the other hand, they had a mission of showing and mobilizing their masses towards a freer and a people-centred development. This two-pronged mission would utilize technology, especially the large technical systems (LTS), as the means to the end. Urban environments served as platforms of flaunting and exploiting new technologies, especially roads, water, sanitation and power network. Despite the introduction or expansion of such networks, colonial deficiency persisted through the post colony. As observed by Akallah and Hård (2020), the perpetuation of the kind of 'deficiency narratives' in LTS and Urban Studies derive from inadequate theorisation and biased methodologies. Overlooking the daily use of technology and various groups' experience of their material surroundings, established story lines end up as unilateral accounts that fail to provide insight into the complexity of the urban landscape (ibid). In this session, we seek to explore the cross-sectional stories of the early postcolonial LTS projects in Sub-Saharan Africa from the vantage point of history of technology and locate the different trajectories that inform the processes of appropriation. How does space, national developmental philosophies and political praxis shape adoption and production of technical knowledge? In attempting to answer such questions, we seek to appreciate the stories themselves and the agency of the local people. We seek to develop new avenues of historiographical interpretations on technology from the South. This contributes greatly to the internationalization of History of Technology.

As such we invite session abstracts of not more than 300 words of the following themes;

- Power generation and distribution
- Road and drainage building
- Water and sanitation systems
- Mobility in urban areas
- Cold War Politics and LTS
- Appropriation of technological knowledge

Kindly submit abstracts together with short bios and institutional affiliations to the conveners Dr. J. Akallah at ayumbajetty@yahoo.com based at Maseno University, Kenya and F. Edward at f38edward@yahoo.co.uk based at University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The **deadline** for submission is **April 6, 2021**.