

DR. KNUT GRAW

RITUAL PRAXIS INSIDE OUT: TRACING EMIC-ETIC CONTINUITIES IN MANDINKA DIVINATION

Divinatory practices in Senegal and the Gambia are highly diverse and require diviners to manage different techniques and skills. Despite the diversity of practices, diviners apply technical notions that reflect both a common structure underlying these practices as well as an emic theory of divinatory praxis. This lecture focuses on several of these underlying notions and the question of how they can be translated into a theory of divination that bridges the seeming divide between emic and etic perspectives. By tracing emic-etic resonances in Mandinka divination, the lecture highlights the importance of paying particular attention to the often highly complex conceptual landscapes of esoteric ritual practices in Africa and beyond. In a second analytical move, the lecture interrogates the consequences of possible emic-etic resonances for the question of insider and outsider perspectives in the study of religious and ritual practices.



Knut Graw is a social and cultural anthropologist specializing in African Studies, ritual analysis and migration theory. He has worked at the University of Leuven (Belgium), the Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin (Germany), the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) in Uppsala (Sweden), the United Nations University in Barcelona (Spain) and at the International Consortium for Research in the Humanities: Fate, Freedom and Prognostication (IKGF) at the University of Erlangen (Germany). He is the author of various articles on West African divination and the co-editor of 'The Global Horizon: Expectations of Migration in Africa and the Middle East' (2012). His current work deals with comparative divination studies, ritual, the anthropology of religion, and anthropological methodology. He speaks multiple languages including English, German, French, Spanish, Mandinka, and Arabic.



Date:
Tuesday - 04 November, 2025



Time:
6.15 - 7.45 PM

**Location: Big Seminar room,
Hartmannstr. 14, Building D1, Erlangen**

Link for virtual attendance: <https://fau.zoom-x.de/j/62556506187>



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Alternative Rationalities and
Esoteric Practices from a Global Perspective



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