Third Biannual Anthropology Research Day

Please join us for a discussion of the research presentations by:

**Jordan Oelke** (MA Anthropology, Leipzig)
Caring for Others to Care for Coral: Environmental Stewardship along the White River Community in Ocho Rios, Jamaica

**Adam Bobeck** (MA Anthropology, Leipzig)
Icon, Index, & Islam: Material Religion and Twelver Shi‘ism in Leipzig

**Anna-Lisa Reith** (MA Anthropology, Leipzig)
Anthropology vs. Ideology – Handmade Africa Maps as Knowledge Carriers

**Ji Hye Son** (MA Anthropology, Leipzig)
The First International Socialist Brethren in the Karl Marx University: The Vacillating Position of North Korean Students between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’

**Carmen Pereyra** (MA Anthropology, Leipzig)
Counter-hegemonic or Hegemonic Strategy? An Analysis of the Right-wing Populism Discourse in a Project calling Germans to Migrate to Paraguay

**Date** November 15th 2019
**Time** 1pm – 5pm
**Venue** S102, Schillerstr. 6, Leipzig

All are welcome!
This planned master’s thesis project is a collaboration between a researcher (myself), and a grassroots NGO, the White River Fish Sanctuary (WRFS) in Ocho Rios, Jamaica. The WRFS, established in 2016, works to reconcile damages done to the coral reef ecosystem by tourism and fishing industries through coral gardening, a recent newly introduced method for restoring degraded coral colonies, guided by a sustainable development script. The White River is a main pollutant source to the WRFS’s coral nursery, and shoreline waters of tourism hotels. The researcher will apply the lenses of translation and affect while contributing to the WRFS’s efforts to decentralize its sustainable development institution, by promoting environmental stewardship and listening to the stories of community members along the White River. In addressing the suspected types and sources of pollution flowing into the coral nursery, as one factor of the coral reef’s vulnerability, it is hypothesized that individuals, businesses, and families along the White River experience a vulnerability complex of being negatively impacted by the high pollution level in the river, while being polluters themselves. Thus, the best way to study how sustainable development scripts are translated to community members upstream, outside of the coral nursery and fish sanctuary value circles at the mouth of the White River, is by participating in building lines of dialogue between the institution promoting environmental stewardship and the community members. A community-based research model, which compiles stories from participants, will be combined with the collection of water samples to determine the types and sources of pollution in a way that does not favor qualitative or quantitative results. What affects do the shared stories of WRFS members from the sea, create in community members further up the river, on land, in translating their results in ways perceived to be valuable to community members? What paradoxes emerge in the tales and actions of community members in relating to the White River? How does the WRFS make the case for caring for coral?
For ritual holidays, Shi’i Muslims around the world congregate in Husseiniyas – congregational halls correlated to the remembrance of Imam Hussein’s martyrdom. Leipzig is home to a Husseiniya that has fostered a community that is undergoing rapid transformation. The reasons for this transformation are numerous: waves of migration, economic considerations, bureaucratic limitations, and social sensitivities (both inside and outside the community) all play a role in how the Husseiniya organizes the community. By examining these material components and the Husseiniya itself as inseparable from how Shi’i Islam in Leipzig transpires, rather than as something additional to it, my presentation highlights how Shi’i Muslims in Germany engage as Shi’i Muslims.
Students drew maps of Africa at the Institute of Anthropology at the University of Leipzig in the 1950s and 1960s. These maps can open a door to the anthropological work of that time. They do not only contain the history of their production, but also of the sources that were used for them. I chose 3 maps of Africa for my elaboration. In their case, hybrid and encyclopedic knowledge was carried from Hermann Baumann’s book Völkerkunde von Afrika: mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der kolonialen Aufgabe, published in 1939, further into the GDR. His diffusionist and essentialist idea of language, culture and territory continued. Although the socialistic influence on Karl-Marx-University was strong during the GDR, what affected the scientific practice. Travelling and the access to literature was restricted, while the state also reformed the higher education system. Besides that, sharing ideological values, e.g. the concept of Völkerfreundschaft, was public concern. I found a break in the fact that older, colonial positive sources were used for the production of the Africa maps in a time that was strongly marked by an anti-imperialistic ideology. I realized furthermore, that the knowledge was carried on and it got denser, even if it contradicted the public consensus. It is now still my matter to elaborate, if and how knowledge was carried on further than to the 1960s. Can I find such a fraction between ideology and anthropological work also in later times?
The thesis starts with the founding of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and explores the discourse of nationalism via the evaluation documents of North Korean students who were enrolled at Karl Marx University in the 1950s. Disparate ideologies ranging from traditional German heritage and anti-fascist ideology to the sense of socialist internationalism were inextricably intertwined in the construction (Aufbau) of the nascent GDR state during the 1950s. Tied up in the context of the Cold War, the ruling party of the GDR, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), had to (re)invent a national identity in accordance with the socialist ideology, which was distinct from its rival, capitalist West Germany. Along with the creation of a new German identity that rejected the fascism of the Third Reich, the GDR actively participated in practicing universal and cosmopolitan socialist values, especially in relation to the socialist brethren countries. North Korean students were the first international guests that the GDR government officially invited in 1952, as a practice of fraternal socialism. Karl Marx University (KMU), now the University of Leipzig, played the role of entrance institution for all foreign students who came to the GDR, providing intensive German language and academic preparation. The objects of this analysis are the evaluation documents obtained from the archive of Leipzig University, which pertain to 43 North Korean students who studied at KMU from 1953 to 1962; the period which coincides with Aufbau of the GDR. Drawing on previously unused archival sources, the thesis applies discourse analysis to study how the position of North Korean students vacillate in between the category of ‘us’, the socialist brother with the same status, to the ‘other’ who still needs the help of the West in order to progress. This analysis does not lead to a simplified narrative defining the GDR as a racist state. Nevertheless, it articulates how acts of socialist solidarity were practiced and experienced by the professors of KMU, in a liminal period in which the GDR tried to transform free itself from its colonial and fascist history and transform into an egalitarian socialist state.
The growth of right-wing populism around the world is a worrying phenomenon that has been the subject of many studies. This work aims to contribute to this growing area of research by exploring a project that participates in this political spectrum inviting Germans through the Internet to take part in a gated community in Paraguay. To study the discourse circulating in society entails analyzing a form of social and political action, therefore, using methods of CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis), delving into the rhetoric, the proposals and imaginaries conveyed by such rhetoric, and the discursive strategies in the call to migrate, I focus on the struggle for hegemony. Relying on Antonio Gramsci’s insights on hegemony and the re-reading and reworking of the term in the realm of post-structuralism by Ernesto Laclau, I aim to discern whether the project is enmeshed in a form of counter-hegemonic or hegemonic strategy and the implications that each of these understandings poses. Is it a counter-hegemonic strategy inasmuch as is sustained in the absence of consent with the ruling system, or what can be found is a detachment from the hegemonic nucleus that, through a position of „resistance”, does nothing but reinforce the domain of hegemony?