DFG Priority Programme 1448
Adaptation and Creativity in Africa
Technologies and Significations in the Production of Order and Disorder

SPP 1448 Coordination - Universities of Halle and Leipzig

Saly (nr Dakar), 5 October 2014

SPP 1448 “Adaptation and creativity in Africa. Technologies and significations in the production of (dis)order”

Press release, 5 October 2014

Junior and senior scholars of the DFG Priority Programme (SPP 1448) “Adaptation and Creativity in Africa” discussed the results of their on-going research at a second international conference held in Saly, which is some 80 km from Dakar, Senegal, from 1-4 October 2014. The Priority Programme is funded for a six-year period by the German Research Foundation (DFG), and is jointly coordinated by the Universities of Leipzig and Halle-Wittenberg respectively since 2011. It brings together around 70 researchers from Germany and different African countries who analyse recent processes of social change in Africa. In doing so, they particularly examine how African societies deal with processes of accelerated global change. Some of the scholars additionally also took part in a joint one-day exploratory workshop on the application for a potential International Centre for Advanced Studies in Africa, organised in cooperation with the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin and sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

The SPP 1448 conference was opened by Cheikh Bécaye Gaye, Professor and Director General Research at the Senegalese Ministry of Higher Education and Research and, representing the German Ambassador to Senegal, H. E. Bernhard Kampmann, the Chef Mission Adjointe, Andreas C. Schröder. On behalf of DFG, participants were welcomed by Dr Corinne Flacke. Against the background of current processes of reforming the Senegalese system of higher education Prof Gaye highlighted the importance of transnational networks in cutting-edge research, in particular with regard to doctoral training. Both Prof Gaye and Mr Schröder stressed the symbolic importance of organising such a conference in Senegal at a time when the region is going through a devastating Ebola epidemic. “We are extremely glad and grateful that the Priority Programme has decided to have its conference here in Senegal in this challenging situation”, Mr Schröder stated.

Key note lectures were given by internationally renowned scholars from Political Sciences, Anthropology, and Postcolonial Studies, notably Dr Bakary Sambe (coordinator of the Observatoire des radicalismes et conflits religieux en Afrique, Université Gaston Berger, Saint Louis, Senegal), Prof Hlonipha Mokoena (Columbia University, New York, USA), and Prof Achille Mbembe (Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg, South Africa). Also present at the conference were members of African partner organisations and African junior scholars from approximately ten different countries (for example South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Cameroon) as well as representatives the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA).

Apart from the regular programme proceedings, three round tables were organized to address pressing current issues. The first one addressed on-going social change and Africa’s position in current processes of globalisation. The second one on “The politics of Infrastructures – Managing the Ebola epidemic” discussed socio-political, economic and legal aspects of the current Ebola crisis. And the third one took up the challenge of current discussion about innovative forms of transnational training of doctoral students in Africa.

The third and final results conference of the Priority Programme will take place in 2016.

For further information see <http://www.spp1448.de>.
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