



Centre de Recherche sur le Savoir Local

Programme Point Sud 2009-2010

**Workshop and Field School:
“On the Theory and Practice of Negotiation Processes”**

05.-12.12.2009

Report

1 Organisers

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Prof. Dr. Ute Fendler, University of Bayreuth

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2 Themes and Objectives

This seven-day event combined the workshop format with a field school. The aim of the event was to discuss the theory and practice of social negotiation processes. Guiding questions were how Western models and norms were applied in the local context and what existing norms were encountered in their practical implementation on the ground. This issue was not only to be discussed in theoretical terms but also in the concrete working environment, together with representatives from institutions in Bamako working at the interface of global and local norms. Twenty-nine German and African graduate students and established scholars trained in different academic traditions and disciplines and with a variety of language skills came together in the Point Sud Research Centre in Bamako to do so.

3 Methodology and Results

The workshop began with a city tour during which participants, of whom most had never previously been to Bamako, acquired an impression of the living conditions in the different city districts. This was of particular interest for the participants from other African countries.

The next two days served the intensive preparation of the field school and the discussion of the topics at issue together with representatives of institutions in which these kinds of norms are applied in practice. All participants had received a reader in preparation so that they could familiarise themselves with the basics of Malian history and society and in the four subject targeted areas: development, media, religion and law (copyright and patent law).

After an introduction to the workshop topic and a round of introductions, the participants were divided up into four work groups to deal with the linguistic challenges of the workshop. Each group was asked to find ways to overcome language barriers. The results were presented in the plenum. The working language of English was understood by almost all participants, but to different degrees, so it was necessary to translate the main discussion content into French. This situation would reverse during the field study, during which the main language of interaction – French – was translated for anglophone participants. These translations were made by bilingual participants in a flexible manner, although the translation process repeatedly distracted from other tasks. However, there was consensus that this form was preferable to professional interpreters. One core result of this meeting was, therefore, the

development of an awareness for the issue and a structure for dealing with the linguistic challenges via active engagement with it.

The next step involved the formation of interdisciplinary working groups on the four topics. These were given the task of finding a common language for communicating and discussing the issues. The presentation of the results to the plenum revealed that already the interpretation of the terminology (i.e. "development" or "media") and the methodological approach required intensive discussion. At the same time, interdisciplinarity was felt to be an ideal for working with the above topics and issues from different perspectives. The question of the possible objectives of interdisciplinary co-operation was discussed controversially. In these meetings it became clear that various discourses, such as on the subject of development, were not only different in respect to their disciplinary perspective but also in how African doctoral students perceived the issue as opposed to the German students. Workshop participants expressed the desire to continue this discussion in a follow-up workshop.

Theoretical and disciplinary introductions to the core issues of development, media, religion and law (copyright and patent law) with a focus on their relevance to Mali were made by the organisers and guests from Johannesburg, Cologne, Frankfurt and Bayreuth. In a further step, the working groups developed key questions in preparation for the field study and discussion with the representatives in the institutions.

Two days were reserved for the field study in which the four work groups visited four institutions each in the morning. In the afternoon they evaluated the results of interviews and observations and prepared them for presentation to the plenum.

The DNCT, one of the most important state institutions for decentralisation in Mali, and the civil society organisation ARIANE (Programme d'Appui au Renforcement et Acteurs Initiatives of Non Étatiques) were visited by the group working on the issue of "development". The representatives of the DNCT explained the process of decentralisation and the problems encountered in its implementation. The impressions gained with ARIANE complemented the findings from the perspective of civil society so that the participants were given an insight into two different perspectives on decentralisation and its impact on development in Mali. The ARIANE programme claims to promote civil society, but the donors and to a great degree the state make the decisions, not the Malian population itself. A large percentage of the organisation's financial resources remain with the central government. Thus Western norms are implemented with too little consideration of the interests of the local population, despite prevailing claims to the contrary. Extremely important was the question of how the role not only of the West but also of Libya, China and Brazil vis-à-vis land issues (particularly in the Office du Niger) was to be interpreted.

The working group on "law" talked with representatives of BUMDA (Bureau Malien du Droits d'Auteurs) and CEMAPI (Centre Malien de la Propriété Intellectuelle). Here conflicts between legal norms fixed in Western or state laws implemented to protect the rights of authors and artists as well as trademark and patent holders and those rules felt to be important

by the population or specific population groups became particularly clear. Questions about copyright have become increasingly important in Mali since the 1990s in combination with new technical reproduction means (of CDs, DVDs, etc.). The question of who benefits from the work of BUMDA was intensely debated. The conflicts that many actors find themselves in with respect to their duties to the law and to their own relatives were also identified. Local strategies for dealing with Western standards seem to dominate here. The significance of statistics, which various disciplines drew upon to varying degrees, was later debated in the plenary (i.e regarding the interpretation of the relative increase or, respectively, the decrease in numbers of court cases on the issue of piracy).

Discussions on "media" were held with representatives of state radio and television, the Office Radio Télévision du Mali (ORTM), and Radio Bamakan, the first independent radio station in Mali established in 1991. In these media organisations, conflicting norms above all in the theory and actual practice of internal organisational processes were apparent. Media practice in Mali requires – contrary to the expectations of many of our participants – a very flexible approach to established norms in day-to-day practice and production processes.

In the context of the theme "religion," the Association Malienne pour l'Unité et le Progrès de l'Islam (AMUPI) and the Catholic Church were visited. The latter, despite its small membership (about 5% of the Malian population) has a significant social impact. When it was founded in 1987, AMUPI pursued the goal of reconciling the two main conflicting Islamic movements in the country. Today the organisation brings together about one hundred Islamic groups in Mali and claims to respect the other religions in Mali as well. To achieve its objectives, AMUPI uses the media and has its own radio station for promoting shared values and norms. This radio station does not play music and broadcasts announcements for free; it is not financed, as opposed to other independent radio stations, by advertising revenue. The gap between theory and practice was also apparent on the topic of religion, especially with regard to the role of women in the family and public spheres, and the linking of Islamic faith with local religious practices.

The final two days served the presentation of results and the discussion of the experiences of the field school. The field work was seen as important and as having broadened many horizons, although the philosophers and political scientists in the group would have liked to discuss the terminology and its practicability for the whole week, while anthropologists would have liked to have spent more time working in the field to gain further insights. The participants deemed those field visits as particularly successful that addressed issues raised on the day before. Besides the state and civil society institutions that were selected for the field school, the participants stressed the importance to include in future workshops a third component, namely, discussions with the affected population.

In their workshop reports, all participants underlined that they had learned a lot, especially those who had previously neither been in Mali nor had thought much about the country. This was due primarily to the constructive working atmosphere and the multinational and interdisciplinary backgrounds of the participants. Narratives about other university systems

and academic traditions in Africa were also repeatedly highlighted as a positive result of the workshop. The participants also valued the time spent together to develop new ideas to gain new information and talk informally about the progress of their doctoral theses.

4 Sustainability of the Event

The participants of the workshop spoke in favour of continuing the ongoing exchange in a follow-up workshop in the same or a similar form, either in Mali, in another African country or in Germany so as to visit similar institutions with the African participants there. A follow-up workshop should ideally also address more pointedly the individual doctoral projects.

5 Participants

Applicants

1. Prof. Mamadou Diawara Ethnology, Goethe University Frankfurt
2. Prof. Ute Fendler Romance Studies, University of Bayreuth
3. Prof. Stefan Kadelbach Law, Goethe University Frankfurt
4. PD Ute Rösenthaler Ethnology, Goethe University Frankfurt

Visiting Scientists

5. Prof. Alexander Peukert Law, Goethe University Frankfurt
6. Prof. Dorothea Schulz Ethnology, University of Cologne
7. Dr. Dina Ligaga Literature, University of the Witwatersrand

German and African PhD Students

8. Isaiah Kunock Afu Ethnology, University of Yaounde I
9. Patricia C. Awiah African Studies, University of Ghana
10. Abraham Brahim Romance Studies, University of Bayreuth
11. Lasha Bregvadze Law, Goethe University Frankfurt
12. Julian Culp Philosophy, Goethe University
13. Franziska Dübgen Philosophy, Goethe University
14. Daniel Dücker Sociology, Goethe University
15. Kenneth Mukete Elondo Ethnology, University of Yaounde I
16. Issa Fofana Geography, Point Sud/University of Bamako
17. Dorothea Gaedecke Political Science, Goethe University
18. Ariane Goetz Political Science, Goethe University
19. Matthias Gruber Ethnology, Goethe University
20. Ricarda Hanck Romance Studies, University of Bayreuth
21. Niels Kemper Economics, Goethe University
22. Björn Loewe Ethnology, Goethe University
23. Carine Sheto Mongong Ethnology, University of Yaounde I
24. Jacqueline Neumann Law, Goethe University
25. Gilbert K. Tietaah African Studies, University of Ghana
26. Bourema Touré Ethnology, ISFRA, University of Bamako
27. Leonie Wagner Political Science, Goethe University
28. Myriam Hadnes Economics, Goethe University