Program

15 October 2015 - Room S11, Seminar Building

09:30-10:00 Registration

10:00-10:30 Conference Opening/Welcome address

10:30-12:00 Keynote/Public Lecture

Peter Geschiere: "Ethnicity: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial - Africa in Comparison"

12:00-13:30 Lunch

13:30-15:30 Panel A: Skeptical voices on precolonial or premodern ethnicity

Scholarly understandings of ethnicity often start from the assumption that only the modern condition makes ethnic classifications relevant. Only with the global extension of European dominance through colonialism the idea of race became a structuring principle on a global scale (Quijano); and while pre-national imperial rule only marginally applied ethnic classifications to maintain its political boundaries, the nation-state defined its territorial boundaries in explicitly ethnic terms (Wimmer).

The first panel gives room to the viewpoint that there is only limited proof – if any – that ethnic classifications mattered in premodern/precolonial societies. If it does indeed not make sense to use ethnicity as an analytical category when studying them, what were the more relevant social categorizations in premodern societies?

Speakers:
Karoline Noack (University of Bonn): “Ethnic” - where did it come from and why we have to get rid of it
Ed Wilmsen (University of Edinburgh): Ethnicity - an easy euphemism for everything: problems in projecting the present onto the past
Richard Fardon (University of London): Primordialism and constructivism and other unappealing theories of ethnicity

Discussant:
Mario Krämer (UoC Forum Ethnicity)

15:30-16:00 Coffee/Tea break
16:00-18:00 Panel B: Premodern colonialism and archeology

When scholars highlight the importance of colonialism for ethnogenesis and ethnicized politics, they often refer to the European colonialism from the sixteenth century onwards. But what about earlier, premodern forms of colonialism? Did premodern empires such as the Romans in Europe, the Inca or Aztecs in America or certain dynasties in China also influence the ethnic identity of their vassals? Most or sometimes all that we know about premodern empires comes from archeological research. But does archaeology have the means to gain insights about questions of (ethnic) identity and belonging? The panel addresses these questions from the viewpoint of several regions and disciplines.

Speakers:
Sarah Albiez-Wieck (UoC Forum Ethnicity): Translocal positionalities in prehispanic Mexico and Peru
Nico Lüdtke (University of Oldenburg): Ethnicity, colonialism and the borders of the social world in sixteenth-century Spain
Yannis Stouraitis (University of Vienna): The political un-importance of ethnicity in the medieval East Roman world
Yasuko Takezawa (Kyoto University): Parallel marginalization processes in pre-modern times? Jews, Romani people, and “kawaramono” in Japan

Discussant:
Stefanie Gänger (University of Cologne)

18:00 Book Launch:

19:30 Dinner (for speakers only)
11:30-13:30  Panel D: Current and political uses of (assumed?) historical ethnicities

Today, in many parts of the world, ethnicity is used as a political resource by different actors in their struggle over inclusion and exclusion. This is reflected, for example, in current debates about the exclusion of immigrant ‘others’, in discourses of autochthony, as well as in the global indigenous rights movement. Often, such discourses refer to experiences of colonial exploitation as the basis for common identification, while at the same making claims to long histories of local rootedness and cultural integrity. They simultaneously reframe the present in view of the past, and the past in view of a desired future. In this panel we will ask: How do postcolonial ethnicities differ from their predecessors? How much historicity is needed for making convincing claims? Is ethnicity or nationality still the primary currency for collective mobilization today? Or is it gradually being replaced by alternative social categorizations, such as religion or wealth? Are we facing new groupisms in our analytical endeavors?

Speakers:
Manuel Fernández-Götz (University of Edinburgh): Celtic identities ancient and modern
Günter Schlee (Max Planck Institut Halle): Ethnicity change and exchange: What is ethnicity worth and what can it be traded for?
Tanja Bastia (University of Manchester): Class and ethnicity in contemporary Buenos Aires

Discussant:
Lye Tuck-Po (University Sains Malaysia)

13:30-14:30  Lunch

14:30-17:00  Final Plenary Discussion and Closing Remarks

Discussant:
Tobias Schwarz (UoC Forum Ethnicity)

Moderator:
Michaela Pelican (UoC Forum Ethnicity)