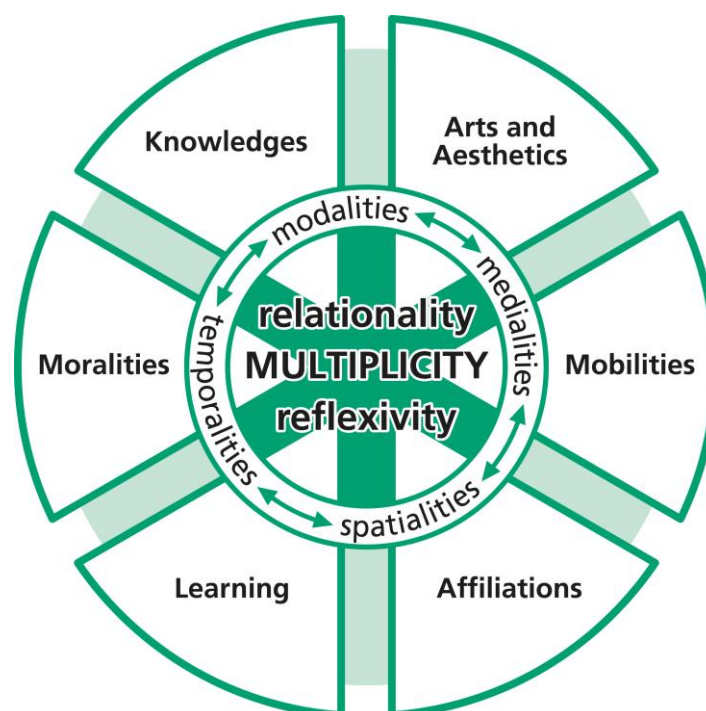# Research Sections

The cluster will pursue its empirical and theoretical agenda in six thematic fields to be studied in our Research Sections (RSs): Moralities, Knowledges, Arts & Aesthetics, Mobilities, Affiliations, and Learning.

Each RS will be run by an interdisciplinary team of researchers, who are expected to develop subprojects that create synergies between the thematic fields and generate additional analytical value for the cluster as a whole. Initially, the RSs will comprise the 25 Principal Investigators, but they will eventuelly include other key researchers from the University of Bayreuth, Africa-based and other international cooperation parners as well as researchers based at the African Cluster Centres.

Core Concepts, Heuristic Angles, and Research Sections

Research Section Moralities

Principal Investigators:
Martina Drescher, Romance & General Linguistics
Eberhard Rothfuss, Social Geography
Rudolf Schüssler, Philosophy
Eva Spies, Study of Religion

The objective of this RS is to study modes of "doing ethics" in contexts where questions of well-being and societal transformation are at stake, especially in fields characterised by transnational interactions such as development, social/religious movements or international justice. We understand morals or ethics not as given principles or rules, but rather explore

the processes of how moral concerns, claims, and value judgements emerge, gain recognition or cause conflict. Here, we analyse processes of communicating, negotiating and practising moralities, and we study the different modes of relating, such as collaboration, rejection or non-recognition through which moral positions arise and take shape.

Searches for transformation on the African continent are shaped by a high frequency of interventions by international experts and organisations of all kinds, as well as the many national and civil society initiatives to improve everyday life. Against this background, the RS wants to study how, in the course of such activities, different moral claims, concerns, and judgements emerge, and how they influence issues of public interest, and questions of societal transformation and future-making. We study the coexisting, sometimes overlapping and frequently conflicting moral demands, worries and evaluations as expressions of multiplicity, and thus set out to analyse the historical, contemporary, and potential, imagined and personal, national and transnational relations through which they take shape. We will focus on fields such as (inter-)national jurisdiction, (trans-)national social and religious movements, and international development, investigating for example negotiations around the cooperation with the International Criminal Court, or moral communication and religious practices seeking to transfor the nation.

Moralities are frequently understood as given ethical principles or socially approved codes of conduct. The RS, however, conceives of moralities as continuously constituted in and through social and socio-material, often asymmetrical relations. In this sense, we want to study historical and ongoing processes of *doing ethics*, i.e. the relational processes through which moralities emerge. According to this praxeological understanding, our focus is on human activities that deal with evaluations and judgements—notions of fairness, well-being, and the right or wrong ways to act and live a good or bad life—as well as their recognition and/or rejection. As such, we want to explore the role that different modes of "doing ethics" play in shaping and influencing societal transformations and future perspectives. Here the RS is especially interested in conflictual modes of doing ethics in contexts of historical, contemporary and future agencies and (power) relations. Tackling these questions, we propose to elaborate our praxeological approach in order to contribute to a better under-standing of the relational processes that are of key interest in in the cluster as a whole.

Objectives

Our notion of moralities as "doing ethics" mirrors our focus on the processuality and emergence of ethics in social interaction. The RS pursues two central objectives: first, to describe and analyse modes of doing ethics, and second, to examine the ways these shape, and are shaped by, processes of social transformation and future-oriented perspectives.

In pursuit of our first objective, we will study processes of doing ethics in fields characterised by competing, overlapping or coexisting moral claims and judgements. By focusing on how people communicate, negotiate and practice moralities we aim to study how

different modes of relating, such as cooperation, appropriation, rejection or disavowal, produce different moral concerns, criteria and judgements. Here we are especially interested in situations of disagreement, including claims of moral incompatibility and incommensurability; i.e., the impossibility of translating one's moral criteria and practices into the categories of others. For example, the refusal to translate religious concerns into the bureaucratic and legal rules of the nation state or to adopt behavioural norms advocated by international NGOs.

Our second objective is to scrutinise the connection between modes of doing ethics and social transformations, and to find out, for instance, how public moral claims and processes of exclusion or contestation relate to inequalities, changing power relations and emerging forms of alternative sociality. Thus, with a focus on contexts of transformation, we will be particularly attentive to the power relations from which moralities emerge, and which they might change.

Altogether, we aim to develop a joint, interdisciplinary approach to relational processes of emerging moralities within public discourses, institutions, and material practices.

Work Programme

The work programme of our RS is guided by the combination of three methodological takes: communicating, negotiating and practicing moralities. Moreover, it is organised according to our common focus on situations characterised by initiatives and interventions of new African and non-African actors, in which competing and overlapping moral claims and judgements emerge. In particular, we will study contexts affected by the interventions of transnational agencies (e.g. individual actors, organisations, new judicial regulations or material infrastructures). Interdisciplinary teams will focus on conflictual relations wherein moralities shape, and, at the same time, are shaped by situations of change; and in which they thus tend to become explicit as they are contested, excluded, appropriated, and sometimes imposed and prescribed.

The perspective of communicating moralities starts out from the premise that morality is communicatively constituted. This approach will be of particular use in the study and conceptualisation of the role of speech (acts) in the sphere of public discourse, for example in studies on the communicative construction of health, sexuality and gendered moralities in the context of pandemic discourses, including (inter-) national sensitization campaigns.

The focus on negotiating moralities offers an original access to processes of doing ethics in institutional contexts, for example, courts of justice, reconciliation commissions or charity organisations. Here we are especially interested in the questions of when and how different stakeholders bring in and bargain over moral claims and judgements in these contexts, how these are made explicit and enforced, and at what points they influence public debates on transformation.

Practising moralities will provide access to the materiality and situatedness of doing ethics, and thus to actors and agencies, and the roles that bodies, objects, spaces and infrastructures play in producing and shaping tacit and more explicit moralities. Studying for example international development interventions or religious/social movements we ask how moral concerns, criteria and judgements are established and expressed in and through material practices which strive to bring about "the good life", and/or change.

Research Section Knowledges

Principal Investigators:
Eric Anchimbe, English Linguistics
Susan Arndt, Anglophone Literatures
Christine Hanke, Media Studies
Katharina Schramm, Anthropology

The RS Knowledges will investigate knowledges and their global and local impacts. It will study the trajectories and politics of processes of knowledge, with respect to
a) the un/doing of knowledges,
b) the scopes and scales of knowledges, and
c) the politics of knowledges.
By contributing to the methodological framing and theoretical sharpening of the concepts of reflexivity and relationality, this RS challenges us to reflect on the situatedness of our own knowledge production in the cluster.

Objectives
The main objective in this RS is to study the production, enactment, dissemination, and effects of knowledges. We draw attention to the relational ways in which knowledges are constantly formed and transformed, shape-shifting social and political configurations. Thus framed, this RS will investigate the multiplicity of knowledges along three interconnected lines:

First, in the (un)doing of knowledges, we will be interested in the ways various knowledges in and about Africa are generated, understood, classified, and (re)ordered. Emphasis will be on contingent practices: How are knowledges performed, stabilised and validated in concrete material relations and discourses? How are they unlearned, silenced or ignored, how are they made (ir)relevant? How do different forms of evidence-making, interpretation and knowing relate to each other? Which agencies do matter, and how?

Second, in analysing the trajectories, scopes and scales of knowledges, we will consider knowledges as ongoing projects brought forth in transregional and transtemporal encounters: What happens when knowledges migrate and relocate or are displaced? What is added, truncated or substituted to fit a new setting? How are knowledges translated,

adapted, contested, unlearned and re-known in the processes of circulation? Why and under what circumstances are knowledges (not) mobilised or silenced?

Third, with respect to the politics of knowledge we will focus on forms of domination and contestation linked to the nexus of colonial and postcolonial perspectives, as intersected with, gender, queer and posthuman studies. The two main foci here are: to examine the co-production of epistemic and governmental orders in historical and contemporary settings, and to engage with nativist agendas of knowledges, such as the notion of indigenous/endogenous knowledge. How do such movements perform alternative epistemic strategies? What kinds of postcolonial ontological politics emerge in their wake?

<u>Work Programme</u>

The research projects to be pursued in this RS will take up the lines of investigation as follows: First, they will explicitly address the (un)doing of knowledges. We will study how entangled historical and contemporary knowledges are produced, authorised and challenged through practices of collecting, classifying, mapping, and storage. Here, our interest is on the ways in which classificatory principles and categories of difference(s) (e.g. race, ethnicity, age, sex, gender, culture, species etc.) are established; how they materialise in scientific, literary and linguistic narrations, practices and models; how they are entwined with historical genealogies and political orders; how they connect these multiple elements, and how they are potentially dismantled and resituated.

Second, projects will engage with the trajectories, scopes and scales of knowledges that account for relational processes of translation, transformation and hybridisation. We will focus on discursive and material practices in and by which knowledges are articulated and circulated through time and space. With respect to the relationship between language and knowledges we will take into account how languages coexist, travel and change in processes of translation. We will trace knowledge trajectories in colonial and postcolonial texts and discourses. We will investigate how these knowledge trajectories compete with other knowledges, how they are challenged, co-constructed and/or hybridised. The temporal and spatial circulations of archival objects appropriated and conserved during colonialialism (including ethnographica, human remains, material specimens, catalogues and indexes) will be studied in relation to their impact on contemporary productions of knowledges.

Finally, projects will look at the politics of knowledge in Africa and African diasporas. We will pay attention to knowledges as products of nativisation, nationalisation, indigenisation and hybridisation in relation to complex processes of migration and globalisation. Western epistemologies have never encountered a discursive vacuum, but, rather, existing ideoscapes and knowledges. The translation of foreign texts and knowledge models into African (and other) settings often involves the amalgamation and change of both "foreign" and "local" knowledges, as well as new configurations of power; processes which have often had global impacts. Here, we will study literary and audiovisual narrations as

reflexive sites for negotiating migrations and global knowledge encounters. Empirically, we will engage with the co-production of epistemic and political orders, employing "the future" as a category of analysis e.g. with respect to Afrofuturism and Afrofeminism.

In accordance with the cluster's aim of reconfiguring African studies, the projects in this RS will reflexively engage with current debates about the decolonisation of knowledges and will develop new methodologies with respect to the epistemological and political challenges raised by these discussions in institutional settings in Africa and beyond.

We will take the lines of investigation as lenses through which we explore the multiplicity of knowledges both diachronically and synchronically. The approaches and frameworks are designed to both support and benefit from the transdisciplinarity of the RS, thus strengthening our joint contribution to the methodological framing, theoretical sharpening and empirical specification of the three core investigative concepts of the cluster—multiplicity, relationality and reflexivity.

Research Section Arts & Aesthetics

Principal Investigators:
Ute Fendler, Romance & Comparative Literature
Ivo Ritzer, Media Studies in Africa
Rémi Tchokothe, African Linguistics
Clarissa Vierke, Literatures in African Languages
Ulf Vierke, Art Studies Africa

This RS addresses the multiplicity of artworks. Hence, instead of taking given unities in aesthetics for granted as our starting point, we will focus on ongoing processes of creation, mediation and interpretation as well as how artworks shape and are shaped by material and social conditions.

Objectives

The central objective of this RS is to provide a better understanding of the actual processes of making art(s) and their ways of relating to the world, by conceiving of artworks as multi-layered, and as having their own ways of reflecting upon being in the world. The RS will approach (the) making art(s) and aesthetics through three interrelated lines of investigation:
a) artists' practices and audience perceptions;
b) circulation and configuration;
c) the materiality of artworks.
Subprojects on artists' practices and audience perceptions within this RS will not focus on artworks as clearly defined objects, but will turn towards the actual multimedial and multilingual practices and repertoires of artists, including writers, musicians, filmmakers, DJs, performance artists, and dancers. How do artists relate to other artists and artworks, for instance through appropriating or rejecting ideas, repertoires of imagery, sounds or texts?

Subprojects on circulation and configuration will consider artworks as constantly drawing on and feeding into ever-changing flows of sounds, texts, images, which (re)configure in specific artworks and contexts. Going beyond concepts of unilineal distribution from the global North to the South or within one linguistic domain, we will consider multidirectional flows at various scales, across and beyond the African continent, for instance to Asia or Latin America, as well as the West.

Subprojects on the materiality of artworks will analyse the aesthetic characteristics and specific material gestalt that actually make up artworks. The mediums of artworks are not only vehicles of expression, but decisively shape their production, distribution and reception. Furthermore, depending on their materiality, artworks also relate to the world in specific ways: there are interactions between social experience and the forms of artworks, which make alternative existences sensorially perceptible. New materialist and speculative realist perspectives that highlight the agency of artworks themselves and relegate problematic idealist assumptions such as artists' intentions to the background will be important points of reference in this line of research.

Work Programme

Our aim is to critically revisit established research practices that consider aesthetic practices separately, according to categorical, linguistic and disciplinary boundaries. Research within this RS will thus include a wide range of aesthetic practices and artworks (including film, literature, music and other visual arts/media).

Our focus on artists' practices and audiences' perceptions entails that we will make case studies of the actual production of artworks by particular artists, as well as of how audiences relate to them. More specifically, we will concentrate attention upon multimedial and multilingual practices and also address questions about the tacit experiential ways in which artists and audiences relate to artworks.

Our work on circulation and configuration will entail studying flows of texts, films, sound and imagery, while taking a critical view on the politics of circulation, as well as on definition, in keeping with the cluster's key concept of reflexivity. Here we will critically interrogate the politics of the categorisation of aesthetic practices and problematise the global vs. local dichotomy. We will seek to further develop perspectives on the far-reaching connections of artworks across linguistic and methodological boundaries. It is our aim to go beyond centre-periphery models by considering various aesthetic practices in various languages and media from transregional and transcontinental perspectives. We will study the musical, literary and art "landscapes" of specific contexts, focusing, for instance, on the entanglements and co-constitution of French, Portuguese, English and Swahili literary productions in the Indian Ocean archipelagos. Here, our intention is to work out how actual aesthetic practices in various media and languages relate to each other, as well as charting the migratory flows of sounds, images and texts, studying them in different contexts and changing constellations.

Foregrounding material and form, we will focus on the media of particular artworks and ask how they come to take shape in form. Here, we will also ask how processes of transfer across media impact on the effects of artworks, such as, for instance, from theatre to film and television. Following the migration of texts, images, and sounds and their reconfiguration in specific artworks will allow for comparative analysis of the specifics of media and materials. The RS will delve into explorations of the artwork's agency, as well as the tension between the artist's subjectivity and the autonomy of artworks. This line of investigation will take inspiration from new materialist and speculative realist conceptions underlining the autonomous force of artworks. Here the RS greatly benefits from the discussions that arise between its more empirically oriented researchers in the social sciences, and those of a more hermeneutic-philosophical background in humanities.

Central to all subprojects in this RS will be the building of a dynamic archive, both to store audio, visual, and textual media and also to provide tools for discerning affiliations between texts, imagery and sounds. Exhibitions, both site-based and in virtual formats, offer both a means to present the findings of this RS, as well as a laboratory for transmedial research that will bring invited international artists together with resident researchers.

Research Section Mobilities

Principal Investigators:
Ulrike Beisel, Anthropology
Martin Doevenspeck, Political Geography
Joël Glasman, African History
Cyrus Samimi, Climatology

While mobility has increased dramatically around the globe over the last decades, a focus on the Global South and Africa in particular reveals selective and ambiguous mobilities. This RS empirically and conceptually interrogates these complex patterns of (im)mobility: the movements and blockages of people, things and ideas, within, towards and outwards from Africa. (Im)mobilities in Africa and its diasporas are closely tied to multiplicity: (im)mobilities can occur simultaneously at various locations, and in complex ways; they may affect, clash with, or contradict each other beyond the standard perspectives of South-North movements of raw resources and refugees out of Africa, and developmental ideas arriving onto the continent. This RS offers a grasp on multiplicity by focusing on various forms of (im)mobilities. It foregrounds the contingent relations established by and between multiple movements of people, things, and ideas on the African continent and beyond. The angles of temporalities and spatialities take centre stage in the analytical approach. The empirical focus is on who and what moves where, when, how and why, namely on the reasons for movement or stasis, and on their attendant socio-political, socio-economic and socio-

ecological formations. Three lines of investigation provide a broad empirical perspective on current and past mobilities, towards, from and within Africa:

a) the (im)mobility of people;

b) the (im)mobility of things;

c) the (im)mobility of ideas.

Of great relevance for this RS are the theoretical advances of "Mobilities Studies" that show how the interconnections of a variety of mobility practices constitute relations, and how mobilities in turn are constituted by these relations. The bulk of the empirical research that has taken such a relational approach has happened in the Global North. As a result, such studies have rarely considered, for example, the colonial and neoliberal forms of power with which many forms of mobility are imbued, perpetuating global inequalities. Work in this RS focuses on multidirectional movement to destabilise universalised notions of mobility and stasis built on Western understandings of mobilities and to bring the conceptual innovations of "Mobilities Studies" thus far into closer conversation with African scholarship.

Objectives

Research in this section develops new transdisciplinary research questions and conceptual and methodological approaches to mobilities. This RS questions the drivers of differential mobilities, dwelling and place-making practices; the environmental impacts associated with, for example, physical transport; multiple concepts of resource and environmental management and perceptions of climate and ecological events. We investigate how mobilities are tracked, ordered and governed in the context of, e.g., migration control, or biometric citizenship. We understand mobilities as molded to fit the different historical contexts in and with which they emerge, and organised through specific constellations of uneven movements.

Work Programme

This RS focuses on three lines of investigation to carve out the relationship between mobilities and immobilities, in Africa and beyond: (a) the (im)mobility of people; (b) the (im)mobility of things; and (c) the (im)mobility of ideas. These lines of investigation enable a broad empirical perspective on current and past mobilities, towards, from and within Africa. We propose to explore a specific dimension of multiplicity: namely, the spatial and temporal aspects of (im)mobilities on various scales.

(Im)mobility of people: the RS addresses various modes, practices and experiences of (im)mobility, within, from and towards Africa. Our studies of mobile and immobile subjects, embodied experiences of movement and stasis are aimed to reveal the politics of multiple and uneven practices and spaces of mobility by analysing movements, places, policies, programmes, effects, myths, and discourses of migration, as well as obstacles and coercive measures relative to it. We invite studies on how social practices are embedded in changing mobility patterns in the North are reshaping land use in Africa (e.g. copper and lithium mining for e-mobility); on internal and international migration from, within and to Africa; on

representations of migration, flight, refugee camps and other spaces and places of (im)mobility and migration control; and on the technologization of border management.

(Im)mobility of things and technologies: subprojects on mobile (bio)materials, technical devices, and goods are invited to analyse the material-semiotic changes mobile objects undergo, and the socio-economic and infrastructural conditions they engender, whether deliberately so, or as a side-effect of globalised markets: the conditions of labour, health hazards for bodies, soils and souls, and their attendant social formations. We welcome interdisciplinary studies on the materialities of mobilities, their socio-material, economic and environmental costs and benefits. Topics may include: resource extraction and flows; the translation of new energy technologies; human / nonhuman entanglements, and invasive species; the expansion of virtual financial and informatic flows; biometric citizenship; the trade in biomaterials such as timber, ivory or organs; and changes in environmental or climatic conditions, their consequences and mitigation technologies.

(Im)mobility of ideas: This line is explicitly focused on the power of concepts, models and narrations of and in mobilities. We study how travelling concepts and narrations change the contexts in which they are introduced, as well as how concepts and narrations themselves change as they move from one context to another. We investigate the interactions and co-constitution of concepts and contexts. This includes travelling ideas or concepts of nature conservation and climate change adaptation. Topics of interest include the mobility of indicators such as the United Nations' "Sustainable Development Goals"; the mobilities of tropes and narrations in the arts; and the mobilities of statistics, data and algorithms, such as in international finance or insurance practices, or in relation to population control.

Research Section Affiliations

Principal Investigators:
David Stadelmann, Economics
Alexander Stroh, Political Science
Ulrike Wanitzek, African Legal Studies
Volker Wiese, Law

Today's African nation states maintain multiple, often overlapping, competing political, economic and social affiliations that change over time and redefine societal issues. In this thematic field we propose to analyse the tensions, obstacles and temporal evolution as well as the benefits and challenges connected with such affiliations, especially as they play out in regional economic communities (RECs).

Consider the recent Agreement on a Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) in Africa as an example for an emerging affiliation between the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Regional economic exchange, legal harmonization and

political cooperation within and between the three participating RECs has been limited and it has been caught between the multiplicity of modes of collaboration and policies aimed at different degrees of homogenisation, such that internal potentials have not fully been realized. These multiple affiliations and references to regional integration mechanisms reshape economic relationships and question existing borders, concepts of nation states, and legal understandings of diverse sets of affected African societies.

Beyond holding regional affiliations through RECs, African states are affiliated with global organizations. African relations are shaped by historical trajectories such as former colonial ties and migration networks. Simultaneously, a number of existing states in present borders struggle with their own sovereignty, concepts of national identity and ethnic diversity. In theory, affiliations in Africa are supposed to facilitate and redefine modes of exchange, and cooperation, and they even extend to understandings of rights which affect existing, fluid individual and group identities. Although regional integration is *en vogue* in Africa and affected by development optimism, actual results of integration on the ground often fall short of theoretically expected outcomes, pointing to the need of academic reflection on existing theories. Evidently affiliations in Africa are not limited to trade, legal harmonization and political integration but they have the potential to affect capital movements and migration issues, which in turn reshape existing trade relationship and require the evaluation and evolution of existing economic, legal and political settings.

Objectives

We propose to explore the complexity and interplay of different affiliations and integration efforts by analysing (a) *Interacting Markets, (b) Decision Making,* and *(c) Human Rights.* A typical research question raised in the field of interacting markets relates to necessary prerequisites for regional integration to enhance social and economic welfare and to foster cohesion on the African continent. Economic co-operation of states within RECs and beyond implies cross-border movement of persons, capital, goods and ideas. Challenges arise because of sometimes confusing affiliations to overlapping RECs, but also due to the economic, legal, political and societal feedback mechanisms of policy changes in an integrating Africa, where national borders become fluent and where integration and interests of decision makers multiple in nature. Since interacting markets require and favour mobilities, this invites cooperation with the RS "Mobilities".

Any process of integration connects and affects actors such as international, national and regional political decision makers, public administrators, courts, developmental agencies, and diverse interest groups, among others. When analysing decision making, we explore state-time dependent interests, incentives and intentions of decision makers in Africa to understand, evaluate and design potential policies that influence, extend, shape and promote mutually beneficial affiliations between actors with diverse interests. A typical research question here relates to the incentives of politicians, business leaders, bureaucrats,

judges or NGOs to push or frustrate affiliations that tie countries to integrated decision making at various levels. Different cultures and traditions of dispute settlement, their indigenous and colonial past and their future role in modern Africa shape existing affiliations and engender new ones, thereby providing feedback mechanisms. Consequently, we consider decision making in the resulting multilevel set-up to depend at least as much on the kind of relations at play as on the individual characteristics of the many actors and organisations involved. This can be achieved by means of analysing the institutional structures as well as the incentives of decision actors.

Existing institutions shape affiliations and affiliations transform institutions, thereby reconfiguring understandings of peoples and existing states. Such transformation processes link to fundamental Human Rights. According to the classical, Western understanding, such rights are tied to the individual who are to be protected from the state. The alternative protection of various collective entities—African legal texts tend to speak of "peoples" or "national communities"—is not conflict-free as individuals may have to give up rights in the interest of the group or entity they belong to. Combining the tools of social science and legal studies with cultural analysis, we will ask whether the multiplicity in African legal provisions is relaxing the observance of clear but static rules in favour of mediation and consensus-building among different actors. The focus on Human Rights connects to debates in the RS "Moralities" and can also inform research about decision-making processes in general.

On a higher level of abstraction and even broader interdisciplinary collaboration, this RS contributes practical observations to approach reflexivity as a key concept of the cluster. The Tanzanian-German Centre for Eastern African Legal Studies (TGCL) in Dar es Salaam has built strong relations between the research topic "regional integration" and the legal practice of regional integration by training, among others, lawyers beyond the legal framework of the East African Community (EAC). The ambition of this RS in "applied reflexivity" draws on the careers of researchers and former TGCL students from all six Partner States of the EAC and beyond to find the effects of research and teaching interventions on the outcome of interest itself. Reflexivity here invites the analysis of the ways in which TGCL has co-shaped debates on regional integration. This includes self-reflection and empirical evaluation of its activities and results so far, and continuous reflection and monitoring accompanying research on affiliations, such as those of regional economic communities and international and regional human rights regimes, and the translation of education into national and local discourses.

Research Section Learning

Principal Investigators:
Erdmute Alber, Anthropology
Iris Clemens, Education Science

Susanne Mühleisen, English Linguistics
Rüdiger Seesemann, Islamic Studies

This RS seeks to realise an understanding of multiple and interrelated processes of learning in Africa and their connectedness beyond the continent, with particular reference to—and relevance for—the cluster's key concepts of multiplicity and relationality. Our different but nonetheless related disciplinary perspectives will contribute to a joint understanding of the many roles that learning plays in the making of subjectivities, life-stages and gendered bodies, and the ways that these are framed through the unequal distribution of educational opportunities. We will also seek to analyse how learning itself is relationally constituted by — and at least partly co-constitutes — institutions, worldviews, communications, infrastructures, and transnational and transcontinental connections. Our understanding of learning goes beyond research approaches that limit their focus to formal educational settings such as schools or universities. Rather, we will address learning in a wider sense, encompassing all of the ways and processes in which knowledge and skills are transmitted, acquired and (re-)produced, regardless of institutional borders. We include private homes, schools, markets, media, streets, farms and international organisations in our considerations. We are interested in multiple learning processes and their inherent temporalities: in learning by doing; as a bodily practice; as a form of appropriation or mimesis, and as a mode of communication. Blurring the boundaries between artificial dichotomies such as formal / informal, institutional / non-institutional, modern / traditional, literate / illiterate, we will direct our interest to the interplay between various learning spaces and media. This relational perspective on learning processes in Africa and elsewhere will allow us to highlight their multiplicity and to analyse their entanglements, mutual coexistence, conditions of emergence, and the multiple ways in which learning processes combine in peoples' lives. In order to get a sense of the manifold interrelations within the highly heterogeneous African educational landscape, we see a particular need for studying learners as embedded in their specific environments, and at the same time as producers of these environments through their networks of relations.

Objectives

Research will be orgnanised along three lines of investigation: (a) communication, (b) biographies of learning, and (c) travelling concepts and practices.

Africa's linguistic multiplicity constitutes both a challenge and a resource for the creation of learning spaces, whose concepts of education and knowledge acquisition are either those intrinsic to global networks stretching from Europe, the Americas and the Middle East, to South and Southeast Asia, or embedded in processes of adaptation and transformation within specific African contexts. This situation invites research into the conditions and challenges of communication as a constituent part of learning processes in multilingual settings, where the gap between the mostly European languages of formal

instruction and the multiple African languages of socialisation requires acts of translation, adaptation and appropriation.

In our second line of investigation, biographies of learning, we will trace the multiplicities of learning processes via a focus on the learning trajectories of individuals. This is based on the understanding that individual life trajectories are always shaped by combinations of different modalities of learning (for instance apprenticeships, Qur'an schools, informal learning in the household), whether sequentially or simultaneously. Until now, less attention has been paid to the ways in which individuals move between different paths and modes of learning, and thus different epistemic orders, for example by simultaneously attending "secular" and religious schools. Here we will take inspiration from approaches that lay stress on processes of "timing", particularly in relation to education.

In our third line of investigation, we will relate processes of learning and educational experiences in Africa to globally travelling concepts and practices that shape and produce varied formations and reformations of learning settings. The global "trading zones of knowledge" and the worldwide flows of educational concepts, ideas, and knowledge invite us to study the specific ways in which learning processes and settings emerge and change, and how travelling educational concepts and practices are negotiated in, and adapted to the African context.

Work Programme

With regard to our first focus, processes of communication in multilingual African learning spaces will provide challenges with regard to language choice, elaboration and corpus planning in institutional learning contexts. We will seek to investigate language choice in environments where the relationship between one or several ex-colonial as well as African languages are in competition or in parallel use for learning purposes. Another question relates to appropriations and adaptations of communicative practices in informal learning situations, such as advice-giving in both private and media contexts, which is based on the attribution of expert vs. learner/user roles in communicative interaction where norms and conventions are negotiated.

Methodologically inspired by the principle of "following the people" and by relational ethnography, we propose to explore individual biographies of learning. We will follow the directions and temporalities of the life paths of young individuals towards adulthood, and their multiple connectivities with learning processes. Here, instead of following conventional approaches to the study of life courses, we will view them as being constantly made and re-made in relational ways. Taking a processual and praxeological perspective, we aim to combine theoretical debates on learning in Africa with those concerning the life course, gender, kinship and work.

Those of our subprojects that are to explore travelling concepts and practices of learning will take a particular interest in global relationalities, and the ways in which the

tension between the implementation of Euro-North-American models of schooling and more recent projects of "decolonising" education plays out in different national contexts, taking into account comparable processes in Asia and Latin America. Another key line of research pursued by this RS will be that of the rapidly changing landscape of higher Islamic education south of the Sahara. Over the past two decades, Muslim educationists and entrepreneurs have entered the booming private educational sector in all African countries with a sizable Muslim presence, producing new and highly gendered trajectories of learning that frequently merge "secular" and "religious" subjects.