

Senior Fellowship for Dr. Obvious Katsaura: "Networked Religiocities: Transnational Urban Religious Flows in Africa"

Initiative: Wissen für morgen – Kooperative Forschungsvorhaben im subsaharischen Afrika (beendet)

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This study mobilises the concept of transnational religious urbanism to engage an investigation of the urban consequences of the flow of religious ideas, faiths, practices, goods, spirits, people, and institutions between selected African cities. Harnessing religious and urbanist understandings of transnationalism, I coin the concept of networked religiocities to capture the idea that cities are involved in circuits of religious exchange that (re)-shape their socio-economic and spatial ecologies. This comes against a backdrop of the observation that West African and Southern African cities are particularly connected by a new transnational Pentecostalism that is often driven from Nigeria and Ghana, reaching countries like South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe (cf. Van de Kamp and Van Dijk, 2010; Ukah, 2013). Important to this study is the tracking of underappreciated, yet significant, transnational urban "divine" and cultural economies of gifts, desire, demand, hope, and salvation (cf. Long, 2002; Bell, 2012) that connect African cities. The study further investigates the socio-spatial and ecological consequences of this economy on the making and unmaking of structural and everyday African urban orders. Drawing on perspectives from the urban sociologies, anthropologies, theologies, and geographies of transnational religion, the study gazes into the influences of transnational religious ideas, goods, objects, spirits, and practices on various forms of urban citizenship, residency and denizenship. It investigates how trans-African city-to-city religious osmosis shapes the everyday and mundane social practices and the consciousness of African urbanites. Methodologically, the study relies on ethnographic observations, ethno-network analysis, and discourse analysis.

Projektbeteiligte

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