



Abstracts zu Workshop 18

Indigeneity: Career and appropriation(s) of a global category

Organisation: Gregor Dobler und Tilo Grätz

David Picard (Leeds)

Indigenusness and the Modern State: The Formation of Cultural Primordialisms in a Creole Island Context

In this paper, I will reflect upon the role of indigenusness in the constitution of modern states or 'modern stateliness'. I am particularly interested here in examining the relation between historical events of marginalisation and extermination of indigenous people and more recent efforts to encourage descendants of surviving indigenous people to re-emancipate and refashion indigenous identities. Tourism, cultural conservation lobbies, universities and museums seem key institutions in these recent emancipation movements. Considering that forms of marginalisation and extermination of indigenous people can be related to the foundational moments of many modern states (or that moment retrospectively considered as foundational), I propose to approach the relation between these events and the recent public re-emancipation and re-fashioning of indigenous people through the classical anthropological concept of sacrifice. Specifically, I will discuss whether the observation of recent forms of reification and self-promotion of indigenous people can be understood as part of the modern state ceremonial, of a culture and model of governance that needs 'indigenusness' as an unconditional reference to re-invoke its foundational moments and recreate its own political magic. To ground my argument, I will use ethnohistoric and ethnographic data from the island of La Reunion, Indian Ocean as well as cases from the academic literature.

Olaf Zenker (Bern)

Autochthony, indigeneity and nationalism: time-honouring and state-oriented modes of rooting individual-territory-group-triads in a globalising world

Recently, it has become standard to note the resurgence of local identities, vernacular forms of autochthonous exclusions as well as the return of the 'native' in the shape of 'indigenous peoples' as the flip-side of globalisation. The contradictory expansions of modernity thereby produce an accelerated desire for interconnecting individuals, groups and 'their' territories and for firmly rooting such triads in global space. Against this backdrop, it is astonishing that two crucial bodies of research – studies of nationalism, on the one hand, and of autochthony, on the other – hardly engage with each other conceptually and

instead provide rather contradictory accounts as to how identity formations of individuals and groups literally 'take place': within studies of nationalism, it is typically the 'non-ethnic' ('the civic') that is associated with territory through place of birth and/or residence (the 'ethnic' being mainly linked to descent and culture), whereas in research on autochthony, it is usually the 'ethnic' that legitimises privileged access to territory through 'first-comer claims' rooted in the past. This paper argues for a synthesis of insights from both fields by conceptualising 'autochthony' – i.e. the proclaimed 'original' link between individual, territory and group – as the root phenomenon. It suggests distinguishing between two causal logics underlying the reproduction of this autochthony-triad, which honour time in different ways: 'individualised autochthony' links the individual, territory and group in such a way that shared culture and/or descent ultimately follow from place of birth and/or residence within the same present, while 'collectivised autochthony' inverts this causality on the basis of continuously evoking the same past. Based on this notion of autochthony – *de facto* a model of (landed) ethnicity –, the paper proposes to distinguish between 'indigeneity' and 'nationalism' as alternative modes of targeting the state: whereas indigeneity refers to cases of autochthony that, in compensation for past discriminations, demand special entitlements *from the state*, nationalism denotes cases of autochthony that aim for the very entitlement *of the state itself*.

Gregor Dobler (Basel)

A White Traditional Authority? Afrikaner claims in Southern Africa and the conundrums of indigeneity

In Namibia and South Africa, white Afrikaans speakers have repeatedly claimed the establishment of an Afrikaner Traditional Authority and thus to bring the descendants of colonial settlers on equal legal footing with the descendants of the colonized. The group that, under apartheid, tried to cement a distinction between themselves as 'civilized' on the one hand, 'tribal' Africans on the other should be marked as indigenous in the same way as those formerly called 'Natives'. The Afrikaner claim lays open the paradoxes of the concept of indigeneity as a political instrument and its double character – as a resource to gain a legitimate means of access to the resources of state power, and as an expression of identity. This double face of instrumental and expressive connotations makes the concept as powerful as potentially dangerous. By using it for political aims, people express assumptions about the relation between citizens and the state, assumptions which have been in the centre of many scholarly analyses of African societies. The presentation will use the Afrikaner case to unravel some of the societal and political preconditions of the successful use of indigeneity, and look at the common points between 'emancipative' and 'exclusivist' uses of indigeneity/ autochthony.

Tilo Grätz (Hamburg/Halle)

Political emancipation, Cultural entrepreneurship, revivalism. Reflexions on the concept of "Indigenous Media", with a case study from Benin (West Africa)

My paper examines the concept of Indigenous Media that gained much prominence in media anthropology and development cooperation. Referring to debates on the notion of the "indigenous", I will discuss to which extent the concept is appropriate, and will point to some ambivalences it entails when comparing diverse case studies. Assessing an example of a Community radio station in Benin (Radio Ilema), I will propose a different analytical frame, focussing on the set of actors, their often diverging agendas as well as modes of technological appropriation.