

# THE SUDANS STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

## 2018 CALL For PAPERS

### *37<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SUDANS STUDIES ASSOCIATION AND THE 70<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROGRAM OF AFRICAN STUDIES AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS May 10-13, 2018*

#### *The Conflicts in the Sudans: Regional Contexts and Beyond*

The 2018 meeting of the Sudans Studies Association (SSA) will be a historic event. First it is our 37<sup>th</sup> annual meeting. We have had an unbroken run of national and international meetings serving the scholarly study of Sudan since 1981. Secondly, this year will also be the 70<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary of the Program of African Studies at Northwestern University which pioneered in African studies since 1948. The first and oldest in the nation. So much has happened to Northwestern, the Sudan and the World that it is hard to imagine or summarize.

It is perhaps worth noting some of the connections, as well as strategic and academic interests which led to the founding of the African Studies Association and the Sudan Studies Association in the US. Indeed, one can make claim that the SSA was a by-product of and a pedigree of the Program of African Studies (PAS) at Northwestern University. Initiated and constituted as American strategic and academic projects, at the dawn of and during the Cold War era, the ASA and SSA took the form of “area/regional studies” and “sub-area/regional studies” respectively. The role of American private and philanthropic foundations was generally critical in providing the funding. These projects were considered crucial for understanding Africa and the rest of the so-called Third World, for the purposes of winning them over against their rival side during the US-Soviet ideological competition and rivalry. It is in these contexts that the relevance of the joint conference of the SSA and the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Program of African Studies at Northwestern University may be understood and appreciated. Papers that celebrate these historical connections and landmarks are welcome.

THE theme of this year’s 2018 meeting is determined to be: *The Conflicts in the Sudans: Regional Contexts and Beyond*. There are two forms of discernable conditions, to note, at the births of the two Sudans, within and beyond their immediate geography. First, a neighborhood that was toxic to democracy but conducive to military and militarized dictatorships, as well as the predominance of the “African Big Man Syndrome”, which tends to consistently conspire against the solemn respect for the constitutions, and

instead strives to create what may be characterized as “constitutional dictatorships”. That is, the autocratic or the African Big Man usually refuses to surrender power constitutionally, through open, unrigged, and democratic elections. These tendencies are well manifested in the two Sudans, in the neighborhoods, and beyond.

THE second perceptible pattern in the two Sudans is the phenomenon of *mimicry* or *mimicking*, which arises from the colonial legacies, regional contexts or neighborhoods. There is a lot of literature on this phenomenon. Briefly, it is a process of adapting to sometimes hidden order or seemingly prescribed norms in the neighborhood and beyond. Mimicking is also considered as a response to security and safety concerns or equally for support. Mimicry in the two Sudans took a number of configurations: (a) institutional form, e.g. the post-colonial state (from the Wingate colonial state); (b) a disposition of the military in politics, e.g. for the pre-secession Sudan, the 1958 coup by General Abboud, the second in Africa, was inspired by or a mimicking of the 1952 coup in neighboring Egypt; (c) ideological manifestations, e.g. Nasserism (Arab nationalism/socialism) and Islamism (Muslim Brotherhood and National Islamic Front-NIF) in the Sudan, and also a rather acute emphasis on ethnic politics and dispensations in South Sudan; and (d) lastly, personalist forms of mimicry, among the leaders of the Sudans, from Nasserist orientation to the African Big Man Syndrome.

Clearly, the costs of toxic neighborhoods and mimicry to the citizens of the two Sudans have been monumental and staggering. Genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity have found fertile grounds in the two Sudans, more so than in most African countries, and for lengthy periods of sufferings and destructions. They have been driven by seemingly endless conflicts, which reflect the toxicity of the neighborhood and the phenomenon of mimicry.

THUS, papers that address this theme are especially invited and welcome especially as we often publish the proceeding of our meetings and focused papers on a theme will be favored for such subsequent works. Conflicts in governance, military insurgencies, issues between civilian and military rule, the struggles in Darfur, clashing ideas in the Eastern Sudan, and issues of Nubian identity are all welcome. Needless to say, the historical conflicts are also marking Sudanese the pre-colonial and colonial past. Especially this can include the long and complex political relations between north and South Sudan over the centuries and recent decades. Nowadays the bloody conflicts with the new Republic of South Sudan also draw our attention.

With the Sudan facing so many internal issues, the contiguous nations, not so stable in their own rights, have also been drawn into Sudanese conflicts as proxy players, refugee centers, places for asylum and so forth as all struggle for differing versions of peace and justice. The reverberations from conflicts in the Sudans are felt in other parts of Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas as disturbed populations seek justice, peace, and sanctuary.

Finally, we have long welcomed other scientific papers even off the main theme as we have always tried to include all social sciences and history, biological, and archaeological studies, and diverse, languages and literature.

The conference will be organized into panels, roundtables, and other forms of presentations, such as artistic demonstrations or shows. Panels are intended to provide opportunities to share and discuss presentations of prepared papers. Roundtables, on the other hand, do not necessarily require prepared papers. They are intended to provide scholars with opportunities to exchange their disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives on chosen topics, and in an open forum and discussions.

Advance registration is required in order to participate in the conference, either as a panelist or any other presenter. The necessary Information Technologies (IT) for paper and other presentations, e.g. *PowerPoint*, will be available.

The deadline for submitting your 100-word abstract is Monday February 5, 2018. Please submit your proposals and all of this relevant information to: Dr. Lako Tongun, Pitzer College, Claremont Colleges:

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**Thank you very much indeed. We look forward to receiving your proposals.**