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Miriam Badoux (Basel)

„Land is Gold”: Property Disputes, Claim-Making, and Urbanity in Eldoret, Kenya

In Kenya, land is commonly described as an “emotive issue”. Associated with politics and corruption, and often blamed as the root cause of recurring political and ethnic violence in the country, land is more than a mere resource. Issues of land access and ownership drove the struggle for independence and have been at the heart of public debate in postcolonial Kenya. While most of the research on land in sub-Saharan Africa has been conducted in rural areas, my research focuses on Eldoret, a fast-growing secondary city located in Kenya’s Rift Valley. Looking at a wide range of land disputes and the ways in which actors articulate ownership claims, I argue that land materializes urban dwellers’ individual and collective aspirations.

In my talk, I will also reflect on the practicalities and possibilities of conducting ethnographic research on land: how can we best approach land in its everyday dimension? And what can land tell us about the city at large, urban dwellers’ fears and fantasies, and belonging in the urban context?

Miriam Badoux is a PhD candidate and a lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Basel, Switzerland. She received her MA in African Studies from the University of Leipzig. Her dissertation is part of a wider SNF-funded project on “Corruption, Conflict, and Cities in East and West Africa”. She conducted field research in Kenya and Cameroon, and is interested in political and urban anthropology, land and belonging, forest governance, and the Anthropocene.

Institutskolloquium Sommersemester 2019 (Leitung: Heike Drotbohm)

Wann? Dienstag, 04. Juni 2019, 18:15-19:45 Uhr

Wo? Hörsaal 14 / Großer Übungsraum (Raum 01-715), Forum 7, Becherweg 4, 1. Stock,

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