

# **Camera in Times of Crisis**

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Camera in Times of Crisis: Focus on Africa

EDITED BY

**KEHINDE CHRISTOPHER ADEWUMI**

*Durban University of Technology, South Africa*

**FOLASAYO ENOCH OLALERE**

*The Open University, UK and Durban University of Technology,  
South Africa*

and

**GAMBO GILES DUNIYA**

*Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria*



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited  
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL.

First edition 2025

Editorial matter and selection © 2025 Kehinde Christopher Adewumi,  
Folasayo Enoch Olalere, and Gambo Giles Duniya.  
Individual chapters © 2025 The authors.  
Published under exclusive licence by Emerald Publishing Limited.

**Reprints and permissions service**

Contact: [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83662-075-4 (Print)  
ISBN: 978-1-83662-074-7 (Online)  
ISBN: 978-1-83662-076-1 (Epub)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*This book is dedicated to Terkura Matthew Kunde, whose invaluable contribution and legacy continue to inspire us.*

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Contents

About the Editors	<i>ix</i>
About the Contributors	<i>xi</i>
Acknowledgements	<i>xv</i>
<b>Chapter 1 The Construction and Interrogation of Visual Narratives through the Camera in Times of Crisis: An Introduction</b> <i>Gambo Giles Duniya</i>	<i>1</i>
<b>Part I: Visual Narratives of Crises</b>	
<b>Chapter 2 Visualised Liminality: Images of an Empty African City</b> <i>Hein Grové and Selma Schiller</i>	<i>13</i>
<b>Chapter 3 Nigeria's 2023 Currency Redesign Crisis: Evidential Photos and Comments</b> <i>Chukwuemeka Nwigwe</i>	<i>31</i>
<b>Chapter 4 The Role of the Camera in the (In)Validation of Narratives on Africa's Crises</b> <i>Terkura Matthew Kunde</i>	<i>49</i>
<b>Part II: Representation and Agency</b>	
<b>Chapter 5 Dichotomy of the Camera as a Tool for Representation and Agency in Times of Crises</b> <i>Folasayo Enoch Olalere</i>	<i>67</i>
<b>Chapter 6 Visualising Border Experiences Through Participatory Filmmaking at the Moroccan–Spanish Border</b> <i>Rhea M. Dehn Tutosaus</i>	<i>79</i>

<b>Chapter 7 ‘He Who Pays the Piper’: Questioning Crises Framings and Visualities</b>	
<i>Kehinde Christopher Adewumi and Samuila Rabo Ezra</i>	99
<b>Chapter 8 The Endometriosis Experience: Narratives of Personal Crisis Utilising the Camera as a Tool of Validation</b>	
<i>Micaela Scholtz</i>	109
<b>Part III: Activism and Advocacy</b>	
<b>Chapter 9 Counting the Cost: Visual Activism and Advocacy in Times of Crisis in Africa</b>	
<i>Kehinde Christopher Adewumi</i>	129
<b>Chapter 10 Protest Photography: #EndSARS Movement in Nigeria</b>	
<i>Chike Chinazom Obeagu and Blaise Gundu Gbaden</i>	145
<b>Chapter 11 Visual Crisis: A Thematic Analysis of Selected Protest Images</b>	
<i>Adiwu Talatu Onkala and Abdulkadir Aliyu Yakubu</i>	161
<b>Chapter 12 Communicating Peace in Benin City, Nigeria Through the Lens of the Camera</b>	
<i>Daniel Eromosere Omoruan, Sam Erevbenagie Usadolo and Tanya Van Der Walt</i>	179

## About the Editors

**Kehinde Christopher Adewumi** is a curator and an Art in Health advocate. He holds a PhD in Art History from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. He is the Curator-in-Chief and Co-founder of NowExpressions, a curatorial collective. He has curated several community projects in Nigeria and South Africa, mainly focussing on the intersections of the arts and society. Currently, he is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Durban University of Technology, South Africa, where he coordinates postgraduate activities in the Fine Art and Jewellery Design Department. His teaching and research philosophy is grounded on the idea that art does not exist in a vacuum and the true relevance and impact of the arts are not seen on walls but in people. Being a 2021 Fellow of the Global Arts in Medicine Projects, his current research focus explores the intersections between art, health and society.

**Folasayo Enoch Olalere**, The Open University (OU), UK and Durban University of Technology, South Africa, is a designer, educator, and interdisciplinary researcher. He is working as a central academic in the School of Engineering and Innovation at the OU UK. Before joining the OU, he was a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Visual Communication Design at the Durban University of Technology, South Africa. He holds a PhD in Product Design from the Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia. His main research interests are the links between contemporary issues, design processes and indigenous knowledge systems. Exploration of these links is the basis for his inter and trans-disciplinary research in design for experience, culture, and social change.

**Gambo Giles Duniya**, PhD, is a Professor of Art History and Criticism at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. His research explores the intersections of visual and theatre arts, with a focus on their multidisciplinary potentials for community interventions, education and development. His research findings and perspectives have been widely published in different catalogues, book chapters and reputable journals in the areas of human rights, modern Nigerian arts, environmental studies and design, African studies, language, arts and humanities, as well as contemporary art practice and theory. As a curator of contemporary art, he focusses on facilitating the emergence and wide recognition of young and upcoming Nigerian artists, who may or may not have passed through his mentorship. He also brokers conversations among artists and stakeholders in the art world, through the creation of safe and enabling spaces for deliberation.

*This page intentionally left blank*

## About the Contributors

**Rhea M. Dehn Tutosaus** is a Doctoral candidate and Research Assistant at the Fashion and Aesthetics Department of the Technical University (TU) of Darmstadt, Germany. In 2021, she was awarded the TU Darmstadt Prize for Innovative Research for her Doctoral project. Her research focusses on post- and decolonial theory and the aesthetics of borders, movements and bodies in contemporary art practices located at the Strait of Gibraltar. She studied Art History and Romance Languages and Literatures at the Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Germany, and the Universitat de Barcelona, Spain. She has published in journals such as REGAC Revista de Estudios Globales y Arte Contemporáneo and MIRADAS *Journal for the Arts and Visual Culture of the Américas and the Iberian Peninsula*. She is currently co-editing the 10th issue of MIRADAS on '*Border Aesthetics: Practices of visualization, imagination and artistic negotiations in the Iberian Peninsula and the Américas*'.

**Samuila Rabo Ezra** is an Art Historian and hails from Tafawa Balewa, local government area of Bauchi State, Nigeria. He attended Boys' Secondary School Gindiri in Plateau State Nigeria. Thereafter, he proceeded to the Federal College of Education Pankshin, Plateau State, where he studied Fine and Applied Arts. After obtaining his NCE certificate, he taught art for some years before proceeding to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, for his first degree. His quest for deeper knowledge propelled him to obtain not just a degree in Fine Art but both Master's and PhD in Art History. His research interest covers African art criticism as well as modern and traditional arts. The Art Historian has published over 20 publications in reputable journals, exhibition catalogues and book chapters. He has attended seminars and workshops. He is a member of Society of Nigerian Artists and Art History Association of Nigeria. He is currently the Editor of the *University of Jos Journal of Art History*.

**Blaise Gundu Gbaden** was born on 3 February 1966 in Nigeria. He has a Bachelor of Arts (1994) degree from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka; his Master of Fine Arts (1999) and the PhD degrees in Painting (2014) are from the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. He taught Painting and Drawing at the University of Maiduguri before transferring his services in 2012 to the Federal University of Lafia, where he now teaches both undergraduate and postgraduate students of Fine Arts. He became a Professor of Painting in 2021 and has presented his Inaugural Lecture.

**Hein Grové** is a photographer at heart and a lecturer by passion. The combination of these disciplines has seen him work as a freelance photographer and photographic employee in the commercial and advertising fields. His experience in the practical field of photography has led him to a teaching position at his alma mater, the Tshwane University of Technology, where he obtained his Master's qualification with a focus on visualised liminality. His academic endeavours have earned him experience in teaching, moderation, curriculum development and co-supervision. His teaching at the university mainly focusses on advanced and postgraduate students with a research interest in experience within the photographic field. He currently serves as Section Head within the Department of Visual Communication.

**Terkura Matthew Kunde** was a trained art historian, culture researcher as well as a writer with profound interest in cultural studies/art diplomacy, especially in how art can be used to promote peace among people of different cultures, encourage economic development, good governance as well as using art to communicate the ideals of human integration. As a product of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, he earned a BA, an MA and a PhD in Art History. He was a member of the Society of Nigerian Artists Kaduna Chapter and a Co-Founder of Cormat Cultural Foundation, Kaduna – an organisation promoting youths and children through culture and education. He was a Postgraduate Coordinator in the Department of Visual and Creative Arts, Federal University of Lafia, Nigeria where he taught Art History. He believed that 'Art is a mirror of the society and works of artists in a given historical period must reflect the ideas, aspirations, and culture of people who live in that society'.

**Chukwuemeka Nwigwe** holds a PhD in Art History and an MFA in Textile Design. As a Senior Lecturer, he teaches Art History and Textile Design at the University of Nigeria. His research interest cuts across gender concerns such as cross-dressing in Africa, exemplified in the project, 'Breaking the Code: Interrogating Female Cross Dressing in Southeastern Nigeria', carried out during ACLS-AHP Postdoctoral Fellowship, 2018–2019. The research underpinning this paper was conducted during the fellowship residency at the University of Dar es Salam, Tanzania. He has published several articles in both local and international journals. His previous book chapters include: 'Textiles and Igbo Burial: Significations of Traditional Graveclothes and Mourning Costumes among the Amagunze Igbo' and 'Igbo Women's Fashion and Nigeria-Biafra War' published in Berlin and London, respectively.

**Chike Chinazom Obeagu** is a visual artist, lecturer, curator, writer and culture activist. He trained at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Fine Arts degrees in 1998 and 2003 graduating with magna and summa cum laude respectively. He subsequently received a PhD degree in Painting from Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, completing a desired academic mentorship by the seasoned faculty of the two most prominent art schools in Nigeria. He has published extensively and has won several awards for his creative works.

**Daniel Eromosere Omoruan** is a PhD student in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts (VPA), Durban University of Technology, Durban, South Africa. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in the Department of Performing Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria, and Master of Arts degree from the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. He is currently a Lecturer at Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria. He is playwright, actor and novelist. His areas of academic focus are cultural performance and communication.

**Adiwu Talatu Onkala** (born 1982) holds a PhD in Painting from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts at the University of Maiduguri. She also serves as a Project Manager and Senior Field Coordination's Officer at Fact Foundation, a national non-governmental organisation. She has widely published and actively participates in numerous exhibitions and workshops both domestically and internationally. Her research interests include artistic explorations of nature, social issues, art pedagogy and contemporary art practices within and beyond Nigeria. Additionally, she focusses on research data collection, management, coordination, analysis and field surveys in collaboration with humanitarian organisations dedicated to peace initiatives, sustainable development and restructuring settlements for IDPs. She is passionate about providing balanced mentorship to youth, fostering their development in the arts and beyond.

**Selma Schiller** is an experienced Lecturer, Designer, Moderator, Researcher and Curriculum Developer affiliated with the Tshwane University of Technology. Apart from teaching some undergraduates, her primary responsibilities lie with postgraduate students. She teaches and supervises Postgraduate diploma, Masters and Doctorate students conducting research in various creative fields, including Graphic-, Interior-, Industrial-, Fashion-, Textile- and Ceramic Design, as well as Integrated Communication Design, Multimedia, Photography and Fine Arts. She completed her PhD in Curriculum and Instructional Design and Development at Pretoria University. Her undergraduate studies focussed on graphic design and education. Her research interests lie in developing educational practices to challenge design students to acquire the essential human qualities required for a contemporary design career. In conjunction with her academic background, she is also a creative person with 26 years of experience as a freelance graphic designer and artist.

**Micaela Scholtz** is a researcher, visual artist and trained graphic designer, known to articulate and author complex visual communication solutions in unique and carefully considered ways. She holds a Master of Arts degree and works as a Lecturer in the Humanities and Graphic Design. Her practice is concerned with female representations and their impact on women with the invisible illness, namely endometriosis. She has presented and written extensively on this topic, while continuing to explore and uncover different approaches. Her Master's study titled, *Visual Narratives Portraying the Lived Experiences of Women with an*

*Invisible Illness* aimed to uncover the truths and realities of this disease, visualising the experience to encourage a better understanding thereof.

**Sam Erevbenagie Usadolo**, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Media, Language and Communication at the Durban University of Technology, Durban, South Africa. He currently holds the positions of course Coordinator and Research Representative within the department. He has a proven track record of supervising postgraduate projects, having successfully guided students to completion of their dissertations and theses. His scholarly achievements include publications in academic journals and books. His research interests are wide ranging, encompassing areas such as teaching and learning, organisational behaviour and communication, health communication, linguistic human rights, court interpreting and development communication.

**Tanya van der Walt** is a Senior Lecturer in Drama and Production Studies at the Durban University of Technology. Her undergraduate studies were conducted at the University of Natal (Durban) and she completed her MA in Drama at Rhodes University. She holds a PhD in Drama Education from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Her career in theatre has included such diverse activities as stage management, lighting design, arts administration, marketing/publicity, acting, directing, writing, and teaching. Her primary research interests are in the areas of self-study of creative practice, collaboration and collaborative practice, creativity and drama-based teaching and learning.

**Abdulkadir Aliyu Yakubu** teaches in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State, Nigeria. He holds a BA in English and MA in Literature-in-English from the Gombe State University and the University of Jos, respectively, and is currently studying for a Cotutelle PhD in Cultural Sustainability (with specialisation in Theatre Arts) at the SDG Graduate School, University of Maiduguri (Nigeria)/University of Hildesheim (Germany), where he is a DAAD Fellow. He is an Associate of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, an Associate of the Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists, and an Associate of the Nigerian Association of Evaluators. His book of poetry, *The Banquet*, was published in 2017. He is a copywriter and is active in humanitarian and development engagements. He continues to build his photography skills.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the many individuals and organisations who have contributed to the realisation of this book. First and foremost, we extend our deepest thanks to the team at Emerald Publishing Limited for their unwavering support and guidance throughout this project. Our sincere appreciation goes to Siva Shiny, our dedicated Book Project Editor, Charlotte Maiorana, our Commissioning Editor and Aimee Wright, our Commissioning Assistant. Their collective efficiency, insightful suggestions and organisation have been crucial in navigating the publishing process.

We are also immensely grateful to the team of academics who generously volunteered their time and expertise to peer-review the chapters of this book. Though their identities remain anonymous, their rigorous and constructive feedback has significantly enhanced the quality of our work. Additionally, we owe a debt of gratitude to the photographers and institutions who graciously permitted us to reproduce their images. Their contributions have provided a vital visual dimension to our exploration of crises in Africa.

*Kehinde Christopher Adewumi, Folasayo Enoch Olalere,  
and Gambo Giles Duniya*

*This page intentionally left blank*

## Chapter 1

# The Construction and Interrogation of Visual Narratives through the Camera in Times of Crisis: An Introduction

*Gambo Giles Duniya*

*Department of Fine Art, Faculty of Environmental Design, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria*

### Abstract

The presence of cameras, at the forefront of crises, either in the hands of journalists, bystanders or passers-by and sometimes even parties to the crises, has inspired multiple visual notations, commentaries and perspectives. Thus, efforts and resources are channelled towards documenting crises, to help us better understand them and play a part in their resolution. Sometimes, the camera also participates in the adjudication of cases arising from crises or, indeed, even in the reconciliatory efforts after a crisis. The book aims to explore the multi-dimensional role of the camera in times of crises, with particular interest in how scholars view the camera as a [useful] tool in times of crisis in Africa. Hopefully, this book will help unravel the multi-layered tendencies of the camera as an instrument of documentation, history verification, (re)presentation of the other, and perhaps the legitimisation of narratives. The camera's subjective framings of crisis narratives, as a manipulative tool for influence, inference and power are also explored. The book is structured into three parts. The first part focusses on the visual narratives of crises. The second part of the book explores the camera's tendency to be a tool for representation and agency, while the third segment discusses the use of the camera as an entity for activism and advocacy in crises. These structured parts are intended to broaden the understanding of

readers about the greater possibilities that images and imageries from the camera as a tool possess.

*Keywords:* Camera in crises; visual narratives; editorial introduction; narratives of crises; crises in Africa; constructing crises narratives

### **Introduction**

In today's digital world of smartphones and hi-tech TVs, cars and homes, the camera has become an integral part of everything modern. It provides views, narratives, insights and sometimes even evidence, for and against 'what is' or 'what should be'. According to Getlein (2002, p. 202), 'the camera is a Latin word for "room", and it is not far-fetched to think of any camera as being a little "room with a view"'. A camera, the author further opines, 'is a subtle and versatile tool for image making, as is a pencil in the hands of a traditionally trained artist' (Getlein, 2002, p. 225). It is, therefore, clear that even from a conceptual understanding of the camera and based on the Latin explanation of what it is, the camera always has a 'particular view'. The manipulative tendency of a camera is further magnified by Getlein's comparison of the camera to a pencil in the hands of an artist. Indeed, Buser (2006, p. 206) observes that 'photographers are capable of rearranging, retouching, distorting and adjusting images that can pose as flawless reality or can be far from reality'. Hence, the capability of the photographer and the camera's inbuilt components allow manipulation for and against humanity. Thus, we see the camera as a tool for both vision and obscurity – as it illuminates, so it also conceals.

In our consideration of the place of the camera in society, the concept of the griot is instructive. Often considered as a mere praise singer for the high and mighty, the role of the griot in terms of the sustainability of cultures and societies is quite immense. Griots are custodians of stories, histories, and genealogies of their societies. Due to their deep knowledge of history, they often play the role of diplomats, spokespersons and advisers to Kings and community leaders (Hale, 1997). This is one of the ways we see the camera in this book. We regard the camera as a technological griot, visually documenting peoples, places and histories with each click. On a trip to Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria in 2017, this author together with other esteemed academics, had a lunch break at Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria, knowing that we still had about five hours of journeying ahead. One of our colleagues, who prides himself on being the 'paparazzo' of any event, had taken photographs of us engaged in different activities, documenting both the interesting and not-so-interesting images of our trip, using his smartphone. That would not have been possible some 20 years earlier in Nigeria. This illustrates how the camera has become a handy tool for both professional and non-professional photographers. It is in this sense that it has become and remained a constant and active spectator, participant and collaborator, both in normal times and in 'times of crisis'. Thus, the presence of a camera in such situations often means

that, depending on the number of cameras, there will be several narratives and counter-narratives that will be visually presented. Some of such presentations will corroborate the consensus narrative, while others will be challenging, depending on individual or group interests and affiliations. The camera has, therefore, become an instrument for (de)constructing visual narratives, representation and agency, as well as for activism and advocacy, both in times of calm and crises.

The presence of cameras, at the forefront of crises, either in the hands of journalists, bystanders or passers-by and sometimes even parties to the crises, has inspired multiple visual notations, commentaries and perspectives. In the words of [Azoulay \(2008, p. 137\)](#), ‘The photo acts, thus making others act’. This precisely summarises the power of photography and the camera in motivating people to act in response to visual documentation of rare situations. Thus, efforts and resources are channelled towards documenting crises, to help us better understand them and play a part in their resolution. Sometimes, the camera also participates in the adjudication of cases arising from crises or, indeed, even in the reconciliatory efforts after a crisis. It is all of these factors and even many more that necessitated the writing of this book. It is, therefore, in such dimensions that the chapters in this book have contemplated the place of the camera in crises. Thus, the book aims to explore the multi-dimensional role of the camera in times of crises, with particular interest in how scholars view the camera as a [useful] tool in times of crisis in Africa. Hopefully, therefore, this book will help unravel the multi-layered tendencies of the camera as an instrument of documentation, history verification, (re)presentation of the other and perhaps the legitimisation of narratives. This will also be achieved through its subjective visual framings of crisis narratives, using the camera as the manipulative tool for influence, inference and power.

Consequently, the book is structured into three parts. The first part focusses on the visual narratives of crises. The second part of the book explores the camera’s tendency to be a tool for representation and agency, while the third segment discusses the use of the camera as an entity for activism and advocacy in crises. These structured parts are intended to broaden the understanding of readers about the greater possibilities that images and imageries from the camera as a tool possess. Thus, for each part of the book, an editor will provide clear insights into the theme of that section. This introductory chapter, for instance, doubles as a review of the theme ‘Visual Narratives of Crises’. The review of this theme is thus presented in the next subsection. But before exploring the content and context of the book’s various segments, we must first offer our contextual framing of the term ‘crises’.

## **The Contextual Framing of Crises**

When we think of a crisis, images of disorganised unrest, violence, tension and chaos often come to mind. According to [Al-Dahash et al. \(2016\)](#), crises, disasters and emergencies are often viewed as synonymous. While crises can indeed be sudden events requiring urgent attention, similar to disasters and emergencies, they can also emerge subtly and progressively, such as in food and medical crises.

In this book, we adopt a broad interpretation of crises. We see them as unstable and extremely challenging situations that surpass the resources and coping mechanisms of individuals and (or) communities. Crises can manifest overtly or covertly through violence, leading to severe consequences including loss of life, property destruction, population displacement and widespread public violence and insecurity.

For instance, the ongoing conflict in the Sahel region of Africa (Akinola & Ramontja, 2023; Cold-Ravnkilde & Ba, 2022) exemplifies such overt and violent crises. Violent clashes among armed groups, compounded by extreme climate conditions, have devastated communities, forcing millions to flee their homes and creating a severe humanitarian emergency. On the flip side, an example of a nonviolent crisis is the severe drought in the Horn of Africa (Adloff et al., 2022; Alasow et al., 2024). Prolonged periods of insufficient rainfall have led to widespread crop failures, water shortages and the death of livestock. This environmental crisis has caused food insecurity for millions of people, forcing many to migrate in search of sustenance and stability. These scenarios highlight how sociopolitical, socioreligious and environmental factors can create a crisis by exceeding the coping mechanisms of affected communities, leading to varying degrees of direct and indirect repercussions for the affected. Thus, in its focus on situations such as environmental disasters, cross-border crises, political protests and communal clashes, this book takes a broad and multi-dimensional approach to understanding crises in Africa.

### **Visual Narratives of Crises Through the Camera**

The first section of the book delves into the multifaceted role of photography in documenting and portraying crises in Africa. From conflicts and natural disasters to social inequality and political upheavals, the camera has played a crucial role in capturing the harsh realities faced by communities across the continent. Thus, the section examines how the camera serves as a powerful tool for both bearing witness to and shaping narratives of crises. Additionally, it explores the ways in which photography can validate or challenge prevailing narratives about Africa's crises.

This editor is tempted to engage in the academics of visual narratives as a concept, before highlighting the contents of the various chapters in this part of the book. Fortunately, some of the chapters have helped exemplify what it means, both literally and conceptually. For instance, Terkura Matthew Kunde's chapter discusses crisis events and how the camera has shaped narratives that affect Africa's development. His methodology includes contemplative questions that require the reader to dig into their own experiences of the camera and its images during crises as answers to his questions. It is his submission that the camera, through its series of images and imageries, has contributed immensely to revealing facts about Africa's crises. However, as observed by Kunde, some ensuing visual narratives do not promote Africa's image positively and therefore, undermine development. Clear examples can be seen in plates 3 and 4 of his paper.

In the photographs, the camera frame caught a policeman brutalising a protesting citizen during the 'EndSARS' protest in Nigeria.

The introduction of new naira notes in Nigeria became a crisis that threatened the country's socioeconomic well-being. That situation is the visual narrative Chukwuemeka Nwigwe articulates. His presentation features original photographs of crowd scenes around banks and point of sale outlets in Nigeria. While his chapter's textual narrative argues that the naira redesign policy was a scam and, therefore, advocates for the prosecution of Nigeria's former President (President Muhammadu Buhari), I find the visual narrative intriguing. The photographic narrative is that of despair, frustration and expectation at the same time – hopelessness and hope, ironically put together. This illustrates the power of the person with the camera. They decide which frame the viewer sees and which is not to be seen.

The manipulative tendencies of the visual frames of the camera are clearly presented in the chapter articulated by Hein Grové and Selma Schiller. The authors illustrate how the camera and its process can be used to conceptually package an image for subjective or objective advocacy or activism. This was achieved through a manipulative capture of Pretoria, the administrative capital city of South Africa, as a visual narrative of crisis using the camera. It is the submission of the authors that, through intentional interpretations, the visual [image] can catalyse personal narratives regarding crisis periods in African cities.

In their various and individual approaches, the chapters summarised here, and the scenarios illustrated, have helped in justifying the expressive, communicative, and manipulative propensities of the camera in creating framed images and visual narratives. In their distinctive expressions and collective narratives, the authors and this editor, have conveyed inferential as well as referential views, notations and documentations of periods, situations and places through unique visual frames.

## **Representation and Agency in Times of Crises**

Representation refers to the depiction or portrayal of individuals, groups, communities or ideas in various forms of media, culture and society. On the other hand, agency is the capacity of individuals and groups to act independently, make choices and exert control over their lives and circumstances. The second section of the book explores the transformative potential of the camera in challenging dominant narratives and amplifying the voices of marginalised communities. This section highlights how the camera has been used to tell obscured stories and empower individuals to reclaim their agency in times of crises, including personal medical crises and cross-border experiences.

For example, Folasayo Enoch Olalere's chapter submits that representation and agency are interlinked. This, he argues, is because the way individuals and groups are represented in society can influence their sense of agency and ability to participate fully in sociocultural and political activities. He then gives an overview of the camera's role and influence, and an understanding of its resultant

photographs or (and) videos. Olalere also enumerates the role of the camera in times of crises, with specific reference to Southern and Northern Africa.

The representation of marginalised voices forms the crux of Rhea M. Dehn Tutosaus's chapter. The chapter examines the participatory practices of the filmmaker Irene Gutiérrez Torres with female cross-border workers at the enclave of Ceuta at the Moroccan–Spanish border. With the use of the camera as a documentary and participatory element, the chapter draws attention to the crises women experience in such cross-border contexts. The participatory filmmaking project explored the possibility of reenacting the agency of these women by offering them the responsibility of documenting their stories with the camera. Instead of being in the view of the camera, they used the camera as a viewfinder in their capacity as knowledge producers. This unorthodox approach to documenting narratives seeks to counter the colonial logic of superiority which often views the other as powerless. Within the context of participatory filmmaking, the camera, in this instance, served to represent and reinforce the agency of women in their uncertain and transitory realities.

In her chapter, Micaela Scholtz confronts the reader with the realities of a highly covert gynaecological crisis women grapple with – Endometriosis. The notion of believability is one of the factors that necessitates the presence of the camera in crisis. It is more like saying 'If we cannot see it, then it probably does not exist'. In response, Scholtz adopts an autoethnographic approach to confronting this dismissiveness by bravely collaborating with the camera in constructing visual narratives to present the evidence of the existence of this gynaecological complication to the public. The images in this chapter confront the reader with the excruciating realities of this internal crisis. By so doing, Scholtz contributes to the representation, recognition and validation of this covertly violent and devastating crisis, often suffered in shame, pain and silence.

The term 'peace photography' was used by Möller and Shim (2019). This term stems from their argument that if photography, and by extension the camera, can be used in the portrayal of violence, war and unrest, then the same medium can and should be used in constructing narratives of peace. It is in this context that the chapter by Daniel Eromosere Omoruan, Sam Erevbenagie Usadolo and Tanya van der Walt has been structured. These authors focus on how the camera has been appropriated to uphold songs, dance and costumes. They cite examples of a cultural troupe performance in Benin City Nigeria meant to restore emotions and express sociocultural and historical allegiance towards the promotion of peace. What is important to note in this regard is the duality of the camera. Though used to capture violence and despair, it also functions optimally in the documentation and propagation of peace and harmony.

## **Activism and Advocacy in Times of Crises**

Historically, the camera has been used as both a weapon of warfare and a tool for resistance. The final section of the book delves into the use of photography as a tool for activism, social justice and advocacy in Africa and the Middle East. This section explores how visual storytelling can raise awareness of critical issues

and mobilise support for positive change through a thematic analysis of selected protest images. Additionally, it examines the ethical dilemmas faced by photojournalists and the media in times of crises, highlighting the responsibilities of documenting events accurately while also considering the potential impact of images on public perception, and recognising its tendency to inspire action.

For their part, Kehinde Christopher Adewumi and Samuila Rabo Ezra viewed the camera from the standpoint of activism and advocacy. It is their humble view that the involvement of photographers and the camera in conflict zones commences as a form of personal therapy for the photographers. They also opine that the camera serves to document and share the harrowing realities they witness with others. Thus, they aver that these roles often evolve into offering therapeutic context for a wider audience. Photography, according to Adewumi and Ezra, plays a significant role in humanising those affected by conflict, encouraging imaginative engagement, fostering empathy and inspiring individuals to take affirmative action.

For Chike Chinazom Obeagu and Blaise Gundu Gbaden, the camera was instrumental in the documentation of the nationwide #EndSARS protest in Nigeria in 2020. The authors opine that the proliferation of cameras on different portable devices in collaboration with the presence and active participation of young photographers at the forefront of the protest as quasi-photojournalists sponsored a variety of protest photography. The chapter draws attention to a global reality of witnessing and visual documentation of critical and unexpected situations. In a similar pattern, Adiwu Talatu Onkala and Abdulkadir Aliyu Yakubu explore the use of protest photography for activism and advocacy in crisis in their chapter. In this case, they focus on photo narratives with the aim of establishing protests as forms of resistance synonymous with the camera's documentation of the visible demonstrations of the objections of a people. Thus, the visual narratives of two protests that took place in Nigeria in 2020 and 2023 formed the scope of the discourse. The rapidly growing power, consciousness and agency of the younger generation – the Gen Z – to demand accountability and an egalitarian society in Africa is a major highlight of these two chapters. Indeed, Gen Z activism and advocacy have yielded unprecedented results and reforms in Kenya (Omweri, 2024).

Leaning on media theories such as the Framing Theory, the Agenda-setting Theory, and the Propaganda Model, the last chapter in this collection questions visual accounts of crises as entities which are usually laden with propaganda and manipulative subjectivities. As such, Kehinde Christopher Adewumi and Samuila Rabo Ezra's chapter argues that mediated images of crises are not without biases and manipulative intentions. Therefore, engaging with emotive and action-provoking visuals of crises requires an awareness of potential propaganda. The disparity between reality and visual account is a major phenomenon explored in this chapter. The chapters in these sections give credence to the communicative and expressive qualities of the camera's image as a visual narrative. Hence, it is from its expressive vaults that its emotive senses are activated, and then advocacy comes in, and perhaps later, activism. On the other hand, its communicative quality ensures representation, which usually inspires agency. The collective hope of

the editors of this book is that its chapters will spark new interests in the appreciation and questioning of the place and significance of the camera to society, especially as it aids our navigation of the increasing complexities of our evolving existence.

## Conclusion

Admittedly, we recognise the expectation that a book such as this would be illustrated with an abundance of images to reinforce its points. However, the ownership of images presents another emerging crisis involving academic researchers, the media, the publishing industry and society. The authorship of images has been heavily contested, making it challenging for the contributors to this volume to obtain permission to publish some of the images central to their chapters. Acknowledging the legitimacy of this crisis, scholars like [McCutcheon \(2021\)](#) have highlighted the ambiguity surrounding the authorship of photographs. This situation raises questions about the viability of critical academic discourse when the very entities being critiqued must grant permission to use materials that would support such critique.

Since its creation, the camera has evolved from a cumbersome machine with a rather tedious [operating] process, to its current simple and handy [ubiquitous] form. Interestingly, its original character as a viewfinder has remained all through its evolutionary stages. This character of the viewfinder has been upscaled, however, as a result of modernity, to a highly manipulative level. Indeed, Getlein (2002) notes that the artist (the photographer in this case) has the freedom to choose their view and how they want to present this framed reality. Therefore, the photographer wields the power to include or exclude, to acknowledge or dismiss. For his part, [Buser \(2006, p. 206\)](#) simply observes that ‘contemporary photographers engage in the manipulation or control of photographic techniques of every kind’. Thus, images might be the photographer’s framed truths. It is in acknowledging this possibility of a ‘personal or group framed truth’ that the editors engaged the varied discourses from the perspectives of visual narratives, representation and agency, as well as activism and advocacy; thus, acknowledging the broader prism with which these ‘framed truths’ might be presented.

## References

- Adloff, M., Singer, M. B., MacLeod, D. A., Michaelides, K., Mehrnegar, N., Hansford, E., Funk, C., & Mitchell, D. (2022). Sustained water storage in Horn of Africa drylands dominated by seasonal rainfall extremes. *Geophysical Research Letters*, *49*(21), e2022GL099299.
- Akinola, A. O., & Ramontja, N. (2023). Violent conflict in the Sahel: Causes, dynamics, and actors. In A. O. Akinola (Ed.), *Contemporary issues on governance, conflict and security in Africa* (pp. 125–146). Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Alasow, A. A., Hamed, M. M., & Shahid, S. (2024). Spatiotemporal variability of drought and affected croplands in the horn of Africa. *Stochastic Environmental Research and Risk Assessment*, *38*(1), 281–296.