

Call for papers

Comparing the Copperbelt: Society, Ecology and Culture in Central Africa's mining communities

Workshop held in association with the University of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo, 23-24 July 2019

Comparing the Copperbelt is an ERC-funded research project, running at the University of Oxford from 2016-2020. The project aims to examine the Copperbelt (in both Zambia and the DR Congo) as a single region divided by a (post-)colonial border, across which flowed minerals, people and ideas. It analyses how academic knowledge production (e.g. by the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute and CEPSI) shaped understanding of Copperbelt societies and it seeks ways to explore Copperbelt political culture and popular perceptions from a historical perspective.

This workshop, building on a successful event held in Zambia in July 2018, will be organised in association with the University of Lubumbashi and will take place at the university. It aims to bring together researchers on and in the Copperbelt region to share ideas on social, environmental and cultural history. Research papers from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds (history, anthropology, economics, etc.), approaches and regional focuses are welcomed. The workshop seeks to bring together academics, cultural practitioners and social movements to discuss the region's shared histories.

Topics to be explored include, but are not limited to:

- The history or contemporary environmental situation on the Zambian and/or Congolese copperbelts
- Popular perceptions and articulations of social change e.g. through urban spirituality, cultural expression or social activism
- Processes of knowledge production and their interactions with historical change, e.g. the interaction between academic research and civil society
- The relationship between mining, political culture and social history, for example through gender, generation, class and ethnic relations
- The relationship between present-day dynamics on the Copperbelt and historical change

As well as enabling ERC project researchers to share their research insights, this workshop will enable participants to learn from other approaches and research experiences in order to advance the study of the Copperbelt region. We particularly welcome submissions from Zambian and Congolese researchers: project funding has been allocated to support the participation of local researchers, including bringing Zambian researchers to Lubumbashi. As well as academic presentations, this workshop aims to include cultural events related to the history of the region.

The conference will take place in French: translations of English presentations into French will be available.

Paper titles and abstracts (no more than 300 words) in either English or French should be sent to the organisers at copperbelt@history.ox.ac.uk by 15 March 2019. We will then contact successful applicants to make arrangements for travel, accommodation and other logistics: funding is however not available for speakers outside Zambia and the DRC.