

Aspects of ethnicity in Africa today

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1. Introduction

- a. thanks
- b. my own background
- c. this is one of two lectures

ethnicity and religion

ethnicity easiest to approach, has a long history in China,

forbidden city has a building where once every year the emperor had a banquet with the dukes and representatives of minority nations within the empire

[ascertain which building this was, and give its name; see Internet; my information comes from bronze plaques to be found on the spot in the forbidden city]

2. the background: a glimpse of Africa today

3. methods of research

Much research at IWAAS situates itself at the abstract national level. being primarily an anthropologist and a historian of regional political and cultural processes, my own argument situates itself primarily at the sub-national level. It is not that I consider one perspective better than the other. I consider them complementary ,we need both, but I

am specialised in only one of the two.

situation
fieldwork
languages
documents, historical and contemporary
interviews
current affairs, newspapers etc.
Internet

4. theory of ethnicity

name: classification scheme but in fact also a system of subordination

situation
political space
tribe
culture
identity
incorporation
recognition
strategy
reification of culture in the interest of particular groups and elites
clientism (as obscuring the objective class situation of peasants and urban
proletarians)
the role of chiefs

the limitations of cultural relativism, after a glorious beginning

how do African societies organise the political space in the absence of articulated and conscious class relationship or other categorial divisions that cut across the society, such as on the basis of power, wealth, gender, age: they organise themselves on the basis of ethnicity, which is essentially regionality

(this does not mean that no objective class distinctions do exist in Africa, but that they are constantly blurred and obscured because of individual patronage relations between members of different classes)

5. Three case studies

6. Ethnic processes involving the Nkoya identity of Western Zambia

[get from other existing paper]

7. Ethnic processes involving the Kalanga of Northeastern Botswana

[get from other existing paper]

8. Ubuntu as an aspect of ethnic dynamics in South Africa today

[get from other existing paper]

9. Conclusion

10. References cited