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Sind Städte in Afrika „unkennbar“? Ethnologische Stadtforschung in Afrika

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Are cities in Africa 'unknowable'? Urban anthropology in Africa

Abstract. This article reviews anthropological contributions to the study of urban Africa since the 1930s. The pioneers of urban anthropology in Africa were South African researchers like Monica (Hunter) Wilson and Ellen Hellmann who looked at informal economies, changing social relations and emerging middle class aspirations among labour migrants well before the researchers at the Rhodes Livingstone Institute. Other important early contributions include Balandier's and Miner's studies about Brazzaville and Timbuktu. These and other anthropological approaches to cities in Africa anticipated perspectives and topics that only later became part of the anthropological mainstream: the attention to individual experiences, the focus on new forms of social organization rather than on "culture", the appropriation of modernity through material culture and alternative life-styles, and the application of unconventional methods. Today, anthropological research in urban Africa covers a broad range of issues. However, these anthropological contributions have been overlooked both in and outside the discipline, partly because not every ethnography in urban Africa defines itself as "urban anthropology". The article criticizes recent characterizations of cities in Africa as "elusive" or "unknowable" and argues that African cities are in fact known by their inhabitants. Empirical research should focus on what and how they know.

[Urban Africa, urban anthropology, cityness]

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Meidung als Alltagshandlung in langfristigen Abhängigkeitsbeziehungen – Schwangere Frauen mit HIV/AIDS und ihre Kommunikation in asymmetrischen Machtverhältnissen

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Avoidance in longterm relations of dependency – Pregnant women with HIV/AIDS and their communication in unequal power relations

Abstract. This article analyses the avoidance of conflicts. Avoidance as conflict mode was previously addressed in political anthropology, yet, I found it to be a common way among HIV-positive pregnant women in Lesotho in their interaction with hospital staff and family elders. I argue that avoidance is a useful tool of conflict management in longterm social relationships and when in need for on-going collaborations such as with family member and with medical staff treating chronic diseases.

So far, avoidance is mostly described in the form of physical distance (Hirschman 1974; Elwert 2004; Inhetveen 2006). Adding to this form I found furthermore five types of avoidance in the interaction of pregnant women living with HIV and their interaction with medical personal and elders. These types are grudging compliance, evasion, lying, disturbances, and involving a messenger. I resume that subordinate parties in relationships with asymmetric power relations use avoidance as an active and creative way to influence decision making processes in longterm relationships. These relations are kept in tact since open confrontations are avoided and the subordinate party keeps face.

[Medizin, Familie, Konflikt, HIV/AIDS, Lesotho]

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Traces of castes and other social strata in the Maldives: A case study of social stratification in a diachronic perspective (Ethnographic, historic, and linguistic evidence)

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Abstract. This paper explores the social stratification of Maldivian society, with particular focus on its history and traces of earlier alleged caste systems and slavery as well as their impact on Maldivian society, and the implications this fact had for their social structure. I will argue that some anthropologically remarkable traces of earlier social stratification, such as slavery and the caste system, can still be found on the islands. The same holds true for the social structure of the island Minicoy, part of the Sultanate Maldives until the beginning of the 16th century, which now belongs to India. I will demonstrate that while the middle castes have largely disappeared, the upper level of the caste hierarchy (which has survived in the local elite), the lower castes and certain groups of former slaves have been much more resistant to social developments and structural changes in the society.

[Maldives, Divehi, Minicoy, social stratification, caste, status-group, slavery, low caste, nobility, social elite, honorific forms, migration, cowrie trade]

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On the Nature and Features of the (Early) State: An Anthropological Reanalysis

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Abstract. The state is usually considered to be a centralized and specialized coercive institution for governing a society. Contrariwise, our approach stems from the presumption that the state should be studied as a type of society for which this institution is adequate. This leads to the necessity of paying special attention to the coming to the fore of the non-kin relations in state society. Political centralization cannot be regarded as a feature specific to the state, as it is applicable to many non-state forms of societies. In the meantime, the features typical only for the state is specialization resulting in administrators' professionalization, that is, in the formation of bureaucracy which is related directly to the non-kin social ties coming into prominence. As for the right to coerce, it is a dependent variable: the legitimate violence in states is exercised through and by bureaucrats who operate within bureaucratic institutions.

[state, society, kinship, territoriality, political centralization, administrative specialization, bureaucracy, legitimized violence]

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Neue Technologien – alte Kategorien? Die Problematisierung von Rasse an der Schnittstelle von Wissenschaft und Politik

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New technologies – old categories? Problematizing race between science and politics

Abstract. With the rise of new genomic technologies and an ongoing proliferation of human diversity research there has been a growing academic concern about the revival of biological understandings of race in the life sciences. Clearly it is no more enough to say that race is a social construction, if that mantra relies on a separation between race as a biological fiction vs. racism as a social reality. Race has never been confined to the realm of biology – it always constituted a complex and malleable configuration of cultural, material and political elements. To simply dismiss its biological existence therefore misses the point. In order to account for the stubborn persistence and troubling presence of race in contemporary times, I suggest a topological approach to ethnographically examine how race is coproduced between science and politics.

[Rasse, wissenschaftlicher Rassismus, Biosozialität, Topologie, Methodik]

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Resilience – Analytical Tool, Bridging Concept or Development Goal? Anthropological Perspectives on the Use of a Border Object

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Abstract. The resilience concept has gained much attention during the past two decades. Not only has the concept in its many variations – ecological resilience, social resilience, psychological resilience – gained prominence in academic publications, but nowadays the development world too is defining resilience as a key goal: in many parts of the Global South, projects addressing the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources have taken on their own specific understanding of resilience as a guideline. Such overwhelming attendance to one single idea has provoked profound critique. The resilience concept has been blamed for depoliticizing social-ecological dynamics, for its functionalist and narrow systems-based analytical perspective, for its neglect of power relations and its non-consideration of agency. This paper critically discusses the uses of the concept in various fields of inquiry and explores anthropological perspectives on different types of resilience. It argues that once the political constitution and socio-cultural embeddedness of ‘systems’, ‘system boundaries’ and ‘stressors’ is acknowledged and the gaining of resilience is understood as a political act with particular distributive consequences, the concept can meaningfully contribute to the anthropological understanding of cultural dynamics in general and social-ecological dynamics in particular. Social and psychological resilience are important extensions of resilience thinking. While the concept of social resilience has been developed in correspondence with, though often in outright rejection of, that of ecological resilience, discussions of psychological resilience were not tied to either of the two. The paper explores some ways in which each type of resilience may contribute to anthropological theorizing and discusses how these concepts can meaningfully speak to each other. The paper finally argues that the adoption of the concept ‘cultural resilience’ may complete resilience thinking within anthropology, shedding a light on the longevity of social institutions and cultural patterns. (290w)

[resilience (ecological, social, psychological), adaptive cycle, disaster]

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Klassifikation von Musikinstrumenten – Zum 100-jährigen Bestehen der Hornbostel-Sachs-Systematik

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Classification of Musical Instruments - The 100th Anniversary of the Hornbostel-Sachs-Classification System

Abstract. Musical instruments play an important part in music-cultures as tools with which to generate sound. In fact, most cultures or ethnic groups have a classification system for sound producing devices. Determining criteria are the materials of which the instruments are made as well as the way these materials are transformed into vibration.

Exactly hundred years ago Erich Moritz von Hornbostel und Curt Sachs published the article Systematik der Musikinstrumente. Ein Versuch. in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (1914). They classified musical instruments into four groups after the nature of the primary vibrating material. This classification system continues to be used worldwide in most collections and museums.

One reason for the success of this system could be its cross-cultural perspective which allows for classification without deeper knowledge of the respective cultural setting. This article discusses the structure and origin of the system, its application by the authors themselves after the publication of the article as well as its relevance for contemporary research and exhibition practice.

[musical instruments, classification system, Hornbostel und Sachs, Sourindo Mohan Tagore]

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