



“China-Africa” in Global Comparative Perspective

Brussels 28-30 June 2018

**Call for Papers, Panels and Multimedia Notes
from the field**

**5th Chinese in Africa/Africans in China Research Network
Conference hosted by the**

Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Brussels, Belgium

THE NETWORK

The **Chinese in Africa/Africans in China Research Network (CA/AC)** is the world's largest independent, interdisciplinary, research network dedicated to China-Africa affairs.

Established in 2007, the network currently hosts more than 700 members around the world and includes experts in academia, diplomacy, media, and international development.

The Network's primary goals are to promote academic research and intellectual exchange about China-Africa affairs, with emphasis on people to people ties and issues and favouring field based research and empirical work.

Our objective is to help move the global conversation about China-Africa forward in a critical and constructive way while developing a transnational community of scholars and practitioners who value dialogue, equity and inclusiveness.

THE CONFERENCE

The 5th Conference of the **Chinese in Africa/Africans in China Research Network** is scheduled to take place between the 28-30 June 2018 at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) in Belgium with the support of the Research Centre on East Asia (EASt) and the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie des Mondes Contemporains (LAMC). Various other Belgian, South African, Chinese and American institutions are also co-sponsors of the events.

The aim of 2018 CA/AC conference is two-fold. First, it will showcase the latest research on China-Africa with an emphasis on comparative analysis, new issues and reflexive methodologies with a special exhibition to showcase multimedia notes from the field. The second aim is to promote and participate in the ongoing formation of a constructive China-Africa-Europe dialogue and further develop CA/AC's network in Europe.

THEME OF THE CONFERENCE

Few countries have succeeded in achieving an economic performance as transformative and impressive as China in the last few decades. Within less than a generation, China has become the world's second largest economy, its greatest exporting nation, and an undisputed engine of global growth despite major structural imbalances and socio-economic setbacks at home. The global impact of China's domestic reforms, however, are still unclear.

Despite its growing role in shaping the global economic and political order, few topics about China's remarkable ascension on the global stage have captured the interest and imagination of both popular and academic audiences more vigorously in recent years than China's renewed engagement with the African continent. Justifiably or not, Africa has become a major platform from which to analyse and understand China's growing influence in the developing world and capture local responses to it. Although we have witnessed an evolution in the China-Africa literature in recent years which has helped broaden existing

state-driven, geopolitical conversations to include more nuanced, ethnographic studies of grass-root realities, few examinations set out to analyse China-Africa relations in comparative perspective.

Why have China-Africa relations, thus far, captured a disproportionate amount of academic and media attention compared to extensive Chinese engagements in other regions of the world? What can we gain from situating China-Africa relations in a broader comparative historical and geographic perspective? What real-life issues and controversies are relevant beyond fixed geographic boundaries?

What role does the West play in establishing the parameters of the China-Africa conversation? How have China-Africa engagements been framed and studied so far and how can existing approaches be improved? What new questions and analytical frameworks can help us improve the way we locate and understand unfolding dynamics? What comparative lessons can be learnt by studying similar processes in different regions of the world?

This conference sets out to explore these questions with a particular focus on China-Africa engagements in global comparative perspective, taking grass-root dynamics and people to people relations as our starting point.

We are particularly interested in papers and panels that explore new topics which include (but are not limited to):

- Infrastructure and connectivity
- Urbanisation
- Land-use
- Environment
- Waste and pollution
- Innovation and technology transfer
- Criminal network activities
- Media and communication
- Film and literature
- Migration and inter-generational dynamics
- Women and Gender
- Individual and collective local responses
- Comparative historical approaches
- Foreign policy and International Relations
- African integration, regional integration
- New political economic systems
- Governing the Global South

We also welcome panels and papers that focus on reflexive methodologies:

- Value of field-data: is it worth the risks and costs?
- Access, contacts and secrecy, challenges and rewards from the field.
- Written and non-written field notes: how to value non-text data?

HOW TO APPLY: PAPERS AND PANELS

Please submit an extended abstract of up to 700 words (one page) to caacbrussels@gmail.com describing either your panel or your individual paper before the **30th October 2017**. In addition to the extended abstract, please also submit a short bio (300 words max), as well as a brief list of keywords and all relevant contact details, including institutional affiliation(s), email, phone number and Wechat id (if applicable).

If you are submitting a panel proposal, please include paper abstracts and contact details of all proposed participants. Each panel should have 3-4 presenters.

Participants will be expected to cover their own transport and accommodation costs in Brussels. We will do our best to help search for affordable accommodation for those with limited means.

We welcome contributions from PhD students and early career scholars. We particularly welcome participation from the African continent and from Africans and Chinese residents in Europe.

CALL FOR VIDEOS, PICTURES AND SOUND CLIPS FOR THE EXHIBITION “MULTI-MEDIA NOTES FROM THE FIELD”

Brussels 2018 will host a multi-media exhibition for researchers and practitioners to share images, videos and sound clips captured in the field. The exhibition is designed to recognise the value of multimedia field notes and promote the importance of non-written work in our understanding of unfolding realities. These multi-media field notes are not limited to Africa or China, but must have a relevant related theme.

In addition to expanding the China-Africa conversation beyond conventional academic circles, another key goal of this exhibition is to forge new conversations with experts of other regions of the world. The aim is to highlight the similarities and contrasts of socio-economic realities in Africa and elsewhere.

By collecting and displaying a selection of images from the field we hope to provide a new and valuable platform for authors (both academic and non-academic) to present, share and discuss their ideas and experiences on the ground.

HOW TO APPLY : MULTIMEDIA EXHIBITION

All participants, academics and non-academics, are welcome to submit their pictures, videos and sound clips together with a short one-page “visual story” to explain the selection to caacmultimedia@gmail.com. Please also submit a short bio (300 words max) together with all relevant contact details, including institutional affiliation(s), email, phone number and Wechat id (if applicable).

For larger attachments please feel free to use free online services like Vimeo or Sound Cloud and send the link and user name and password to caacmultimedia@gmail.com .

We will notify authors of selected images as soon as possible and make arrangements for publishing and acknowledgement by March 2018.

CONTACT

For any enquiries please write to caacbrussels@gmail.com