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Covid Organics. A Case of Differentiating Human and Non- Human Actors

Based on the *Artemisia annua* plant, the Madagascan herbal drink Covid Organics was in May 2020 exported to a number of African states as a prophylactic against the contraction of Covid-19. The (health) authorities of Tanzania, Ghana, Equatorial-Guinea, Sudan and other countries approved of the potion while WHO soon raised doubts about its innocuousness, and demanded (as well as initiated) laboratory and phase I-III studies in Mexico.

Considering each of the involved institutions and ingredients, communications and knowledges, experts and efforts at disease-prevention as actors, the paper will revise this largely forgotten chapter of the pandemic by reformulating it with Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory (ANT). Backed by a similar study on *minksaga*, the culling of 15 million minks in Denmark in late 2020 for fear of virus mutation in some of the infected animals, the aim of the presentation is to disclose the human differentiations that lie hidden beneath the Covid Organics case. Apart from the anthropocentric tendency to discriminate between human and nonhuman actors (minks in Denmark, herbals) for the benefit of primarily (exclusively?) the first, the intervention of North-global health actors such as WHO and others point at a transnational and, conspicuously, a North-South dimension: a differentiating of humans (Africans and, here, a potable African solution to Covid-19) from humans in the metropolises.

Bruno Arich-Gerz, RWTH Aachen University, engages in African Studies from transdisciplinary and trans-generic angles. Combining text-, language-, literature- and discourse-analyses with models from the social sciences (Actor-Network-Theory, Luhmann's systems theory), his work includes essays and scientific articles as well as short stories and novellas. Relevant recent publications are *Dänische Nerze in der Pandemie-Politik* (2022, Danish mink and the Politics of the Pandemic), *Gasthörerschaften. Afrikanisches Sprechen und Deutsch in Transformation* (forthcoming in winter 2023, Host Auditing. African Speaking and German in Transformation), "G'bohessa-Sul" (forthcoming, with Anne Storch, in *Safariland, zweifach*).

Weitere Informationen: www.ifeas.uni-mainz.de



A bottle of Covid
Organics

[Wikipedia](#) (Gareth Brown, 2020).

Original
proponents:
Malagasy
Institute of
Applied Research.