

Afrika-Kolloquium

3.00 - 4.20pm:

"I am Austro-Ghanaian" - Citizenship and Belonging of Ghanaians in Austria

Michael P. K. Okyerefo

To what extent do Ghanaian migrants who have become Austrian citizens really belong to their new home? By means of analyzing life histories of nine individuals, the paper interrogates current narratives on migration, citizenship and belonging. The work emanates from ongoing fieldwork among Ghanaian residents in Austria. Some respondents described themselves variously as "Austro-Ghanaian", "Ghanaian-Austrian", "Ghanaian" or "Austrian". The common denominator of these individuals is that all of them have obtained Austrian citizenship, which raises the question of what it means for Ghanaians to be Austrian within the crucible of stringent European immigration laws. By means of a qualitative method, the paper draws on interviews with eight Ghanaians and an Austrian wife of one of them in order to tease out these Ghanaians' understanding of their citizenship and belonging in Austrian.

4.30 - 6.00pm:

Political Myths of the African Great Lakes Region

Wioleta Gierszewska

What are "political myths" and from where do they arise? Why is it important to know and understand the conditions affecting civilization and political culture? My research topic is political myths of the African Great Lakes region, situated in the area of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. Today, this region is being destroyed by numerous conflicts. Political myths in the region affect not only politics, but also international relations. These are used as a means to gain as well as keep political power by politicians who continually create new myths to manipulate society. Knowledge and understanding of the conditions affecting civilization and political culture is necessary to help resolve regional conflicts and the tragic social-economic situations existing inside these countries. The aim of this study is, to present political and other myths that have the most impact in this region, as well as to try to determine the influence these myths have on the creation of internal policies for these countries and their international relations. More often than not, political mythology of Sub-Saharan Africa and the African Great Lakes region is of little interest to most states or nations, but is of great interest to the local groups holding political, economic and business power, as well as the local mafia groups and their criminal activities. These myths create a serious barrier to the socio-economic progress of these societies. Political myths are used to both gain and keep political power and are widely used for the control of important political issues. I conclude that the region's political mythology is characteristic of most poor and dysfunctional countries. "World powers" use such political myths to justify their rule over others in numerous spheres of social life. In a similar way, dysfunctional mythology is used to justify failures and social inequality in poor nations. Problems surrounding this formulated topic will be my primary subject not only in respect to Polish political science literature, but in an attempt at a comprehensive presentation of issues of political myths acting in this region which are the subject of my interest.



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