



Call for Papers

Workshop on *Broadening the debate on EU-Africa relations – perspectives from Africa*

July 19-20, 2017

The Centre for the Study of Governance Innovation (GovInn), University of Pretoria, South Africa

Context

The year 2017 will herald some important events and milestones in EU-Africa relations. The fifth triennial EU-Africa Summit is scheduled to take place in November, while discussions continue apace about the future of the EU-ACP Cotonou Agreement after 2020. This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership, a landmark for the EU and its only strategic partner on the continent.

It is then particularly timely to reflect critically on the relationship and its future. A significant body of research and literature exists about the relationship, either with respect to EU-African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) relations or more recently concerning the EU-Africa partnership. What is notable, however, is the comparative under-representation of studies emanating from Africa itself.

In fact, it has been recently demonstrated that journal articles concerning Africa by Africa-based scholars are actually diminishing relative to articles about Africa from scholars based in the Global North (Briggs and Weathers 2016). There are serious consequences to this trend, particularly in terms of the need for a diversity of perspectives on issues of common concern, as well as the inclusion of issues that may be overlooked by scholars from any given region.

Challenging assumptions of Western-centred universalism, including in the social sciences, can lead to a richer dialogue between North and South. Does modernisation, for instance, mean emulating Europe? For many, this assumption is no longer acceptable, particularly with growing interest in alternative development experiences and approaches emanating from the Global South, such as those from China.

This workshop therefore embraces the notion that worldviews and experiences of those based in Africa matter and must be heard. At the same time, the intention is not to replace a Euro-centric understanding of International Relations with an Afro-centric one. The purpose of “de-linking” scholarship on EU-Africa relations from any one epistemic tradition is to circumvent gatekeeping and provide space for broadening understandings and enriching dialogue. We therefore support work that tests assumptions about Africa’s position in the world and vis-à-vis Europe. New or less heralded epistemological approaches are encouraged.

Aim of Workshop

Against this backdrop, the aims of this workshop are twofold: to begin to redress the underrepresentation of African perspectives in the broader discourse about EU-Africa relations and, by extension, to broaden epistemological approaches to interpreting the relationship.

We therefore invite paper proposals from scholars based in Africa, as well as scholars based elsewhere who are eager to engage with diverse and innovative perspectives on EU-Africa relations. The following themes will be explored:

- problematising the conceptual foundations of the relationship (including the implications of asymmetrical power relations);
- tackling known issues or challenges to the relationship (such as in the areas of security, trade, regional integration, aid, climate change, migration, etc), especially from different epistemological perspectives;
- placing issue areas commonly underrepresented onto the research agenda (e.g. highlighting unsung areas of successful cooperation, new interregional formations and partnerships, further exploring the effects of changing institutions in Africa and Europe on the relationship, etc)
- exploring in greater depth the changing global order and new pressures on EU-Africa relations stemming from it.

We encourage, but are not limited to, critical approaches and varying epistemologies, harnessing some of the most exciting dimensions of scholarship emanating from the Global South, such as the (on going) decolonisation project in South African universities and institutions.

A selection of papers delivered at the first workshop (July 19-20, 2017) will be chosen for a special issue of a peer reviewed journal. These papers will subsequently be revised and presented in a second smaller workshop to be held in South Africa in November 2017.

Funding

The Centre for the Study of Governance Innovation (GovInn) will cover international travel, accommodation and conference expenses for successful applicants. However, funding is limited so preference may be given to participants able to cover their own international travel expenses.

Submission of proposals

Please send your paper proposal (approx 500 words) and a short biography to the European Studies Association of Sub-Saharan African (ESA-SSA) [esa-ssa@governanceinnovation.org] by **February 17, 2017**. The proposals will be selected based on their quality and their potential contribution to a collective publication. Successful participants will be notified by **February 24**. Draft papers are expected by **July 6**.

If you have any queries about the workshop, please contact john.kotsopoulos@governanceinnovation.org.

The workshop is organised by the European Studies Association of Sub-Saharan Africa (ESA-SSA) and hosted by the Centre for the Study of Governance Innovation, with funding from the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

