

Departmental Colloquium Series Summer Semester 2022



**The Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology
of the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität
is pleased to welcome**

Dr. Iain Walker
(Max Planck Institute
for Social Anthropology
Halle)

Wednesday, July 13th 2022, 4-6 p.m.

Creating self and other: discourses of inclusion and exclusion on Mayotte.

The restrictions, advice and conversations that emerged during the first wave of covid in Mayotte revealed a politics of identity that underlies social relationships on the island. If most of the inhabitants of Mayotte, a French department, are French citizens, a significant minority are not, and of these many are either irregular migrants in a formal sense or, regardless of legal status, seen as not belonging. However, most of those perceived as not belonging are from the neighbouring island of Ndzuani, part of the independent Union of the Comoros, and are socially and culturally very close to the Maorais, the people of Mayotte. In this paper I draw on Bourdieu's field theory to explore how interactions may be analysed as occurring in different fields. Relationships between French citizens are played out in the political field, in which capital is acquired through French citizenship, white collar employment and a middle class lifestyle, with corresponding accoutrements, while relationships between Comorians occurs in a customary field, where capital depends upon religious practice, the performance of certain rituals and spatial belonging. Conflicts between the two paths to identity construction often poses problems for those in liminal position and can lead to exclusion, dispossession and violence.

The Departmental Colloquium Series will take place at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology,
Stuttstraße 21, Room STU 102 (2.4).

Everybody is welcome!