

RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

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Fuji: The Contemporary Yoruba Urban Space and the
Performance of Gbajumo or the Bigman

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My research focuses on *Fuji* music a genre in Nigeria as part of daily experiences in the urban Yoruba space. *Fuji* is a popular music genre amongst the Yoruba people of Nigeria and its diaspora communities. It is an outgrowth of *Ajisaari* music, traditionally performed during Ramadan by amateur Muslim musicians. Beyond its Islamic identity, *Fuji* is stylistically incorporative of new musical instruments and musical styles from other popular genres. Similarly, *Fuji* themes are boundless in their mapping and curation of the everyday experience in the Yoruba space. My presentation will focus on the social categories of how *Gbajumo*, or the Bigman, is performed in/through *Fuji*. Through a close-reading of selected *Fuji* lyrics and ethnographic materials from my fieldwork, the presentation will explore these two questions: Who is a *Gbajumo*, or the Bigman, in the Yoruba space? How is *Fuji* implicated in the curation of their performances and experiences in the contemporary Yoruba urban space? To answer these questions, I will invoke the Yoruba philosophical outlook on personhood (*Eniyan*), the somewhat esoteric or cosmological vision of *Ori* (an individual's lot or destiny), and *Oriki* (the praise poetry).