

Postgraduate Conference 2025

Global Dissonance, Disruptions, and Alternative Conversations

Thursday 03 July 2025

Venue: KCL, Strand Campus, Bush House, NE 1.02

The COVID-19 pandemic unleashed a cascade of social, political, and economic disruptions that have exposed the limitations and contradictions of many domestic political systems and the international order. It also laid bare the human consequences of the deepening inequalities at local, regional and global levels. Nonetheless, such disruptions have created opportunities for new, inclusive, and critical dialogues that underpin the possibilities for social, political and economic transformation. This conference explores where and how these alternative conversations are taking place, who is involved, nomenclatures used, emerging patterns and priorities, and what outcomes they may be producing. Are we witnessing the early stages of a new global order, or simply fragmented reactions to an increasingly unstable one? What form, priorities and hierarchies are likely to emerge? Who are the likely winners and losers of the ongoing shifts? While media and scholarly attention focus on dominant geopolitical narratives such as great power rivalries, equally urgent conversations continue to unfold on the margins. Topics such as poverty, inequalities, exploitation, and structural violence remain underexplored in mainstream discourses but carry significant transformative potential.

This conference critically engages with these often overlooked or 'fringe' conversations, recognising them as possible catalysts for reimagining leadership, governance and peacebuilding practices at both domestic and global levels at a time of dissonance and disruption. The day will open with a keynote address by Professor 'Funmi Olonisakin, followed by a series of thematic panels featuring ALC staff and PhD students whose works explore unconventional sites of dialogue and leadership. In addition to paper presentations, the programme will incorporate roundtable discussions to foster collaborative reflection and knowledge exchange across disciplines.

Programme

09:30 **Arrival and Registration**

09:45-10.00 **Welcome and Introduction**

Ms Shuvai Nyoni

Executive Director, African Leadership Centre (Nairobi)

Dr Ekaette Ikpe

Director, African Leadership Centre (London)

Panel 1

When Dialogue Drives Change: Leading Through Conversation

Chair: Professor Abiodun Alao (Professor of African Studies)

10:00-10:30 Keynote Presentation:

Professor 'Funmi Olonisakin (Professor of Security, Leadership & Development)

10:30-10:55 Discussants

Mr Esau Williams (PhD Candidate)

Dr Gloriana Rodriguez Alvarez (Lecturer in Security, Leadership & Development)

10:55-11:25 Q&A and Discussions

Guiding Questions/Themes:

- What forms of leadership emerge or become more visible during crises, and how do they differ from normal times?
 - In what ways can difficult conversations become leadership opportunities?
 - How can conversations be leveraged to empower others to assume leadership roles?
 - How do social hierarchies such as gender, class, or ethnicity influence conversations during crises?
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11:25-11.40

Tea/Coffee Break

Panel 2

Global Institutions at a Crossroads: Leadership, Inclusion, and Trust in a Changing World

Chair: Dr Clement Sefa-Nyarko (Lecturer in Security, Leadership & Development)

- 11:40-11:50** Presentation: Professor Randolph Kent (Director at Humanitarian Futures)
- 11:50-12:00** Presentation: Professor Abiodun Alao (Professor of African Studies)
- 12:00-12:10** Presentation: Mr Erick Kabendera (PhD Candidate)
- 12:10-12:50** Q&A/ Discussions

Guiding Questions/Themes:

- What lessons from the leadership crisis during COVID-19 should inform how leaders approach global challenges like climate change and economic inequality?
- Whose voices are currently marginalised in global institutional conversations, and how can leaders ensure they are heard?
- How can global institutions rebuild credibility and trust in a fragmented world?

12:50 **Lunch**

Panel 3

Voices of the Loud Majority: Youth Perspectives and Emerging Challenges

Chair: Dr Wale Ismail (Senior Lecturer in Leadership, Peace and Development Education)

- 13:40-13:50** Panellist: Ms Sonia Warner (PhD Candidate)
- 13:50-14:00** Panellist: Dr Aleida Mendes Borges (Lecturer)
- 14:00-14:10** Panellist: Mr Ahmed Enape (PhD Candidate)
- 14:10-15:00** Q&A and Discussions

Guiding Questions/Themes:

- Which, where and how are youth having global leadership conversations?
- What are the emerging priorities from youth global leadership conversations?
- Are youth global leadership conversations reproducing or transforming orthodox patterns and hierarchies?
- How are digital technologies enabling youth global leadership conversations?

Panel 4

Energy Transition: From Extractivism to Sustainability

Chair: Prof. *Eka Ikpe* (Professor of Development Economics in Africa)

15:05- 15:15	Poster/Picture Presentation by Mr Kenneth Appiah-Nimo (PhD Candidate)
15:15-15:30	Presentation by Dr Clement Sefa-Nyarko (Lecturer in Security and Leadership)
15:30-15:50	Presentation by Ms Amina Adebisi-Odofofin (PhD Candidate)
15:50-16:25	Q&A and Discussions

Guiding Questions/Themes

- What kinds of conversation can transcend short-term politics to long-term climate responsibility?
- Where and what options are emerging for climate accountability and justice?
- Is climate change capable of transforming the Global North-South dichotomy, including power hierarchies?

16:25-17:00	Tea Break and Wrap-Up
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