

# Waiting for Futures

Work Group for Summer 2017  
University of Bayreuth

**Convenors: Debele, Serawit; Hänsch, Valerie and Stasik, Michael**

The Work Group “Waiting for Futures” is a consortium convened by Michael Stasik, Valerie Hänsch and Serawit Debele within the overarching theme of “Future Africa and Beyond: Visions in Time” at the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies. Needless to say that in recent times the notions of “waiting” and “waithood” have received scholarly attention from African and Africanist scholars who ground their arguments and propositions on various perspectives and empirical examples (e.g. Dawson 2014; Gaibazzi 2015; Schielke 2008, Ayalew 2017). Taking these works as a point of departure and building on our individual research projects as they relate to waiting [religious practices (Debele), forced migration (Hänsch) and mobility (Stasik)], we want to interrogate “waiting” as an analytical and descriptive category. In so doing, we wish to both widen and strengthen the theoretical purchase that the perspective on waiting offers. As such, we engage with the concomitant themes of anticipatory temporalities and imaginative productions of futures. We aim at sharpening existent conceptual categories of the complex and often contradictory ‘territories of waiting’ especially in relation to social construction of time and temporal construction of sociality. Set against the topic of waiting for futures, we propose a twofold heuristic approach to explore waiting: the processes and relations in which waiting takes place and the variegated practices and dispositions of people in wait. In so doing, we set out to explore the different practices, experiences, affects, processes, vocabularies and context of waiting in connection with and in the framework of visions in time in and beyond Africa. The Work Group focuses on diverse modalities of waiting and on varying ways in which ‘people in wait’ conceptualise their past as well as contemporary lived experiences in light of anticipated futures and vice versa. To this end, we envisage to have productive conversations, discussions and debates in a lecture series that takes place during the summer semester and a workshop at the end of September.

