



ASAI

Association for African Studies in Italy

VI ASAI Biennial Conference

Third Millenium Africas in the Global World: Challenges, Reconfigurations and Opportunities

Department of Communication Sciences, Humanities and International Studies

Carlo Bo University of Urbino

29 June-1 July 2022

CALL FOR PANELS

The African continent has historically been characterised by significant movements of people, goods and ideas. The proximity of the African and European coasts, for example, has always made Africa a natural partner for social, cultural and economic exchanges with the countries bordering the Mediterranean. In global flows, Africa is also a polysemic reference point through which identities, belonging and exchanges are defined. In recent years, the multifaceted nature of these interactions has been neglected, while contemporary social movements which traverse African societies offer occasions and opportunities to redefine old categories used to represent Africa from an external perspective.

At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic crisis has triggered a rapid reconfiguration of global political, economic and cultural geographies, the outcomes of which are still difficult to predict. Despite a vision that has emphasised—not without rhetoric—the sense of a ‘renewed’ humanity to overcome the crisis, contemporary Africa continues to be at the centre of representations with strong paternalistic connotations. Although diseases such as malaria or HIV affect the life expectancy of people living in Africa far more than Covid-19, pandemic events still occupy public discourse and the media and they expose the continent to the risk of increasing structural, political and economic fragility.

The biennial ASAI Conference in Italy has become a favoured meeting place for those who study the African continent and African diasporas from different disciplinary perspectives. In light of the consolidated interdisciplinarity that distinguishes African Studies, the VI ASAI Biennial Conference encourages panel proposals that allow for both reflecting—from a synchronic point of view—on the political, social and cultural reconfigurations of African contexts vis-à-vis the challenges imposed by today’s global emergencies, and for framing them in a broader historical perspective.

On a thematic level, we welcome proposals that problematise issues related to climate change and the environment, that have become crucial at the global level; the importance that Africa’s rich resources play in the reconfiguration of power on the continent; the sustainability of the processes of change underway; and emerging social movements. Further areas of reflection which aim at understanding the changes and tensions in African societies, may concern the management of migratory flows and their representation in public debate; the reconfiguration of geopolitical spheres of influence induced by plans to supply vaccine stocks and by cooperation plans more generally; the gradual withdrawal of international donors from African scenarios and/or the reallocation of financial resources to support economies in

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crisis; the changes caused by the emergency situation in both public debate and in European policies on the right to asylum and citizenship; local conceptions of disease and/or pandemic and their expression in discourse and aesthetic and literary works in various languages and forms; access to public health in Africa and in the diasporas; the perception of risk and emergency and any solutions adopted for mitigation; information flow structures, the spread of fake news and the relationship between local knowledge and scientific knowledge; transformations in the meaning of 'elsewhere' and models of internal and external mobility; the impact of the pandemic crisis on the remittance economy; new or renewed conceptions and practices of freedom and dependency under conditions of structural violence; the patterns of change underway in largely urbanised areas; new and old challenges for African diasporas; African creativities and cultural heritage.

On a methodological level, it is crucial to reflect critically on the difficulties related to the health risk of carrying out research on African soil (as elsewhere) and the consequent reconfiguration of investigations; on the opportunities, changes and critical issues related to the use of new communication technologies in research methodology and in structuring public discourse; on the innovative use of available sources; on the reworking of oral sources and historical memories in crisis and non-crisis contexts; and on the involvement of diasporas in applied research projects in contexts outside Africa.

Panel proposals written in Italian and/or English should be sent by 20 December 2021 to asai.convegno2022@gmail.com , and should include:

- the title of the proposal;
- a description of 300 words maximum;
- the name, affiliation, and email address of the proposer(s).

There will be no provision for presenting papers online. Those successful in submitting a panel and/or paper proposal will be expected to present in person at the conference venue.

Notification of acceptance will be sent by 15 January 2022. After the selection of panels, a call for papers will follow.