

"CHINA-AFRICA" IN GLOBAL COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

5th Conference of the
"Chinese in Africa/Africans in China Research Network"



Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Brussels 28-30 June 2018

Call for Papers, Panels and Multimedia Notes from
the field

Deadline 1 December 2017

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 Brussels, Belgium with the support of the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie des Mondes Contemporains (LAMC) and the Research Centre on East Asia (EASt). Various other Belgian, South African, Chinese and American institutions are also co-sponsors of the events. **The conference will be held in both English and French.**

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.

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

There will be an exclusive preview visit of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren for participants of the conference before it's official re-opening in the fall of 2018.

A visit of Matongé, Brussels' famous African quarter, and a visit to the European Parliament can be organised as optional tours for those interested.

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.

PANEL THEMES

We are particularly interested in four areas of China-Africa relations:

1. Migration and mobilities, identities and impacts

- The everyday lives of migrants, host communities, material culture (e.g. flows and friction of people, objects, ideas, values etc)
- Social Identities (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality)

2. Cultural representations of China Africa

- Cultural and digital representations of China Africa (e.g. art, literature, film, internet etc)
- Media, communication and public diplomacy

3. Environment and space

- Conservation/natural resources debates, human and non-human (e.g. animal) relations, pollution etc.
- Urbanisation and other spatial expressions of China-Africa relations (e.g. special economic zones, exceptional spaces, borders etc)

4. Development, geopolitics and South-South Relations

- Political economy of China-Africa relations (e.g. foreign investment, labour relations, agrarian transformation etc)
- Security and governance
- South-South cooperation and the challenges of Development

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?

The conference will be held in both English and French.

HOW TO APPLY: PAPERS AND PANELS

Please submit an extended abstract of up to 700 words (one page) in English and/or French to caacbrussels@gmail.com describing either your panel or your individual paper before the 1st December 2017. In addition to the extended abstract, please also submit a short bio (300 words max) in English and in French, 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.

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.

FUNDING

We are currently raising funds to provide travel bursaries to help a number of scholars attend the conference. Only those whose papers have been accepted will be eligible for financial assistance. If you require funding for travel, visa and/or accommodation please contact the CA/AC team at caacbrussels@gmail.com.

Funding will be distributed on a competitive basis. Please note that this funding will be limited.

Alternatively, if you are in a position to help provide travel bursaries OR would like to be a co-sponsor of the CA/AC Brussels 2018 conference please contact us at caacbrussels@gmail.com.

All other participants are expected to cover their own transport, visa, accommodation, and other costs in Brussels. Please note: there is no registration fee and costs of conference materials, lunches, and other refreshments will be borne by the conference hosts and other co-sponsors. Information regarding optional evening and side events is forthcoming.

DEADLINES/DATES TO REMEMBER

Paper/Panel and Multimedia Proposals Revised Deadline – 1 December 2017

Acceptance/Rejection Letters Delivered by – 1 February 2018

Conference/Public Seminar – 28-30 June 2018

CONTACT

For any enquiries please write to caacbrussels@gmail.com