

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

PANEL: AFRICAN USES OF CHINESE MEDIA

CIRCULATIONS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF GLOBALISED EXCHANGES

**APAD Conference, Université de Lomé, Togo
23-26 June 2020**

Abstract:

This panel looks at the expansion of Chinese media in Africa. Most existing studies look at this phenomenon through the prism of soft power theory, and focus mostly on the analysis of the Chinese government's motivations for sponsoring media expansion. This panel develops a different perspective and interrogates the way in which the expansion of Chinese media presence in Africa is impacting on the everyday life of African audiences, media producers and distributors. It does so by focusing on ethnographic studies of audiences and cultural producers' engagements with Chinese media, and empirical analysis of the itineraries and biographies of media circulation and reception.

Argument:

Over the past two decades, Chinese media companies have significantly expanded their presence across Africa, setting up large infrastructures, training local journalists and media producers, dubbing Chinese programs in African languages, and locally producing news and entertainment contents. Most existing studies look at this phenomenon through the prism of soft power theory, and focus mostly on the analysis of the Chinese government's motivations for sponsoring media expansion. However, the soft power model does not seem to be sufficient to capture the complexity of the existing interactions between Africa and China in terms of media, as it favours a top-down approach that cannot adequately bring to light the variety of strategies adopted by the different actors on the ground. This panel intends to shift the focus away from the analysis of the (presumed or real) intentions of Chinese officials, to concentrate on African audiences, media producers and distributors, in order to interrogate the way in which the expansion of Chinese media presence in Africa is impacting on their everyday life. Within this context, ethnographic studies of audiences and cultural producers' engagements with Chinese media, and empirical analysis of the itineraries and biographies of media circulation and reception will be particularly welcome, as well as historically grounded analysis of longer-term interactions between Chinese media and African audiences (such as the reception of kung fu films), which can enrich our understanding of contemporary dynamics.

Calendar :

The proposals should consist of a title and 600-word abstract. Communication proposals should provide the authors' first names and last names, their status, and their institutional affiliation, as well as their email addresses.

Proposal must be submitted by February 20, 2020.

Acceptance of proposals will be notified by March 5, 2020.

The full proposal is due to May 15, 2020.

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