Perspectives on spatial mobility of hunter-gatherers

14.-15.12.2017

Kick-off workshops for subprojects on decision-making and cultural mapping/spatial orientation among hunter-gatherer groups in Africa

Collaborative Research Centre 806: Our Way to Europe

Project E 3: Anthropological Models: A Reconstruction of the First African Frontier

Universität zu Köln

Thursday 14th December 2017

Horizons of decision making

10.15-10.30   **Welcome Address and Introduction**
Thomas Widlok (University of Cologne)

10.30- 11.30   **Anthropological Approaches to Decision Making**
Michael Chibnik (University of Iowa)
This talk is an historical overview of how anthropologists have analyzed choice. For many years most anthropologists regarded decision making as being largely prescribed by "culture." The development of economic anthropology staring in the 1950s led anthropologists to pay more attention to how scholars in economics and cognitive psychology examine decision making. Some anthropological research on decision making since then has consisted of partial adoption of theories in other disciplines about rational choice, behavioral economics, and heuristics (rules of thumb). Many anthropologists, however, continue to emphasize how cultural conventions, historical circumstances, power relations, and socioeconomic conditions constrain decision-making. Their attempts at holistic, realistic descriptions are quite different from the model-based approaches to decision making focusing on a few variables that characterize much research in economics and cognitive psychology.

coffee break

11.45-12.45   **Dutching the future**
David Zeitlyn (University of Oxford)
Exploring different metaphors for acting in on and with pasts and futures. From divination to other technologies of choice.

lunch break

13.45-14.45   **Narratives of decision-making in advice literature on financial market behavior**

Helene Basu (Universität Münster)

I shall discuss the performativity of rational-choice and behavioural finance approaches to decision-making as it emerges in popular financial market advice literature for amateur traders. The paper aims at straddling the dichotomy between individualistic/cognitive models of decision-making and decision-making as a form of social action from an anthropological stance informed by practice theories.

14.45-15.45   **Rationality – an institutional analysis**

Martin Neumann (Jacobs University Bremen)

Typically decision making is assumed to be based on cognition. Most prominently rational choice theory as an action oriented sociological theory attempts to explain social structures as the result of individual decisions. The basis of decision making are some kind of calculations of individual expected utility in the choice between different alternative modes of action. In this account individual cognition is the basis of an explanation. In the talk I will explore the social history and archeology of human cognition. Thereby it will be argued that rationality is a social institution, based on the history of language and symbol grounding. Rationality extends the mind of the biological species of humans. Based on the cultural evolution of language and symbols mathematics became possible which enables calculation of expected utilities which are at the core of rational choice theory.

coffee break

16.00-17.00   **Finding a place to stand: the challenges of ABM methodology in different kinds of research**

Edmund Chattoe-Brown (University of Leicester)

Like any other effective research method, a coherent ABM methodology is a core element in producing research that will convince other social

scientists. However, owing to the diversity of social science problems, this methodology can never just be "one size fits all". This talk considers three aspects of the challenge of applying ABM methodology effectively in different kinds of research. The first is the appropriate scientific justifications for different applications of ABM (formalising theory, empirical applications, synthesising expert judgement and so on). The second is the significance of the different kinds of data available, whether from direct interrogation of research subjects (which can be added to as required) or from the traces left behind long after their death (which can only be added to through good fortune). The third is the logic of progressive research in ABM. How do we carry out sequences of research using models that move us towards a better understanding of our "target system?" (This view is contrasted with the unrealistic one – which would be plainly unrealistic in statistics for example – that we can reasonably expect to get close to the truth using a single ABM over a relatively short time scale.)

17.00-18.00   Discussion: **Horizons of decision-making**

Friday 15th December 2017

Cultural maps and hunter-gatherers' being in the world

10.15-10.30   **Welcome Address and Introduction**
Michael Bollig (University of Cologne)

10.30-11.30   **Cultural mapping with Hai//om in the Etosha National Park, Namibia**
Harald Sterly (University of Bonn), Ralf Vogelsang (University of Cologne), Ute Dieckmann (University of Cologne)
In our talk we will present a cultural mapping project undertaken with Hai//om (a San community) in the Etosha-National Park in Namibia. We will describe the background, purpose, the methodology used and the challenges faced during the project. Afterwards, we will also share some thoughts about the potential and limitations of "cultural mapping" (i.e. the way we have approached it), and reflect about cultural maps as appropriate tool to represent hunter-gatherers' perception of and engagement with the environment.

coffee break

11.45-12.45   **Of moving, modelling and mapping: Some experiences with San (Taa in Omaheke South, Khwe in Bwabwata National Park)**
Gertrud Boden (Goethe University Frankfurt)
In the talk I want to describe some of my experiences and ideas resulting from working with San individuals in two regions of Namibia on "cultural maps". The actual aim of the mapping efforts was to document former settlement patterns together with rights to land and resources. The aim of this talk is to share and discuss experiences and ideas which came as a by-product to those mapping efforts and so-to-speak "by the way", when driving or walking through, and talking with San (Taa and Khwe) about the landscape they live in. These experiences and ideas have neither resulted

from, nor (so far) led to focussed methodological inquiry on Taa and Khwe perceptions of their environment. Instead, they should be viewed as clues or spoors, potentially worthwhile of tracking further. Based on what the San, with whom I worked, explained to me "on" or "by the way" without having been asked for explicitly, these experiences suggest: first, that places are conceptualized and described along previous movements between them; secondly, that moving in, experiencing and talking about the landscape creates and reflects cognitive modelling of characteristic and/or culturally important landform units; and lastly, that "cultural mappers" should think about how to account for such ways of perceiving/dealing with the landscape in "cultural maps".

lunch break

13.45-14.45 **Maps, hand-drawn by San in late 19th century**
Tilman Lenssen-Erz (University of Cologne)
The famous Bleek & Lloyd collection of oral traditions of San from the late 19th century has received a lot of attention by researchers into ethnography and rock art. Very little, however, has so far been investigated concerning the drawings that the San informants made during the time that they stayed in the household of the Bleek family. Among more than 500 drawings from six authors (/Xam and !Xun, ages ranging from 7 years to end 30s), mainly featuring plants and animals, are at least nine maps of various "scales". It is said that the men and boys decided entirely on their own what to draw; after having finished they would disclose information on what can be seen on these maps to Lucy Lloyd who noted it on the drawings. These maps and their 'legends' will be presented, offering illustrative material for a discussion of map conceptualizations of hunter-gatherers.

14.45-15.45 **Beyond cognitive maps: some attempts towards a theory of semi-nomadic wayfinding**
Øyvind Eide (University of Cologne)

In the presentation I will present some ideas of how people find their ways through a landscape with some suggestions towards what it means to know where one is. The talk will be based on my own experience in orienteering, map surveying, and wayfinding and on input from reindeer herders, farmers, and hunters from the Sami and Norwegian populations in Scandinavia. This knowledge will be complemented with evidence from different areas of research including anthropology, psychology, history, neuroscience, geography, and cartography.

coffee break

16.00-17.00 **Through the Eyes of Hunter-Gatherers. Participatory 3D Modelling among Ogiek Indigenous Peoples in Kenya**
Giacomo Rambaldi (Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA))
My presentation will focus on the role of the map legend in allowing knowledge holder to articulate and document their knowledge and mental maps. It will include excellent examples about how "cultural maps do represent the ways of life and perspectives of hunter-gatherers, versus the extent to which they reflect our own ideas of the world".

17.00-18.00 Discussion: **Maps as tools for representing hunter-gatherer perceptions of the environment? Potential and limitations**