

CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Professor Scarlett Cornelissen
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Title of keynote:

Industrial entanglements and their political outflows in the Japan-South Africa relationship in the mid-twentieth Century

Biography

Scarlett Cornelissen is Professor in the Department of Political Science at Stellenbosch University. She holds a PhD from the University of Glasgow and postgraduate and Bachelor's degrees from Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town. She has been Katherine Hampson Bessell Fellow with the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University and Leibniz Professor at Leipzig University. Other research fellowships have been held with the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies at Kyoto University and the Institute of Developing Economies in Chiba, Japan.

Scarlett conducts research on Africa's international political economy with a specialist focus on Japanese diplomacy, aid and industry in Africa. Recent books include *Migration and Agency in a Globalizing World: Afro-Asian Encounters* (Palgrave, 2018), *Handbook on Africa-Asia Relations* (Routledge, 2018), and *Africa and International Relations in the Twenty-First Century* (Palgrave, paperback edition published 2015). She is co-editor of the *Review of International Studies* and *Geopolitics* and serves on the editorial boards of *European Journal of International Relations*, *Journal of Modern African Studies* and Chatham House's *International Affairs*.

Abstract

For much of the twentieth Century 'the South Africa question' stood central in Japan's relationship with the African continent. This refers in essence to how Japanese authorities' and firms' dealings with the apartheid regime from roughly the late 1950s to the late 1980s framed Japan's relations with the larger continent in complex ways. This talk engages this period and focuses on an aspect of the Japan-South Africa relationship that has not received that much attention in scholarship – that is, the industrial links forged alongside trade ties and how these reflected industrialisation processes in both Japan and South Africa at the time. I look at direct and indirect Japanese involvement in industrialisation processes in South Africa in the 1960s and 1970s through the lens of South Africa's manufacturing sector and attempts towards import-substitution industrialisation. Through the tracing of the rise of Toyota South Africa, I illustrate how political-economic processes in apartheid South Africa – in which Japanese capital and industrial links played an indirect role – were intertwined with the bolstering of an Afrikaner industrialist class. The talk aims to unpack the broad dimensions of Japan-Africa relations over the decades. I discuss the geo-institutional conditions under which economic and industrial ties came to be fashioned and the material and political outflows they brought for South Africa and the wider African continent.