



**UNIVERSITÄT
BAYREUTH**

Ethnologie Afrikas

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The African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE)

Invited Workshop on:

African Borderlands

From Empirical Studies towards a Theory

26-28 July 2008, Bayreuth, Germany

The transformation of statehood is a frequently debated topic in studies that deal with globalization. This is particularly true with regard to the African continent; here, the “building” of the nation-state has been confronted, more than anywhere else, with a number of challenges. At times and in certain areas, state structures even collapsed, and thus transformed contemporary Africa into the symbol for state failure. However, the persistence and vitality of non state forms of political organization, conflict resolution and economic networks may also lead to the assumption that the state is not the only way to create and maintain order in contemporary Africa. Particularly the political and economical realities in peripheries and borderlands of many post-colonial states in Africa seem to challenge state conceptions, practices of sovereignty, territoriality and mobility. Thus borderlands can be regarded as spheres where traditional and new forms of non state politics and networks are not regulated or controlled by national or international regimes.

The invited workshop “African Borderlands: From empirical studies towards a Theory” intends to contribute to a systematic comparative empirical research on these issues. In 2007, a first step into this direction was taken at the workshop on “African Borderlands Research: Emerging Agendas and Critical Reflections” in Edinburgh. Here the “African Borderland Research Network” (ABORNE¹) was

¹ www.aborne.org/

founded. ABORNE is an interdisciplinary network of researchers of more than 15 European, American and African universities. It seeks to integrate history, anthropology, development studies, migration studies and refugee studies. The workshop in Bayreuth will serve as the next step of this genuine network. It is supposed to combine empirical case studies with a more conceptual and theoretical approach. Thus the workshop intends to gain a comprehensive comparative approach and a distinctive scientific profile of borderland studies by developing a set of common theoretical perspectives and methodologies. The workshop will focus on the following topics:

1. Boundaries and Borderlands in a comparative perspective: Methodologies and theoretical insights
2. Border spaces and regional economies
3. Border politics and politics across borders
4. Inserting the history into borders and borders into history
5. Borders and identity
6. Applied approaches
7. Institutional frameworks for borderland research

Please submit your papers or abstracts to Thomas Hüsken thuesken@gmx.de until the 31/ 04/2008