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Gauging the Gatekeepers: Negotiating Anthropological Research in a Tertiary Level Australian Hospital: Failure, Fallout, and a Change in Direction for Paediatric Cardiac Research

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Abstract. This article describes and comments on the process, subsequent machinations and failure to negotiate an ethnographic research project in a tertiary level teaching hospital in Australia. For social scientists and those from the humanities who attempt to fully engage with the biomedical domain, the engagement is not always seamless (Hume et al. 2018; van der Geest & Finkler 2004; Barnett 1985). The differences between hard scientific paradigms and the social sciences or humanities paradigms (Cassell 2002), and a lack of appreciation and understanding of one for the other is often an issue that continues to pose ethical and moral challenges. Ethics and medical anthropology are increasingly discussed and debated; in particular where two different social groups in an unequal power relationship (social capital) interface, for example, the ethnographic researcher with medical and hospital professionals (Mapedzahama and Dune 2017; Fainzang 2015). Nor is the impact of a failed project invisible or disaffective on the qualitative research team or principal researcher. There is emotional fallout at a personal and professional level that requires reflexivity, resistance and resilience before any moving forward can be accomplished; nevertheless, moving on can be achieved.

[biomedical; hierarchy; power; relationships; resilience]

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Myth as Argument, Mythmaking as Field of Play: Mythical Manoeuvre and Value Appropriation in North Seram, Eastern Indonesia

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Abstract. Defined by Joel Robbins as the science of continuity, anthropology has long experienced difficulty explaining changes and transformations. The notions of cultures and traditions it maintains tend to simply assume their durability. This inclination has led to the problem of overlooking the dramatic heterogeneity in bodies of myths. Since myth is often treated as the ‘great component’ that promotes ‘the unity of a culture’, even among those who are critical of the timeless notion of culture, the theoretical tendency that pervades anthropology is to emphasise its coherence with the whole while disregarding its conflicting multiplicity. This paper attempts to propose a framework within which we can better address the multifariousness of a body of myths in actual social circumstances. This is accomplished by expanding Edmund Leach’s view of myth as an ‘argument’ and taking the view that the reproduction of myth requires its alteration and transformation for the sake of appropriating conceptualised qualities of social value. The subject of this study, in particular, is the myth about the Butonese lowlander in North Seram, Maluku, Eastern Indonesia.

[myth, transformation, continuity, Eastern Indonesia, Maluku]

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Intersectionality and the Labour Market in the United Arab Emirates: the Experiences of African Migrants

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Abstract. The Arab Gulf region is one of the major destinations of labour migration besides Europe and North America. While the majority of migrants come from South and South East Asia as well as from neighbouring Arab countries, the region has also become an attractive destination for migrants from Africa. In particular, business hubs such as Dubai and Doha have attracted traders, jobseekers, and recently also students from various African countries. So far, little attention has been devoted to the growing presence and heterogeneity of these migrants, or to variations in their migration experiences. Moreover, several studies have highlighted social hierarchies as a structuring element of Gulf societies, and have identified multiple vectors of inequality, including ethnicity, gender, and class. In this paper, we will adopt an intersectional approach to studying the experiences of African migrants in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in particular in relation to their integration into the labour market and the recruitment of business partners. Similarly to migrants from other parts of the Global South, African migrants and entrepreneurs are exposed to a variety of structural constraints that impact on their entry into the UAE economy, often channelling them into low-paying, elementary occupations. Yet once they have entered the system and regularized their stay, they may explore alternative routes to improve on their situation. As the case studies investigated in this paper will show, African migrants flexibly use their intersecting positionalities, in particular ethnicity, nationality, race, and gender, to renegotiate their place in the segregated UAE economy and seek upward professional and social mobility.

[intersectionality, migration, labour market, United Arab Emirates, Africa]

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Mapping Lineage Leadership in Kyrgyzstan: Lineage Associations and Informal Governance

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Abstract. As Kyrgyzstan constructs a modern national identity, a social institution long considered to be a vestige of the past—lineage identity—continues to exert significant influence over the present-day processes. This fact needs to be recognized and addressed. Lineage affiliations have gained new relevance in Kyrgyz society in the post-Soviet era. Most ethnic Kyrgyz people can trace their descent to one of 40 lineage groupings, each with a common geographic origin, graves, unique history and genealogy. Some have now chosen to affirm these ties by creating informal lineage associations that exert behind-the-scenes influence over daily life, as well as in national politics.

Most importantly, lineage associations hold significant power to mobilize voters, control patronage, and organize protests. In essence, they can function as lobby groups, or even rudimentary political parties that reach deep into local and regional institutions. At the same time, lineage associations are increasingly striving for greater recognition in Kyrgyz politics and society. Some advocate for a formal constitutional role, including the creation of a special governmental assembly to represent them. Despite wielding considerable influence, kinship associations largely operate in the political shadows. The country's law on public associations restricts such groups from engaging in open political activity. I argue that lineage associations function as a kind of constraint and control mechanism on the political sphere, ensuring that no single leader is able to gain sufficient enough power to become a dictator, and at times also help to contain local corruption.

Kyrgyzstan is not the only society in the region (or in the world) to consist of myriad lineage groups. One can see the emergence of the lineage groups in other Central Asian societies and elsewhere in the world (Lewis 2004; Hoehne 2016), but the Kyrgyzstan's exceptional in the way in which they have begun to come out of the closet and into open politics in the post-Soviet context.

[Kyrgyzstan, lineage associations, kinship, politics, Central Asia, democracy, state]

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Technologies of the Intellect: Mnemonic Techniques as Significant Pedagogical Methods of Islamic Education in Western Sudan

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Abstract. In many Muslim societies in Sub-Saharan Africa, Islamic learning institutions prioritize attentive memorization of the Qur'an. Those who memorize the holy script are believed to be deeply devotional, spiritual, and intellectual. To realize this noble goal, religious specialists and Qur'anic students create special mnemonic techniques. Here, I discuss the Qur'anic schools of Jebel Marra, where mnemonic techniques constitute a significant part of the intellectual tradition in local Islamic education. I endeavor, therefore, to uncover the invention—or creation—of specific local mnemonics, as well as the application of these mnemonic codes in different educational processes. I also aim to examine their pedagogical roles in the memorization, retention, and retrieval of Qur'anic and secular texts. Moreover, Qur'anic student in Jebel Marra apply mnemonic techniques not only to religious education but also to secular studies and daily social interactions. While some scholars see Qur'anic memorization as mere 'rote learning' that impedes the development of critical thinking capabilities, I reject this stereotype. In this article, I discuss the local mnemonic techniques that serve as methods of memorization and explain how these techniques promote knowledge growth and foster intellectual development in Qur'anic students.

[Intellect, memorization, mnemonic techniques, Qur'anic knowledge, remembrance, knowledge retention]

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Multiple Belongings. On the Affective Dimensions of Migration

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Abstract. This article addresses transnational migration from the perspective of emotion theory. It argues that enormous emotional and affective challenges confront individuals who are embedded in multiple constellations of belonging across social, national, and cultural borders. I shall discuss these challenges in more detail here with an aim to enrich and expand the notion of belonging prevailing in social anthropology. The contents of this article should be understood as a preliminary step toward developing an emotion-theoretical model of multiple belongings. Although the focus of this paper is theoretical, it also draws on a current empirical study of Vietnamese immigrant families in Germany.

[belonging, migration, emotion, affect, transnational families, sensory place-making, Vietnamese immigrant families in Germany]

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Nachruf für Ulrich Braukämper (1944–2018)

Roman Loimeier

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Am 26. Oktober 2018 verstarb Ulrich Braukämper nach langer und kräftezehrender Krankheit in Göttingen. Die deutschsprachige Ethnologie, aber auch die globale Gemeinde der Äthiopien- und Sudanforscher hat damit einen warmherzigen, loyalen und aufrechten Freund und Kollegen verloren. Ulrich Braukämper war 1995 in der Nachfolge von Peter Fuchs auf eine C3-Professur für (damals noch) „Völkerkunde“ ans Institut für Ethnologie der Universität Göttingen berufen worden und vertrat dort engagiert den Regionalschwerpunkt Afrika in Forschung und Lehre. In der Lehre ging es Ulrich Braukämper immer um eine möglichst erfahrungsnahe Vermittlung von Wissen. Dabei setzte er nicht nur sein großes Bildarchiv und sein Wissen aus umfangreichen Feldforschungen ein, sondern er nutzte auch die Möglichkeiten der Ethnologischen Sammlung, in der er beispielsweise gemeinsam mit Studenten eine Reihe von Arbeitsbereichen in der Dauerausstellung zum Thema „Arbeit in Afrika“ gestaltete. Als langjähriger Vorsitzender der Göttinger Gesellschaft für Völkerkunde sorgte er für eine enge Verbindung zwischen dem Institut, der Ethnologischen Sammlung und Göttinger Bürgern. Diese Verbindung sollte von großer Bedeutung für den Umzug des Instituts in ein neues Institutsgebäude im Jahr 2017 und eine großzügige Finanzierungszusage des Landes Niedersachsen für die Sanierung der Ethnologischen Sammlung im gleichen Jahr werden. Leider hat er den Abschluß der Sanierungsarbeiten am Sammlungsgebäude und die Eröffnung der neuen Dauerausstellung (voraussichtlich 2021) nicht mehr erleben können.

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