



AEGIS
Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies

AEGIS Summer School

Cagliari, 9-13 June 2020

African Futures: Promises, Projections and Reflections on a Continent in Transition

The 2020 Summer School will address the theme of *African Futures: Promises, Projections and Reflections on a Continent in Transition*. Since independence, Africans have repeatedly been promised greater political participation and more inclusive forms of governance – both by their own political leaders as well as international development agencies. Some 60 years after independence, the picture remains mixed. On the one side, collective efforts and targeted reforms have led to significant improvements. Today, Africa is seen more often as a continent of vast opportunities – and no longer as the hopeless continent of war and famine. On the other side, ‘better’ forms of governance have not always led to enhanced political participation, while new social inequalities continue to surface in unforeseen ways and places. For many, the future is decidedly uncertain.

Today, Africa is facing multiple social transformations arising out of a conjuncture between environmental change and a profound demographic shift. Around 2025, a majority of Africans will live in cities – giving the lie to the popular imagination of Africa as a largely rural continent. This Summer School aims at exploring Africa’s many trajectories into the urban age as a key defining element of its future. It seeks to investigate how Africans are currently urbanising the places they come from and the urban spaces they move to; the social and cultural challenges they confront; and how they imagine and fashion alternatives. Urbanism in Africa has many manifestations. It covers mega cities like Lagos and Kinshasa - which are projected to become the world’s largest by the end of the century - as well as the many secondary cities that are also growing rapidly as a consequence of mobility and migration. Urbanism in Africa is also a transnational phenomenon, as is reflected in the urban corridor between Abidjan and Lagos. The enormous growth of cities has multiple causes and significant economic, social and cultural effects. Urbanisation is not by definition a sign of overall positive development. It also brings with it new class divisions and social and cultural inequalities, where informalisation and unemployment figure prominently alongside the displays of wealth of the new middle classes, and new slums and informal settlements coincide with gated communities for the rich. Despite efforts at better planning, infrastructure rarely keeps pace with the expansion of the city. In particular, urbanisation entails environmental challenges that include the proliferation of waste and increasing air pollution that together bring with them some serious epidemiological hazards. The challenges of urban governance and communal coexistence are already yielding a different register of politics in which a highly youthful population resists entrenched patterns of authority and argues for a different way of doing things. At the same time, cities also create new spaces for artistic and cultural expression where it becomes possible to imagine alternative ways of living and relating to others – thereby linking different scales.

All these issues are highly relevant for a critical understanding of African futures. They call for thorough interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary cooperation, which, besides scholars, also includes planners and policy makers. The following are indicative preferential sub-themes, but should not be considered as definitive or exhaustive:

1. Transformations of urban life-worlds
2. Social and cultural difference – popular expressive culture, religion, media, and mediation.
3. Built and natural environment in urban spaces – urban decay and the future of urban design.
4. The “informal sector” – urban informality in terms of economy, housing, and transportation
5. Class formation, consumption and social inequalities – new middle classes, the working poor and the unemployed
6. The urban rich and the urban poor – segregation and novel settlement patterns
7. Domination, resistance and political expression – novel forms of political articulation
8. Urban art and culture(s): music, comics and graffiti
9. Utopias and dystopias: visions of the future through film and literature
10. ‘Futuring’ gender and generation

The 2020 Summer School is organized by the Centro di Studi Africani in Sardegna – CSAS in collaboration with the AEGIS Centres of Leipzig, Roskilde, Leiden, Edinburgh, Lisbon, Köln, Leuven, Napoli, Bayreuth, Basel. The aim of the Summer School is: a) to bring together advanced Ph.D. students and teaching staff from AEGIS Centres in order to exchange field and research experience; b) to improve the students’ ability to prepare and present their research in an international context and more specifically to serve as a ‘feeder’ for ECAS 9 in Cologne; c) to promote graduate training within AEGIS and stimulate African-European inter-university cooperation.

The workshop is open to some 20 PhD students and young researchers coming from AEGIS Centres and their affiliates in Europe and Africa. Applicants are invited to submit proposals (a 500-word abstract as well as a one-page outline of their Ph.D. status and current research) that address the overall theme. Papers that apply and/or refine conceptual and theoretical approaches to the subject matter, as well as presenting fresh empirical information, will be especially welcome. Applicants will be selected on the basis of their research outline and their ability to engage with wider issues in African Studies today. Priority will be given to students and researchers with recent field experience and fresh research results. Application by African students based in African Universities is encouraged; subsidies for the participation of a limited number of successful African applicants will be available on the basis of merit. The deadline for submitting proposals is **30 September 2019**. Participants will be informed of acceptance by **31 January 2020**.

Each AEGIS member participant will be asked to contribute to the Summer School expenses by paying a lump-sum of €150 to partly cover registration, food and lodging in Cagliari. The cost of travel to and from Cagliari is to be met by individual participants. Candidates coming from AEGIS Centres can apply to their Centre for financial assistance. External candidates will have to pay for their own expenses. Participants are expected to register in the afternoon of Monday 8 June 2020. Working sessions will be held from **Tuesday 9 June 2020 to Saturday 13 June 2020**.

For more details, please write to:

Local Organizing Committee:

CagliariSummerSchool@gmail.com

Logistical enquiries may be directed to Dr. Isabella Soi, CSAS Scientific Co-ordinator at:
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Scientific Board:

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Cagliari Summer School 2020
Application form

First name			
Family name			
e-mail address			
Date and Place of Birth		M <input type="checkbox"/>	F <input type="checkbox"/>
Citizenship			
Place of Residence			
Are you in possession of a Shengen visa? (For non European students)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Title of proposed paper			
Title or topic of the PhD Thesis			
University, Department, Town, Country			
Name of the Supervisor(s)			
Discipline(s) of study			
Is your PhD project part of a wider teaching or research programme?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, please briefly describe this programme.			
Dates and place of field work			
Further field work to be done			
If no field work has been done, when do you plan to do field work?			
Language skills	English very good <input type="checkbox"/>	good <input type="checkbox"/>	weak <input type="checkbox"/>
	French very good <input type="checkbox"/>	good <input type="checkbox"/>	weak <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other:		
Are you, or is your University, affiliated to an AEGIS Centre? If so, which one?			
Other remarks you find relevant for the organizers to know			
What do you expect to gain from your participation at CSS?			
Do you have any special dietary requirements?			