

Africa in the World

Ed Liebow
July 20, 2018



More than 200 scholars and students from gathered in Johannesburg for the second in a series of biennial scholarly exchanges on the African continent to celebrate the interdisciplinary connections that help us situate the locus of knowledge production about Africa's contemporary successes and challenges. The exciting program examined relevant frameworks and practical approaches to the study of Africa's past, present, and future, drawing on work across the humanities and social sciences, from historiography, literature, linguistics, anthropology, politics, and technological transformations to art and popular culture.



The AAA co-sponsored this conference together with the African Studies Association (ASA) and our local and regional partners: the University of Witwatersrand City Institute; the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute at the University of South Africa; the University of Pretoria, Department of Political Sciences (UPPS), and Anthropology Southern Africa.

The dialogue focused on the question of who speaks with authority about Africa's contemporary successes and failures. Is "the African Library" restricted to "Europhone" scholarship? To what extent is postcolonialism a relevant lens through which we regard contemporary patterns, processes, and institutions? What is the state of African studies? Who is allowed to theorize Africa? Are "Europhone" intellectuals the only scholars of Africa? Exciting roundtable discussions highlighted

Conference tour destination, the Constitutional Court of South Africa, detail of carved entry door featuring the 27 fundamental themes of the new Bill of Rights. Ed Liebow

African Perspectives on China, African economic futures, and revolutionizing African academic institutions.

The power of interdisciplinary conversations was further amplified by a remarkable closing session, moderated by program co-chair Carolyn Rouse, which featured Drs. Mahmood Mamdani, Muna Ndulo, Debayo

Olukoshi, Toyin Falola, and Funmi Olonisakin, and former South Africa President Thabo Mbeki.

In addition to the co-chairs Carolyn Rouse and Fallou Ngom, we owe a debt of gratitude [to the planning committee](#), as well as to Ushma Suvarnakar, Renee Delancey, and Kathryn Salucka, whose hard work made for organizational magic. [An open-access proceedings of the 2016 conference in Dakar is available through AnthroSource](#), and we will be publishing the 2018 proceedings (also open-access) a bit later this fall. We are already looking ahead to 2020, and welcome suggestions on how to strengthen collaborations and welcome colleagues.

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