THROUGH LOCAL EYES

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Place-based approaches to emerging architectural, urban design and planning challenges in Africa and the Global South

29-31.10.2018

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

The conference "Through Local Eyes: Place-based approaches to emerging architectural, urban design and planning challenges in Africa and the Global South" is a joint initiative of research groups working in the Université libre de Bruxelles, the University of Addis Ababa and the Université de Liège.

Our conference is conceived as a platform for researchers, PhD students, academics, decisions makers and practitioners whose work engage local approaches to the built environment at different scales in the Global South and in particular in Africa

Call for participation

The fast paced urbanization and mushrooming of metropolitan areas in Africa and the Global South especially in connection with rights and access to basic services, have attracted much attention in the last decades from the public, local experts, decision-makers and international stakeholders. In parallel, other built environments such as emerging small towns, shrinking cities and rural areas are now experiencing important pressures and changes, and are increasingly coming under the spotlight.

Practitioners, experts and investors working in the built environment have been prone to import established solutions and concepts borrowed from architectural, urban and planning theories developed and tested in the more economically developed countries (MEDC) to respond to some challenges, whose conditions were in some cases previously established by foreign or even colonial agents. Others have felt more disconcerted in front of the emerging challenges posed by the often contradictory, unconventional, apparently chaotic, and irreducible unicity of such built environments. Despite an increasing sensitivity towards contextualised, participatory and inclusive approaches, such new and emerging strategies have been struggling to enter mainstream urban production which still remains mainly shaped by top-down planning and free market policies, often failing to ensure access to fair, safe and healthy cities.

We welcome contributions investigating architectural solutions or histories, urban designs or visions, comprehensive planning experiments, governance structures or policy-making activities related with emerging challenges into built environments in Africa or the Global South, ranging from rural areas to small and emerging towns, up to larger cities. We encourage contributions developing place-based approaches to emerging architectural, urban design and planning challenges in Africa and the Global South, with a twofold objective. First, to explore the possibility of overcoming Western-based dominant approaches to urban planning and development, testing alternative visions and paradigms. Second, to question the tendency towards replicating and reproducing of strategies borrowed from metropolitan contexts to different urban settings, especially allegedly backward territories. We particularly appreciate contributions that are based on an empirical confrontation with reality and that aim to:

1. singling out site-based local/urban practices and development strategies, emphasizing their adaptation/conformity/proximity to their specific geographic setting (rural, suburban, urban, metropolitan, …);
2. challenging the assumptions of modernist and/or dominant architectural and planning theories and their use in situations radically different from those for which such theories were devised in the first place;
3. testing and formulating new and unforeseen concepts, theories, research paradigms stemming from the specific "urbanities" of Africa and the Global South.

Specific focus areas relevant to the conference include but are not limited to:

1. **Policies, Governance and Planning**

- **Bottom-up solutions and practices: challenging the plan**
  The systemic exclusion of low-income populations from the formal urban production mechanisms opens a reflection on alternative solutions for developing cities and services. Participatory approaches and design projects have spread among planners. In which way do the unplanned city coexist and influence planning activities? Which initiatives have proved to succeed in promoting equity and participation in the urban sector?
- **Emerging concepts and practices on (small town) planning**
  To respond to the lack of planning and research on small towns in Africa and, more generally in the Global South, which are experiencing important pressures and changes. We search for proposals that have a multidisciplinary character, including social, economic, demographic, environmental components, and exploring the notion of "integrated planning".
- **Shrinking cities**
  Despite the emphasis that recent researches put on exponential and uncontrolled urban growth and issues related to rapid urbanization in the Global South, problems connected with shrinking cities and rural areas play a relevant role.
- **Co-design**
  Co-design understood as the process of creation of socio-material artefacts with and for stakeholders, grows in popularity. Even though co-design is a step further from human-centred design towards an active participation and adaptation to local context, questions remain on the outcomes and benefits of its application and on how and why stakeholders engage in the process.

2. **Sustainable development**

- **Infrastructures and service delivery in urban Africa; environmental health and sustainability**
  In the Global South, rapid urbanization is not necessarily supported by economic growth and required capacity to deliver services. Consequently, several cities and towns are faced with inaccessibility of basic public services and environmental vulnerabilities. Which alternative strategies and options have been developed to provide communities with more sustainable infrastructures? What is the contribution of "urban metabolism" approaches to improve service delivery?
- **Resilience (new perspectives on resilience), Sustainable planning, Green infrastructure**
  The concepts of sustainability and resilience faced critics because of their disconnection from local contexts. Nevertheless, a different perspective emerges. How local practices carried out in the Global South enhanced the concept of resilience? How sustainable planning and the design of green infrastructure can find inspiration from the existing practices?

- **Disaster Risk / Urban adaptation**
  As climate change becomes part of the reality of the lives of millions of people, human settlements and communities face the dual challenge of planning for sustainable and healthy development and managing the growing climate risks that threaten livelihoods. How do settlements adapt and reduce their vulnerability in front of climate impacts? Which typologies of actions are implemented through formal development plans and spontaneous, "informal" practices?

3. **Resistance and appropriation**

- **Rural development and Village planning, past and present**
  Ever since the early colonial endeavours in Africa and the Global South, up to more recent international development aid programs, rural development and planning efforts conducted under Western influence aimed at pursuing the goal (or the illusion) of so-called "development". Even in more recent years, programs of villagization or agricultural colonization promoted by the governments of now independent countries have multiplied across the Global South: Tanzania, Rwanda, Vietnam. What are the underlying planning models and how do they cope with locality? Who actually benefitted of such efforts? To which extent have they reached their declared objectives? How can we deal with the existing results of such planning programs or with their ongoing implementation? We welcome contributions critically discussing the current impact and problems posed by past rural development policies and schemes imported to Africa and the Global South.
- **Historical perspectives**
  Twentieth century colonialism and its long-lasting influence on independent countries' policies as well as transnational exchange of expertise in urban planning and architecture in the Global South has been racked by grand utopian schemes that frequently failed because of their lack of knowledge of the cultural and physical context. In parallel, forms of resistance and appropriation of Western models arose.
- **Challenging dominant theories on planning: towards a post-colonial planning**
  We welcome contributions that extends current theorisations towards a more collaborative and socially just practices of planning in multicultural settings, and highlights the further theoretical and practical work to be done to fully realise the complexities of planning in post-colonial settings.

Other specific focus areas could include: conflicts between theories and practices, challenges in the development of risk areas, needs and solutions for global south, emerging territories, public spaces, SME development, grass-root organisations development, interface between rural and urban areas.

Formats

During the course of the conference, which will be a three-day event on 29-31 October 2018 in Addis Ababa, we welcome four types of presentations which are described below

- **Full-length original papers:** conventional academic paper format (3.000 to 7.500-words papers, 20 minutes oral presentations, followed by a discussion). The papers will be grouped by the organizing committee in 90-minute sessions, with 4 to 5 participants. The organizing committee will also appoint session chairs;

- **Full sessions:** participants are invited to propose full sessions broadening the themes and sub-themes of the conference, built around existing research projects and / or current debates, and engaging with recent research, exciting new approaches or theoretical interventions. Please note that this call is reserved for future chairs of sessions. Full sessions may be chaired by one or two persons affiliated in the same or two distinct institutions. Sessions composed entirely of participants from the same department of the same institution are not likely to be accepted. Graduate students are welcome as participants in the session, but sessions entirely reserved for graduate students are less likely to be accepted than groups that include senior and postdoctoral presenters as well as graduate students. Preference will be given to sessions with four contributions, although sessions of five will be considered. Full sessions will be dedicated 90 minutes' time slots in the conference program;

- **Posters:** we invite early-stage researchers and / or young professionals to make a proposal that offers a brief overview of current research project (s), teaching activities or practical experiments in the field, developing knowledge around of the conference theme in the form of posters. Each poster will be the subject of a presentation of about 5 minutes per author and a discussion. These presentations will be grouped into a special 90-minute slot;

- **Training workshops:** focused on topics related to professional life, such as publishing, teaching, the job market, mid-career challenges and opportunities, research and the liberal arts, and alternative / non-academic activities (examples: "Getting published", "Built heritage and digital humanities", "Improving local urban planning services with little or no means", etc.). Participation in a training workshop does not limit participation in other aspects of the conference. The training workshops are participatory and will last 90 minutes by session (duration max. 2 sessions). They may be entirely led by one person or include a panel of experts. Please note that this call is for workshop facilitators. Registration for the workshops will take place at the same time as conference registration;

- **"Lightning talks":** for work that does not lend itself to presentations in the form of an academic paper or poster, we welcome proposals for short presentations (10 minutes, up to 20 slides), presenting engaging research projects and originals, educational programs or activities, field work or surveys, public administration actions and / or practical experiences in architecture, urban design and planning related to the

conference theme. One or more 90-minute slots will be dedicated to these presentations in the conference program;

Submission process

Practitioners, decision-makers, NGOs and scholars are invited to submit proposals for this conference.

Contribution proposals should be introduced through the conference's online submission platform (available starting **27 December 2017**). File formats and subsequent guidelines will be directly indicated on the submission platform.

Contributions proposals to this conference will undergo two distinct revisions stages:
1. at the submission of abstracts;
2. at the submission of full-papers / extended abstracts.

Each stage will be subject to a peer review process. Contributions will be examined by the scientific committee, and selected according to criteria of originality, scientific quality, geographic and gender representativeness.

Abstracts are due by **12:00 PM CET time (UTC+1), January 15, 2018**. Applicants may submit multiple contributions of different formats (one contribution per format), but must enter only one contribution at a time per submission via the online platform. Abstracts must fulfil the requirements indicated below and be clear and well written. The official language for submission is English, nevertheless, contributions in French are also welcomed. The organizers

are making provision to organize simultaneous translations from French to English and vice-versa.

Acceptance and **registration fees (approximately 50 to 70 euros)** will be announced by **17 February 2018**.

Certificates of participation will be issued to the participants during the conference.

According to the authors acceptance, conference proceedings containing the extended abstracts will be published online. Significant contributions fulfilling the revision process will be invited for publication in an edited book.

First phase of reviewing

The requirements for each format are the following for the first phase of reviewing:

- **Papers**
- proposed contribution title;
- name(s), institutional affiliation(s), contact(s) of author(s);
- abstract (500 words). References (up to 5, in a consistent style), tables, and figure captions are not included in the limit of words but have to be filled in together with the abstract, applicants can join up to 2 visuals (images or tables) to their abstract
- 4 to 6 keywords
- short resume (100 words)

- **Full session (this call is directed toward future chairs and is open to 1 or 2 chairs from the same or different institutions)**
- proposed session title;
- chair(s): name(s), institutional affiliation(s), contact(s) of chair(s);
- foreseen panel: name(s), institutional affiliation(s), contact(s) of presenter(s), if already known
- short abstract (500 words) giving a clear rationale for the papers' collective goal
- 4 to 6 keywords
- list (maximum 5) of the proposed full-length original papers (if already known), including title and 300-words abstract for each
- short resume (100 words) of both the proposing session chairs and each of the foreseen session participants (100 words each)

    To be noted: Preference will be given to sessions with four contributions, although sessions of five will be considered. Sessions composed entirely of participants from a single department at a single institution are not likely to be accepted. Graduate students are welcome as session participants, but sessions composed entirely of graduate students are less likely to be accepted than panels that include senior and postdoctoral presenters together with graduate students.

- **Posters**
- proposed poster title;

- name(s), institutional affiliation(s), contact(s) of author(s);
- abstract (300 words). References (up to 5, in a consistent style), tables, and figure captions are not included in the limit of words but have to be filled in together with the abstract, applicants can join up to 2 visuals (images or tables) to their abstract
- 4 to 6 keywords
- short resume (100 words)

- **Training workshop**
- proposed training workshop title;
- chair(s) / trainer(s): name(s), institutional affiliation(s), contact(s) of author(s);
- short abstract (500 words); including a list of activities + material needed + time schedule
- 4-6 keywords
- short resume (100 words) for the chair and other trainers (100 words each)

  To be noted: Time allowed to training workshops will be 90 minutes training per session (with a maximum of 2 sessions for the same workshop)

- **Lightning talk**
- proposed lightning talk title;
- name(s), institutional affiliation(s), contact(s) of author(s);
- abstract (300 words). References (up to 5, in a consistent style), tables, and figure captions are not included in the limit of words but have to be filled in together with the abstract, applicants can join up to 2 visuals (images or tables) to their abstract
- 4 to 6 keywords
- short resume (100 words)

Venue

Home to more than 3,000,000 inhabitants, lying at an altitude of 2.300 m over sea level, with a mildly temperate climate, Addis Ababa is globally accessible from the new Bole International Airport. In addition, Addis Ababa hosts the UN - Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) and the Headquarter of the African Union (AU). The capital city of Ethiopia is a vantage point from which to observe and discuss the current state of emerging architectural, urban design and planning challenges in Africa and the Global South.

All participants to the conference should take care of their own travel arrangements and eventual visas and authorizations to join the conference. Financial aid may be granted under certain conditions.

Registration fees are to be announced on 17th February 2018 (approximately 50 to 70 euros).

- Waiver of registration fees and travel grants:
  Early-stage scholars enrolled in a Master degree and/or Doctoral programme and who do not benefit of a scholarship of financial support are entitled to a full waiver of registration fees. A limited number of travel grants will be made available for early-stage scholars as well as for young professionals under the age of 35 at the time of the conference. Participants wishing to apply for such grant are required to do so. Available travel grants are not likely to cover the full cost of travel. A preference will be granted to applicants residing or originary from African countries and the Global South.

Organizing Committee

- **Université libre de Bruxelles :**
- **HABITER research center** (Faculty of Architecture La Cambre-Horta): Luisa Moretto, Oswald Dellicour, Axel Fisher, Giuseppe Faldi, Jean-François Pinet, Catalina Dobre, Michele Tenzon, Kahina Benyacoub
- **BATir** (Brussels School of Engineering) Ahmed Z. Khan, Philippe Bouillard
- **University of Addis Ababa :**
- **ECIP - Emerging Cities Integrated Planning Lab** at the EiABC (Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and City Development): Fiseha Wegayeh, Darik Zebenigus, Lia Gmariam, Bisrat Woldeyessus, Teshme Tefera, Ahma Ermias , Zewdu Tesfaye
- **Université de Liège :**
- **Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech**: Jan Bogaert, Gregory Mahy

Scientific committee

- **Dominique Rouillard**, ENSA Paris-Malaquais (France)
- **Philipp Misselwitz**, Habitat-Unit, Technische Universität Berlin (Germany)
- **Joseph Kabamba Kabata**, ISAU/UPN Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo)
- **Marcello Balbo**, International urban migrations UNESCO chair / IUAV-Venice (Italy)
- **Haïm Yacobi**, University College of London - Bartlett School of the Built Environment, Development Planning Unit (United Kingdom)
- **Genet Alem,** TU Dortmund (Germany)
- **Adriana Allen**, University College of London - Development Planning Unit (United Kingdom)
- **Zegeye Cherenet**, Addis Ababa University - EiABC Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and City Development (Ethiopia)
- **Sabine Planel**, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) / Research Institute for Development (France)
- **Marco di Nunzio**, London School of Economics and Political Sciences - LSE Cities (United Kingdom)

To contact us

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