



Call for papers: ABORNE Annual Meeting, 16-17 April 2018, Cagliari (Italy)

The African Borderlands Research Network invites contributions to its 2018 annual conference in Cagliari on the Italian island of Sardinia.

ABORNE was founded in 2007 and, from 2009 to 2014, received support from the European Science Foundation Research Networking Programme to hold annual conferences and workshops. Since 2014, ABORNE has been a Collaborative Research Group under the Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies, AEGIS. While the ESF funding has run out, the network lives on and will periodically organise conferences and workshops. For further information, visit <http://www.aborne.org>.

For the Cagliari conference we invite contributions to the following theme:

Materiality and Immateriality in the Reproduction of African Borders

Across much of Africa, borders are not always immediately visible to the naked eye, even if borderland residents are often acutely aware of where one country stops and the next one begins. In recent years, substantial investments in infrastructure across Africa have rendered many border-crossings much more visible, as manifested in new roads, bridges, One-Stop Border Posts and other border checkpoint facilities. The built environment of border towns, which often differs markedly on two sides of a line, is also (re-)materialized in brick, steel and concrete and often undergoing rapid change. As old structures visibly crumble, new ones are being brought into being or given a renewed lease of life.

The harmonization of information systems, especially within Customs, may not be so obvious, but is embedded in the construction of new spaces where state work is transacted. The very act of establishing new borderland and cross-border infrastructure can in some cases also shake up the dust of history which has settled on unresolved border disputes and inaccuracies of colonial border-making and demarcation. At the same time, borders have always been constituted in ways that are not material in quite the same way: whether that be through imaginaries, memory, rumour or simply relationships of affinity. Somewhere in between lie the practices which depend on emergent technologies, but also rely on the workings of these other registers - including mobile money, remittances and festivals. Some of these compress time and re-order space in fundamental ways.

The workshop-style meeting in Cagliari will be a venue to showcase new and ongoing research within the ABORNE community that considers the relationship between the material, the immaterial and the in-between. Contributions may be contemporary or more historical in scope and papers of a more conceptual and comparative nature would also be welcome.

Timeline and Organisation:

The deadline for paper abstracts is 18th December 2017.

Please send a MS Word document containing: author's name, affiliation, e-mail address, a paper title, a clear and concise abstract of max. 250 words, and a short CV to Dr. Isabella Soi: isabsoi@gmail.com. A scientific committee will select those contributions which best fit the theme of the call for papers. Participants will be notified about the outcome by 8th January 2018.

The organisers are aiming to secure funding to cover (at least partially) accommodation and food expenses, but most participants will be asked to contribute to the workshop expenses by paying a fee of €100 – and to cover their own travel expenses. We expect funding will be available to subsidize the full expenses for a limited number of Africa-based colleagues. When submitting your abstract, please indicate if you cannot attend the conference without subsidies. The expected number of participants is 15-25.

Venue:



Cagliari is the capital and the most important city of Sardinia, with a soul consisting of a millenary history, culture, nature and night life. Cagliari is also known for the five-mile-long Poetto Beach and for its four old districts, Marina, Stampace, Villanova and Castello, where 13th-century towers still guard the medieval city walls. Cagliari and the Sardinian cuisine are characterized by unique flavours and excellent local wines. Cagliari is connected with mainland Italy via daily ferry trips, and to most important European cities via Elmas Mario Mameli airport. Bus and train connections link the airport to the city centre where the workshop will take place. The exact venue will be confirmed once the number of participants is known.