

Thomas Hüsken, Alexander Solyga and Dida Badi (eds.).
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Bridging together social and cultural anthropology, history, geography, political and natural sciences, and scholars of various generations, this rich collection of essays is a tribute to the intellectual career of Prof. Dr. Em. Georg Klute as an ethnologist of Tuareg culture and Saharan Africa in the classical sense of the term but also an acute observer of contemporary socio-political and economic dynamics in Africa and an adventurous explorer of innovative and original research paths. At the same time, the volume offers an insight into the approach to anthropology and African studies developed at the University of Bayreuth where Klute served as a professor for many years. As Thomas Hüsken, Alexander Solyga and Dida Badi underline in their introduction (pp. 15–25), like other representatives of his generation, Klute lived through and participated in the 1970s and early 1980s political mobilisation “against the authoritarianism and inflexible conservatism of the German post war society” (p. 8); and he has proven able to transform this political and civic commitment into an academic posture balanced by the right proportions of curiosity, scientific rigor and human commitment. In addition to a complete list of his publications, the three editors provide an insightful reconstruction of his professional career and of his efforts to build up inclusive research networks across Europe and Africa.

“Multiplicity,” one of the leading concepts of Klute’s theoretical agenda, is also the guiding principle of this volume. Through the plurality of case studies, of theoretical positions and experiences, Hüsken, Solyga and Badi convey Klute’s style as researcher, professor and above all citizen of our global world, the unequal and violent dynamics of which he has continued to address since first visiting Northern Niger as a volunteer in the early 1970s. All along, his attention has remained focused on what he could learn through close contact with everyday African lives.

With the contribution of senior and junior researchers from Germany, Europe and Africa, the five sections of *The Multiplicity of Orders and Practices* take cues from Klute’s work in order to open a window on the dynamics of power, relatedness and social interaction underway in the continent. The regions

involved correspond to the broadening of his interests, from the Saharan and Sahelian Tuareg areas of Niger and Mali he continued to travel and research since the 1970s, to Northern, Western and Eastern Africa and the Horn. In all these contexts, Klute has expanded comparatively the insights on local governance, legal pluralism and relations with the state that have continued to emerge from his Tuareg ethnography. The volume also responds to the research of a balance between empiricism and theory that has been central to Klute's and Bayreuth's anthropological tradition. The five sections address his major contributions to the field of African studies: the dynamic relation between the historicity of grassroots political arrangements and the African colonial and post-colonial state (Section 1. *Beside the State: African Politics and Beyond*); the possibility of conflict management and peace building through the mobilisation of a plurality of legal traditions (Section 2. *Legal Pluralism and Conflict*); the significance of work from the point of view of African societies and cultures (Section 3. *The Anthropology of Work*); the challenges (and potential) of ethnography as an intimate process of cultural apprenticeship (Section 4. *The Merits of Participant Observation*), and last but not least the discursive dimensions of human life (Section 5. *Discourses*). The attention to languages and to the concepts people use to account for their lives, is one of Klute's leitmotifs. Through a focus on concepts, I will now try to describe the contributors' effort to enrich his reflections in new directions.

"Para-sovereignty" is a notion that Klute developed between the late 1990s and early 2000s in collaboration with the sociologist Trutz Von Trotha in order to account, among other topics, for the relations between traditional authorities and colonial and post-colonial African states. Through the analysis of the Bamako neighbourhood of Sabalibougou, Lamine Doumbia takes "para-sovereignty" as a starting point to discuss the multiple actors involved in local land management and their relation with the municipal administration. Good governance, he concludes, should always consider the historicity of places and territories in order to prevent crisis and conflicts (*De la périphérie au centre-ville. Un terrain d'anthropologie juridique et politique*, pp. 205–2021). Doumbia also refers to "heterarchy," another key concept in Klute's tool kit to understand grassroots African politics in terms of situations where the plurality of roles and functions is not hierarchically arranged.

In principle, the fertility of an idea shows up when it is applicable to situations originally not contemplated by the person who first promoted it. Erdmute

Alber (*Heterogeneity and Heterarchy: Middle-class Households in Benin*, pp. 29–50) broadens the application of “heterarchy” from an analysis of the interaction of state and non-state actors, as Klute mostly did, to the micro-level of households, individuals and close social relations. Drawing on her long-term ethnography with middle-class Beninese families, her chapter casts light on the relevance of kinship ties and obligations in the configuration of heterarchical social fields that negotiate the increasing social inequality in family networks. Through a focus on the Sahara, Judith Scheele (*Heterarchy, Locality, Connectivity, Tribes – can (and should) we speak of a Shared Political Culture across the Sahara?* pp. 135–153) interrogates the interlacement of hierarchy and heterarchy in the history of desert politics and social life to conclude that “various models of societal order coexist.” The point is “to grasp [their] subtle interplay [...] but also their moral distinction and their own internal logics” (p. 149). Through a review of the available literature, and examples drawn from her research, Scheele makes clear that heterarchy focuses on the interaction among different political orders, whether they are hierarchical tribes or state-like organisations. Thus, the concept invites us “to pay attention to (African states) without necessarily making them central to our analysis, and without equating their limited reach with an absence of political order” (p. 141).

Peter Skalník reminds us that “the contribution of Georg Klute to political anthropology consists in showing that the state is not an inevitable form of political organization” (p. 155). Through a focus on war and processes of state formation, Skalník addresses the inherent instability of post-colonial African states as the result of their uneasy relations with the heterogeneity of their political legacies (*War as a Decisive Factor in State Formation: War and Peace in Africa – Local Conflict and the Weak State*, pp. 155–166). Peace-making processes, which Klute had studied in both Northern Mali and Guinea-Bissau, are at the core of Dieter Neubert’s discussion (*Decentralized Conflicts, Heterarchy and the Limits of Conflict Regulation*, pp. 237–252). “Under condition of heterarchy” – Neubert remarks – “the state is just one more or less powerful actor among others” (p. 238). This means that peace negotiations must include a set of various centres of power, with challenges that researchers have to address contextually. Their finality is the beginning of new socio-political processes through which the achieved results must stabilise through a “general change in the perception and understanding of problems, options and politics” (p. 248). Post-conflict reconstruction is as

relevant as conflict management, and both are tools “to persuade the war constituency and the violent actors to agree to a peace treaty” (p. 249).

Looking at African politics on the ground invites us to consider the dynamic appropriation and negotiation of past discourses, practices and relations into the present by people and groups differently positioned politically, socially and economically. Mario Krämer (*The Current Debates on Neotraditional Authority in South Africa – Notes on the Legitimacy and Rise of Intermediaries*, pp. 111–133) and Magnus Treiber (*Projecting Modernity – A Leitmotif in Eritrea’s Struggle for Independence*, pp. 167–179) address Klute’s engagement with the workings of power and governance in Africa. Both consider the historicity of the African state, with an analysis of raising neo-traditional politics in the post-apartheid South African context in the case of Krämer, and of projects of modern nation-building in Eritrea in that of Treiber. The specific section of *The Multiplicity of Orders and Practices* that focuses on methodology (Section 4. *The Merits of Participant Observation*) demonstrates the relevance that “being there, being with people” has played for Klute and other anthropologists at Bayreuth. In a friendly recognition of the passion for practical dimensions of culture that has made Klute’s approach largely personal and special, Baz Lecocq (*On Detailed Fieldwork Observations and Primordial Histories of Pastoral Animal Husbandry – The Cattle Line from the Neolithic to Present*, pp. 343–362) begins with a recollection of the fame he earned among the Tuaregs as “the best goat herder of his generation” and “for his capacity to herd cattle and drive them to the market” (p. 344). Lecocq assesses the scientific tradition that attributes Saharan rock paintings in the bovidian style to the Neolithic ancestors of twentieth-century Peuls in order to show, from a broader methodological perspective, the relevance of details in historical and anthropological analysis. In so doing, he also casts light on socio-cultural processes that imbue the deep past with contemporary processes of identity formation in this part of Africa. Taking cues from Klute’s lessons on participant observation as a multi-sensorial and personal engaging activity, Hanna Lena Reich (*Exploring the Night – Fieldwork Experiences from Nairobi*, pp. 385–398) shares the process that made her aware of her own positionality as a researcher in the nocturnal life of Nairobi.

From various perspectives, Dida Badi (*Le modalités d’appropriation et de transmission des biens et du pouvoir chez les Touaregs sédentaires du Tassili n Ajjer*, pp. 51–82), Anja Fisher (*Expert Women in Nomadism: A Case Study*

about the Expertise of Work among Kel Ahnet Nomads in the Algerian Sahara Desert, pp. 299–322), Tilman Musch and Mahama Abaliyi Sedike (*Un mariage par le rapt chez les Toubou Teda – Transgresser pour conserver la paix sociale*, pp. 363–384) strengthen the understanding of Saharan cultures and social worlds through detailed accounts of discourses and practices associated with inheritances, power, skilled knowledge and marriage practices. In particular, the fascinating attempt at collaborative ethnographic writing of Musch and Sedike discloses the potential of cross-fertilisation between the external and internal understanding of social practices and processes. By focusing on marriage customs, the authors reach the conclusion that defensive attitudes towards the colonial encounter led Teda groups to develop a structural attachment to their own traditions and values. Internal cohesion and social relatedness, pursued through a variety a tactics, became their defence against foreign intrusion.

The volume closes with the chapters by Kurt Beck (*On Claiming Non-creativity, or: “The One who has no Guide, his Guide is the Devil”*, pp. 401–418) and Gerd Spittler (*De quelles choses l’homme a-t-il besoin? La culture matérielle des Tourages Kel Ewey*, pp. 439–459). Looking at “creativity” from the angle of the Sudanese Bedford workshops where he carried out fieldwork, Beck uncovers the western biases of this notion and re-signifies it in the light of legacies that past generations of mechanics bequeathed to their apprentices. Although creative in practice, as they would otherwise be unable to repairs the lorries, vans and cars under their care, these workers downplay their personal role as innovators and present themselves as the respectful heirs of an established style of craftsmanship. Beck also provides one of the many precious glimpses of Klute’s daily work in Bayreuth that run through this volume: the two sharing a coffee in the early morning before starting the administrative load that in this age of increased bureaucratic routines affects academics worldwide. His contribution is about Sudanese mechanics as much as about Klute himself and the tradition in the anthropological study of work and of nomadic societies established in Bayreuth: “to claim excellence and distinguish oneself requires the assertion of being situated firmly in a chain of recognized tradition” (p. 415). Like other kinds of craftsmanship, anthropology demands the capacity to integrate change and creativity with the appraisal of the conceptual and experiential paths carved out by earlier generations of scholars. Bayreuth tradition, as it clearly emerges from Spittler’s reflection on Tuareg material culture, relies on prolonged fieldwork and

collaboration with local scientists and intellectuals, attention for the details of daily life, and above all a parsimonious usage of theory that privileges explanation over the exhibition of concepts.

While *The Multiplicity of Orders and Practices* accounts for the collaboration with natural sciences that Klute has established in the latter part of his academic career with the purpose of contributing to the growing debate on human-environmental relations, it overlooks his original (and to a large extent “alternative”) perspective on African development and social change, and his personal commitment to his Saharan and Sahelian interlocutors. Never interested in claiming a role as a public or applied anthropologist, Klute has seen his efforts to promote a bottom-up agenda for African development honoured by the cross of the German Republic Order of Merit in 2018. TAMAT, the NGO that Klute helped establish in 2004, as he was making his first steps as professor of African Studies at the University of Bayreuth, addresses local needs in their own terms and urgency. Such a contribution, and a reflection on Klute’s quiet but continuous and determined engagement with African and German civil society, would have enriched the collection further. In any case, the volume is valuable reading for specialists of African studies as much as for those who, curious of what unfolds on the continent, are open to comparison with the dynamics of other parts of the world. For the editors, the contributors, and the present writer, Klute has been, in various moments, a source of inspiration as much as a supportive and loyal friend: in addition to its scientific relevance, *The Multiplicity of Orders and Practices* is also a token of affection.

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