



Université  
de Lomé

**Call for papers for a workshop on:  
Urbanism at the Margins –  
Centering African Border Towns and Cities**

**Venue:** Université de Lomé , Togo

**Dates:** 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019

**Organizers:** African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE) - a collaborative Research Group (CRG) of the Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies (AEGIS).

<http://www.aborne.net>

Littératures, Langues et Identités Germano-Africaines (LIGA) and

Equipe de Recherche en Littératures de l’Afrique Noire et de la Diaspora (*ERELAND*) are research groups of the Université de Lomé

**Scientific Committee:** Paul Nugent, Wolfgang Zeller, Hugh Lamarque (University of Edinburgh), Kokou Azamede, Ebony Agboh (Université de Lomé), Olivier Walther (University of Florida), Samuel Ntewusu (University of Ghana), Isabella Soi (Università degli Studi di Cagliari)

**Working Languages:** French and English

## **Workshop theme**

Since 2007, ABORNE has hosted an annual workshop or conference on a theme relating to borders and borderlands in Africa. In 2019, the theme will be “Urbanism at the Margins: Centering African Border Towns and Cities”, which is a curiously neglected topic.

In the past decade, there has been a significant uptake in studies of the African city, informed in large part by the realities of demographic expansion and projections for the future of Africa’s urbanization. The focus has in large part been directed towards capital cities, and increasingly towards mega-cities whose emergence is confidently predicted. What urban studies has not done sufficiently is to engage with the unfolding realities of urbanism at the geographical margins. A number of Africa’s capital cities and projected mega-cities are located on, or close to, international borders – including Kinshasa, Lagos and Lomé. With cross-border trade and investment in long-distance transport corridors on the rise, Africa’s border towns are some of the smaller but fastest-growing urban areas on the continent. By bringing urban and border studies into closer dialogue, the aspiration is to advance the debate within two sub-fields that tend to revolve in different orbits. The workshop will consider the full spectrum of urbanism from border towns to full-blown cities, with a view to shedding light on:

- (a) the ways in which the border setting shapes urban forms, livelihoods and aesthetics and
- (b) the manner in which urban connectivity shapes the borderlands as lived spaces.

The workshop organizers welcome proposals from across the Humanities and Social Sciences that directly and explicitly contribute to the workshop theme. Papers that consider both sides of a border or take a comparative look at different towns and cities would be especially welcome. The following is an indicative list of topics, but should not be considered prescriptive:

- The changing urban demography of African borderlands
- Representations of the border town/city in literature and film
- Trade, markets and livelihoods in border towns/cities
- Transport, infrastructure and mobility in border towns/cities
- Urban cross-border communication in the era of social media
- Urban cross-border competition and cooperation from below
- Commuting and citizenship in border towns/cities
- Language and border urbanism

## **Practicalities & deadlines**

The deadline for submission of abstracts is Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Please send a MS Word document in English or French containing: author's name, affiliation, e-mail address, a paper title, and a clear and concise abstract of max. 250 words to: [paul.nugent@ed.ac.uk](mailto:paul.nugent@ed.ac.uk), [wolfgang.zeller@ed.ac.uk](mailto:wolfgang.zeller@ed.ac.uk), and [hugh.lamarque@ed.ac.uk](mailto:hugh.lamarque@ed.ac.uk)

The scientific committee will select those contributions which best fit the theme of the call for papers and selected participants will be notified by 14<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

The deadline for sending full papers is 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019

The organisers have secured core funding from AEGIS to partially cover accommodation and food expenses, but most participants will be asked to contribute to the workshop expenses by paying a registration fee of €35 – and to cover their own travel and hotel expenses. Per diems cannot be offered. When submitting your abstract, please indicate if you cannot attend the conference without subsidies. The expected number of participants is 15-25.

Paper presentations will take place from the morning of 16<sup>th</sup> to the afternoon of 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019. An optional excursion across the Togo-Ghana border is planned for 18<sup>th</sup> September.

Participants are expected to make their own visa arrangements for entry to Togo (and Ghana if they wish to participate in the excursion). Flight and hotel bookings should also be made by participants.

For any other questions, please contact: [Paul.Nugent@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Paul.Nugent@ed.ac.uk) and [azamgod@gmail.com](mailto:azamgod@gmail.com)