

## **Erinnerung, Politik, Nation**

(dienstags, 18:15 – 19:45)

am Institut für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien,  
Forum 7, Großer Übungsraum (Raum 01-715), im Forum 7 (Becherweg 4), 1. Stock

3. November Ute Röschenthaler (Mainz/Frankfurt) (Antrittsvorlesung)  
*„Celebrating our heritage“. Lokale Festivals, Erinnerungskultur und neue Identitäten in Kamerun und Nigeria.*
10. November Studierende des IfEAs/Lehrforschungsgruppe Benin (Mainz)  
*Polizei und Justiz in Benin. Bericht von einer studentischen Lehrforschung*
24. November Eva Spies (Mainz)  
*Auf Leben und Tod? Formen des Religionskontakts in Madagaskar*
1. Dezember Almut Seiler-Dietrich (Bensheim)  
*Die Tagebücher des madagassischen Dichters Jean-Joseph Rabearivelo – Politik und Poesie, 1933-1937*
15. Dezember Hans Medick (Göttingen/Berlin)  
*Der Dreißigjährige Krieg als Erfahrung und Memoria. Zeitgenössische Wahrnehmungen eines makro-historischen Ereigniszusammenhangs*
12. Januar Reinhart Köbler (Bochum/Freiburg)  
*Kolonialkrieg, Völkermord und Rekonstruktion in der Erinnerungspraxis von Nama und Herero (Namibia).*
19. Januar Katharina Schramm (Halle/Saale)  
*Sankofa-Interpretationen. Nation, Diaspora und die Politik der Erinnerung in Ghana*
26. Januar Winfried Speitkamp (Gießen)  
*Demokratisierung und Erinnerungspolitik in Kenia seit der Jahrtausendwende*
2. Februar Susann Baller (Basel)  
*Repräsentationen der Vergangenheit. Wege der staatlichen Unabhängigkeit und Erinnerungspolitik im Senegal*
9. Februar Johannes Fried (Frankfurt)  
*Gedächtnis und mündliche Kulturen im Mittelalter*

In 2010 many African states celebrate their independence jubilees—a date that suggests itself to explore the politics of memory. Nation-building and state-making undoubtedly depend on the creation of a corps of ‘national’ bureaucrats and institutions, the construction of a material infrastructure that supports nation-wide communication, and the dissemination of schools and education. At the same time, it involves a symbolic dimension, namely, the creation of cultural emblems and symbols as well as the (re)writing of ‘national’ history. It is these processes of creating a national ‘imaginary’ and the politics of memory involved in nation-building that stand at the centre of attention of many contributions of this semester’s seminar series.

Politics of memory involve a wide range of issues. On the one hand, the collective memory is informed by official history as it is depicted in history books and museums, represented in national monuments or other ‘lieux de mémoire’, celebrated in national days as well as canonised and preserved in institutions such as national academies and historical commissions. On the other hand, popular, subaltern, and personal historical narratives create a broader communicative memory that sometimes complements, and often contradicts the official politics of memory. Both aspects of memory politics form part of nation building. More generally, it is only through active collective memory politics, (re)constructing and (re)creating the past, that a society imagines itself as a unique nation, united beyond manifold internal differences and, at the same time, set apart from other nation-states or the former colonial powers. Yet the often heated debates about what should be remembered or forgotten reveal the fault lines of the nation under construction.

Speakers in the seminar series explore these relations between commemoration and nation-building in various African countries, but also in India who gained her independence earlier and often served as a model and source of inspiration. Other contributions look at the making of memory(ies) during historical periods when the politically relevant ‘imagined communities’ did not yet coalesce into ‘nations’. They address historical eras such as the medieval times or the early modern period when the technologies of memory making differed markedly from those that ‘nationalist’ commemorations rely on (writing, newspapers, mass media, etc.). This comparative perspective allows us to understand that modern forms of memory making and commemoration are by no means self-evident, but historically specific.

Two presentations, finally, at the beginning of the semester (November 10 and 17) are not directly related to this semester’s theme, but take up issues that have been discussed in the past seminar series (‘Staat und Nation in Afrika’).