**Multi-polar urban spaces in Africa: everyday dynamics, creativity and change**

#### Convenors

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**Discussant: Paul Jenkins**

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#### Short Abstract

This panel will discuss the challenges and opportunities that currently arise from, and in, the dynamic and constantly changing African urban spaces, with an emphasis on the everyday creativity of the majority of urban dwellers - to enhance understanding of African dynamics in a multi-polar world.

#### Long Abstract

Despite calls for a better empirically-based understanding of African cities the way such spaces and associated living ('urbanism as a way of life') is depicted typically focuses on what these are not and should be, rather than what they are and are perhaps becoming. Building upon findings of the recent completed project "Home Space in the African City" ([www.homespace/.dk](http://www.homespace/.dk)) the focus of the panel will be on the analysis of the creative solutions that the inhabitants of these cities find to solve the challenges they face.

The relevance of this panel derives from the fact that rapid urbanisation in Sub-Saharan Africa is taking place in a arguably uniquely weak political and economic context and the diversity of issues that are related to this problematic: from global urban development theories to local African urban approaches; from urban planning and housing polices to local practices of construction and urban development; from macro structural political and economic constraints to micro urban families livelihood strategies.

Researchers are thus invited to share research experiences related to urban African studies, particularly the ones based on empirical studies of creative solutions that the majority African urban dwellers provide everyday to urban problems (housing, building, transport, access to land, water and energy, among others) in the light of macro political and economic constraints. Specifically we would like to discuss how such understanding can lead to new approaches to urban African issues that challenge mainstream urban theories and policies that frame international development agendas and national urban policies.

**Abstract submission**

Proposals should consist of a paper title, a (very) short abstract of less than **300 characters**, and an abstract of **250 words**. Proposals can be written in English or Portuguese.

All proposals must be made via the bespoke on-line facility that ECAS2013 is using to handle all proposals.

<http://www.nomadit.co.uk/ecas/ecas2013/panels.php5?PanelID=2163>

**Proposals should not be sent by email**

16th January2013 – Final date for submission of abstracts

1st February and then 1st March (second round) - Notification of accepted papers