

**Brokerage between successful negotiation and opportunism**

30.09.2019, Teil 1: 14:00-15:30 Uhr / Teil 2: 16:00-17:30 Uhr, Raum D201

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Brokers are social actors whose mission is to engage in negotiation. For this reason, they need to be highly mobile, both in a physical and an ideational sense. Attempting to bridge distinct social worlds, they translate different languages and jargons, mediate between individuals or organizations, the local and the global, and channel scarce information that common people in local contexts usually have no access to. These brokers play important roles in a wide range of settings, be it the transnational world of trade, development, peace building, activism, people smuggling or other manifestations of the global. They dwell in intermediate settings where frictious relations evolve in predictable and unpredictable ways.

This workshop examines brokers' socio-cultural practice of negotiation. In order to shed light on these individuals we aim to answer questions such as: What entitles them to become brokers and what are their specific qualifications? What means do they apply? How sustainable are their negotiations? What interests and objectives further their activity? We are thus not only interested in the mediating capacities of brokers and the structural relations they are part of. We propose to look closer at their actual work in context, their negotiation and networking strategies, their emergence and life stories, their successes and failures, and at moralities involved such as the struggle for a common good or opportunism. We are also interested in their cultural background, the legitimations and narratives that are linked to their brokerage activities and the social processes that evolve from their work. Therefore, we invite papers that provide thick descriptions of some of these aspects, draw on ethnographic fieldwork and foster comparative research on the brokers' worlds.

Vortragende Teil 1/ Speakers part 1:

**Sabine Mannitz** (Leibniz-Institut Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung, Frankfurt/Main)

**Glocal brokers in the epistemic community of good (security) governance**

This presentation draws on a team research conducted in five countries where security sector reforms (SSR) were meant to improve public security and access to justice, and establish effective and accountable forms of security governance. Parallel to the general acknowledgement of disillusionment in peacebuilding, SSR also has become subject to growing critique, normatively and practically. Shortfalls concern the models that inform interventions and the concepts of implementation. As a consequence, it is widely recognized that 'localization' is crucial for any transformation attempt to meet its ends. Against this backdrop, our research was focused on the concrete travels and translations of SSR programs. In all cases numerous brokers worked to 'localize' a presumably 'global' reform agenda. And yet, 'local ownership' does not seem to describe the reality of 'donor'/'recipient' relations in these glocal reform arenas. Our findings challenge the simplistic categories of 'global/liberal' vs. 'traditional/local' actors and concepts. Brokerage in this epistemic

community has to find compromises with global and local actors who govern specific fields of power and definitions of security.

**Philipp Schröder** (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg)

**Brokerage, the Kyrgyz way – old and new ways of ‘negotiating business’ across capitalist Eurasia**

Since China’s economic ‘opening up’ in 1978 and the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, capitalism across Eurasia has evolved at distinct speeds and taken divergent shapes. Within a landscape of ‘bigger neighbors’, the economy of Kyrgyzstan is comparatively small and reliant on those of Russia and China. Following this observation, I present three types of brokers from Kyrgyzstan that have been involved in ‘negotiating business’ between the 1990s and today. I begin with Kyrgyz bazaar traders in Russia. During post-Soviet transformation, they largely engaged in informal, unmediated transactions. Their era thus was one ‘before the broker’. Next are Kyrgyz middlemen operating in China, who facilitated deals between Russian-speaking clients and local manufacturers. Their success depended on reputation, language skills and the marginality of their home country. In Kyrgyzstan itself, there has recently emerged a ‘new guild’ of consultants and lobbyists. They attach to regional trends of economic formalization, diversification and service-orientation. For each type of broker, I present further insights on their careers, positionings and practices based on ethnographic fieldwork since 2013.

**Yamara-Monika Wessling** (Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität Mainz)

**Negotiating new gender norms. The leader of a women’s NGO in Rwanda as broker between the rural population and the political elite**

The Rwandan government under Paul Kagame has been engaged in gender politics since they took power in 1994. Gender equality has become one of the founding pillars of the New Rwanda, with women being systematically promoted as entrepreneurs, politicians, intellectual innovators and civil society leaders. Most of these women today belong to the educated, urban and financially well-off middle-class.

In this paper, I focus on a psychologist who has founded an NGO for the empowerment of subsistence-farming, rural women in the outskirts of Butare. I argue that she acts as a broker between the political elite who push new, “modern” gender norms on the one hand, and the rural women in her project on the other hand, whose lived realities oftentimes clash with the elite’s ambitions to overcome “the traditional mindset”. In her daily work with the rural population as well as during fund raising among the elite and international donors, she therefore negotiates notions of gender, class and modernity. As I will show based on her life-course, she thereby presents herself as role model of a woman who is empowered, yet still respects cultural values – a notion of womanhood that is crucial for belonging to the middle-class in Rwanda.

**Wayne Palmer** (Monash University, AUS) und

**Antje Missbach** (Monash University, AUS)

**Legal brokers and the search for justice across borders:**

**Seeking compensation for wrongfully imprisoned Indonesian underage people smugglers**

Our talk sheds light on the outcomes of legal brokerage in a trial that involves 115 underage Indonesians who were wrongfully incarcerated in Australian adult prisons for people smuggling. Taking a rather unusual approach to seek compensation, an Indonesian lawyer launched a lawsuit against the Australian government at an Indonesian court. Ultimately, the lawsuit was unsuccessful, but analysing the legal proceeding within the framework of legal brokerage offers new lessons for

other legal brokers attempting similar efforts. Our analysis challenges the assumption that brokers are successful in what they do and that brokerage will bring about change for those the broker represents. Our detailed case study of the legal proceeding, its processes and developments, shows how it is not always so by highlighting how the competence of the broker and the extraordinary circumstance of the case influenced its chances of success.

Vortragende Teil 2/ Speakers part 2:

**Eva-Maria Walther** (Universität Regensburg)

**Brokers in straightjackets: The precarity and originality of actors in Slovak refugee care services**

According to Johan Lindquist's review of the anthropology of brokerage (2015), the position of the broker is not a desirable one. Their suspected moral ambiguity leads to constant scrutiny of their allegiances; and they are bound to mediate resources which they cannot, however, control. Actors in Slovak care services occupy such a precarious position. They engage in potentially conflictuous negotiations on two sides: For refugees, they are ambassadors of an unwelcoming state who enforce a restrictive regime of entitlements and control. When engaging with members of the Slovak majority, they need to defy the suspicions that surround them and their clients to evoke empathy and prompt cooperation.

Building on ethnographic fieldwork in three Slovak refugee support organizations, I examine how these "brokers of integration" navigate this difficult terrain. I show that actors appropriate the position of the in-between they are pushed into: Their double non-belonging allows them to steer clear of political impositions and "get things done" in unofficial, original ways. Through this empirical example the paper engages with the epistemological flaws and benefits of construing certain actors as brokers.

**Franziska Reiffen** (Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität Mainz)

**Family obligations, competition and the fear to fail:**

**The difficult decision to broker (or not) in an Argentine shopping centre**

In Buenos Aires, many shopping centres that offer cheap commodities and accessible – though poorly paid – jobs have emerged in the last decade. In these marketplaces, negotiations between the administration and shop tenants, wholesalers and petty traders, those who offer and those who seek jobs are part of everyday business. During such negotiations, experienced persons often act as brokers.

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in one of these shopping centers, I focus on a shop tenant who, due to her work experiences, mediation skills and personal inclinations acts or is asked to act as a broker, mostly on behalf of family members who work in the same place. Getting involved on behalf of others, though, puts her in a delicate position. This is the case, especially when expectations towards kinship conflict with self-interest and multiply the fear of failed negotiations in this competitive and precarious working-environment. Therefore, at times, she refuses to interfere. In my paper, I explore her practices and reflections in order to show how her decision-making connects with her working conditions, personal experiences and expectations towards family relations and economic success.

*Susanne Epple* (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt/Main)

**When government officials act as cultural brokers. The normative dilemmas of administrative personnel and legal practitioners in Hamar, southern Ethiopia**

Since the implementation of 'ethnic federalism' in 1991, for the first time, rather than being drawn from the central highlands, government officials in the Ethiopian peripheries have been appointed from among the various local ethnic groups. Working in different offices, as administrators and legal practitioners they carry the responsibility of mediating and translating between two rather different worlds and value systems: the state and state law and the local population, who continues to apply customary law.

Although native government officials would seem to be the ideal candidates for handling this difficult situation, they find themselves in a normative dilemma, having to handle the often contradictory expectations of the government and local population. Especially in the context of law enforcement, they have to negotiate with both sides, improvise and find innovative ways to settle cases.

The presentation addresses these officials' strategies, exploring their personal and professional backgrounds, their connections with the local population, and the efforts, successes and issues they experience in translating and mediating between the two worlds.