



University of Namibia Windhoek, Namibia 17 - 20 September 2020

The Hopeful Continent: Africa Rising 20 Years On

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced two decades of virtually uninterrupted economic growth, now popularly phrased as 'Africa Rising'. Cohosts *Anthropology Southern Africa* and the *Ethnological and Anthropological Society of Nigeria* invite multi-disciplinary panels to critically explore this broad and specific narrative of 'rising' in Africa and across the globe.

The Financial Times defined 'Africa Rising' as a narrative that "improved governance means the continent is almost predestined to enjoy a long period of mid-to-high single-digit economic growth, rising incomes and an emerging middle class". The emerging narrative associated this with the democratisation of African states since the end of the Cold War, comparative peace, greater availability of mobile phones and the Internet, and an increase in African consumer spending as well as a growth in entrepreneurship. For many development specialists and influential Western commentators, this growth revival displaced a deep sense of "Afro-pessimism" that dominated the closing decades of the 20th century. The new Afro-optimism, Afro-futurism and post westernism outlooks have fostered hope that poverty can be reduced at a faster pace. In reality, the poor African masses still feel little from aggregate growth. Despite this, the term has spawned a number of spin-off ideas, such as "Latin America Rising" and "Asia Rising."

The organisers welcome panel proposals from emerging and established scholars, and from professionals working in the non-academic world. In addition, we welcome proposals for posters, film, performances and flash presentations engaging critical topics. The organisers

invite parallel panels in both Portuguese and French for Lusophone and Francophone African and international scholars. *The Hopeful Continent: Africa Rising 20 Years On* will be the first *Anthropology Southern Africa* conference hosted in Namibia jointly hosted by the first conference of the *Ethnological and Anthropological Society of Nigeria*.

The organisers invite panels and topics that critically engage with (yet are not limited to):

- Afro-pessimism, African Renaissance, Afro-optimism, Afro-futurism, the promises and critique of historical development, and post westernism and its translation to other global contexts;
- the Africa rising narrative and its realities in terms of discourse; economy; youth; gender and gender based violence; climate change and the Anthropocene; natural resources and land; identity; education; new youth movements; ICTs and new technologies; the impact of Anthropolog(ies) in understandings of Africa and the emerging middle class;
- the capture of the world's attention through Africa's ancient cultural heritage and original birth home of civilization;
- the last frontier for unique film stories, indigenous and other knowledges and content;
- the 'undermining' of the narrative by experiences of disease and conflict in some parts of the continent;
- the opening up of Anthropology for broader engagement with the African academy, both with calls for the de-colonisation of curriculum in the universities across Africa, and as many universities on the continent do not offer anthropology as a stand-alone discipline, but offer through African history, literature, languages, theology, sociology, development studies perspectives that engage with what it means to be human;
- Anthropological and popular perspectives of queer being and becoming as (dis)located in African cultural and political systems.

Please note that panel convenors and presenters require membership of one or more of the following associations at registration: ASnA, PAAA, EASON or IUAES. The organisers welcome more than one membership.

Please use the google form to submit your panel [here](https://forms.gle/qywJ34GeLS3qHxph7) or if you have trouble following the link <https://forms.gle/qywJ34GeLS3qHxph7>

Panels must have two proposers and we encourage these to be across countries. Deadline for panels: 29 February 2020. The call for papers will be released in March.

For any questions about the conference please contact the Chair of the Organising Committee Dr Rosa Persendt at rpersendt@unam.na.