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**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EASTERN AND SOUTH AFRICAN MIDDLE STONE
AGE LITHIC TECHNOLOGICAL MODES**

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Abstract

The African Middle Stone Age was long believed to be a stagnant period in time of technological innovation, but recent studies have shown it is a period of hyper-variability in lithic technology. A comparative analysis across time and space of the African continent will contribute to the theory of our species evolving from subdivided populations. My project conducts a macro-comparative analysis of the eastern and southern African Middle Stone Age archeological assemblages. The Middle Stone Age assemblages were grouped into MIS stages (9-3) with an age range encompassing 340-35 ka. The methods employed are the Stoneworking Modes A-I a technological mode scheme that is proposed to be universally applicable and the cross-application capability will be tested when comparing different regions. The classified aggregated and unique mode counts were adjusted based on differences in sample size across regions and MIS stage, the aggregated mode counts were used to obtain a sample variance across MIS stage and region. The results showed that mostly eastern Africa had a higher sample variance than southern Africa across time. An exception to this result would be at MIS 9, where southern Africa has a higher sample variance. Eastern African technology had a remarkable increase in sample variance from MIS 9 to 8, and southern African had a notable increase in sample variance from MIS 4 to 3. These findings suggest support for early humans evolving from subdivided populations and that there are more factors to investigating the shift in technological variability during the Middle Stone Age.