

EARLY CHILDHOOD IN THE RURAL AREA AROUND ZOMBA IN MALAWI

OUT OF AFRICA



Seven Masterthesis are presented which are framed and discussed by five international Experts

THE EXPERTS



Workshop Location:
Senatssaal at University of Vienna

MAY 2nd

WELCOME GREETINGS

Cross-cultural approaches to child care
Lieselotte Ahnert
Limbika Maliwichi-Senganimalunje

African Lunch

Interaction and closeness in child development
Hanna Luttenberger
Sabrina Leodolter

African Coffee

Maternal beliefs and child development
Andrea Poppe
Carol Worthman

MAY 3rd

WELCOME MUSIC

Secure base and maternal sensitivity
Anna Theissing
German Posada

African Lunch

Parental investment and parent-child-attachment
Sarah Salmhofer
Sabrina Leodolter

African Coffee

Multiple attachments and child care
Melanie Leidwein
Avi Sagi-Schwartz

10:00 AM

12:00 AM

01:00 PM

03:00 PM

03:30 PM

FREE ADMISSION for students and faculty members

Because of limited seats please register under:
<https://entw-psy.univie.ac.at/outofafrica/>



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.

In modern Western societies to this day, there are prejudices against non-maternal caregivers for the care of the young, even if they are relatives or siblings. It is argued that many care providers are suboptimal in raising an infant, as (a) infants may form, only superficially, attachments, and (b) may be impeded in forming attachments to their own mothers. As a result, many care providers may work against child development, specifically in the early phases. This, however, is in contrast to the majority of infants in the world who develop normatively, despite often being exposed to many non-maternal caregivers.

Particularly in Africa, entire communities might take care of children, yet in European countries, mothers believe that staying at home with an infant would be much better than leaving the infant with other people. European parents simply believe that multiple caretaking can overburden an infant and that social competencies of young children might develop better in the socially manageable contexts of a small family. In the European core families, thus, mothers instruct their children in a focused dyadic way, in order to enforce cultural learning.

THE WORKSHOP.

Through two research stays in the rural areas around Zomba in Malawi, carried out in 2011 (from the 4th of October to the 12th of November) and in 2013 (from the 14th of September to the 7th of December) we explored the following questions:

- (A) What type of care do young children in Malawian perceive?
- (B) How much time does the mother and do other caregivers invest into raising a child in the rural areas around Zomba?
- (C) What do Malawian mothers feel and think about their children?
- (D) What do mother-child attachments look like in Malawi?
- (E) How do children attachments towards significant others look like?

The two research stays were supported by the University of Vienna (International Office; Division of scholarships for short-term grant abroad/KWA), by the University of Malawi-Chancellor College and funded privately. The last research stay extended the program of the first one by three junior researchers including two from the first research stay and 7 master students (Andrea Poppe, Anna Theissing, Hanna Luttenberger, Jasmin Niederwolfgruber, Melanie Sophie Leidwein, Sabrina Leodolter and Sarah Salmhofer). This time, Limbika Maliwichi-Senganimalunje (Head of Department of Psychology at Chancellor College) helped with 9 students (Agatha Chitanda, Chikondi Kateta, Gilbert Boohzha, Leah Mziya, Lewis Chiwana, Lloyd Nyirenda, Naomi Mughogho, Salim Mapila and Tawonga Chiwanga) to carry out the research in eight villages around Zomba (These villages were Bakali, Gowelo, Matuta, Mikundi, M'Malisye, Mwenyemasi and Saidi).

We explored N=90 families and delivered interesting data sets on attachments and child development, which are currently the foundation for the master theses of the 7 students involved. The workshop will demonstrate the major results and open up discussion on the importance of cross-cultural research.

MAY 2

MORNING.

10:00 **WELCOME GREETINGS**

AM Prof. Dr. Germain Weber [Dean of the Faculty of Psychology at University of Vienna]
Dr. Lottelis Moser [Head of the Department of International Relations at University of Vienna]

LIESELOTTE AHNERT [University of Vienna/Austria]
Aims of a research program in the rural area around Zomba in Malawi

LIMBIKA MALIWICHI-SENGANIMALUNJE [University of Malawi-Chancellor College]
Characteristics of the rural areas of Zomba

DISCUSSION (Moderation: Sarah Salmhofer)

12:00 **LUNCH**

Self-made African food in front of the Senatssaal

AFTERNOON.

01:00 Moderation: Monika Malamusi
PM

HANNA LUTTENBERGER [University of Vienna/Austria]
Daily life experiences of children in the rural area around Zomba

SABRINA LEODOLTER [University of Vienna/Austria]
The role of the family in raising young Malawian children

DISCUSSION (Moderation: Melanie Leidwein)

03:00 **COFFEE-BREAK**

African coffee in front of the Senatssaal

03:30 ANDREA POPPE [University of Vienna/Austria]
Beliefs and socialization goals of Malawian mothers

CAROL WORTHMAN [Emory University/USA]
Cultural contexts and child development

FINAL DISCUSSION (Moderation: Lieselotte Ahnert)

05:30 **THE END OF THE WORKSHOP**

EVENING.

08:00 **SPEAKERS AND SPECIAL GUESTS GET TOGETHER**
PM

MAY 3

MORNING.

10:00 **WELCOME MUSIC**

AM Moderation: Prof. Dr. em. Harald Euler [Evolutionary Developmental Psychology at University of Kassel]
African Music: Lamine Camara

ANNA THEISSING [University of Vienna/Austria]
Secure base behaviors and emotional regulation in Malawian infants

GERMAN POSADA [Purdue University/USA]
Cross cultural research on maternal sensitivity and secure base behaviors

DISCUSSION (Moderation: Andrea Poppe)

12:00 **LUNCH**

Self-made African food in front of the Senatssaal

AFTERNOON.

01:00 Moderation: Monika Malamusi
PM

SARAH SALMHOFER [University of Vienna/Austria]
Maternal and paternal investment into the care of young Malawian children

SABRINA LEODOLTER [University of Vienna/Austria]
Family functioning and attachments in the rural area around Zomba

DISCUSSION (Moderation: Hanna Luttenberger)

03:00 **COFFEE-BREAK**

African coffee in front of the Senatssaal

03:30 MELANIE SOPHIE LEIDWEIN [University of Vienna/Austria]
Multiple attachments of children in the rural area around Zomba

AVI SAGI-SCHWARTZ [University of Haifa/Israel]
Shared care and the interplay of multiple attachments in historical Kibbutz

FINAL DISCUSSION (Moderation: Lieselotte Ahnert)

05:30 **THE END OF THE WORKSHOP**

EVENING.

08:00 **MEET THE SCIENTISTS: LIMBIKA MALIWICHI-SENGANIMALUNJE**
PM CAROL WORTHMAN - GERMAN POSADA - AVI SAGI-SCHWARTZ

PROGRAMM FEATURES



LIESELOTTE AHNERT [University of Vienna/Austria]

Aims of a research program in the rural area around Zomba in Malawi

This paper provides the theoretical frame on the question of why it is not only an exciting endeavor to compare childcare in Africa with Europe, rather than to doubt if child care in Europe really meets children's needs for emotional closeness.



LIMBIKA MALIWICHI-SENGANIMALUNJE [University of Malawi-Chancellor College]

Characteristics of the rural areas of Zomba

This presentation describes the characteristics of the target population. It also highlights the sociocultural context of the study population that may help us understand specific research findings on multiple caregiving and infancy in rural Zomba.



HANNA LUTTENBERGER [University of Vienna/Austria]

Daily life experiences of children in the rural area around Zomba

Based on the imagination that it might "take a village to raise a child", this paper explores the dynamics of exclusive maternal vs. shared attention with allo-caregivers in the daily lives of Malawian children and to what extent shared attention is of prime importance.



SABRINA LEODOLTER [University of Vienna/Austria]

The role of the family in raising young Malawian children

This paper describes the usual matrilineal family structures in rural Malawi and discusses consequences of raising children if a patrilineal pattern prevails and, as follows, relationship structures become less close.



ANDREA POPPE [University of Vienna/Austria]

Beliefs and socialization goals of Malawian mothers

This paper reports on the interdependent nature of maternal beliefs in raising children, for which integration into the community and compliance is prominent and asks how these socialization goals are in line with attachments towards the mother.



CAROL WORTHMAN [Emory University /USA]

Cultural contexts and child development

Unexpected findings from a study of caregiver beliefs in a township of Cape Town, South Africa, illustrate the use of existing theoretical and methodological tools to tap local views of child development and parenting practice, and the importance of doing so for communicating with caregivers and planning interventions.



ANNA THEISSING [University of Vienna/Austria]

Secure base behaviors and emotional regulation in Malawian infants

This paper confirms the well-known link between a child's attachment and its emotional regulation for Malawian mother-child dyads; it addresses however the specific way how these mothers handle child emotions.



GERMAN POSADA [Purdue University/USA]

Cross cultural research on maternal sensitivity and secure base behaviors

This paper discusses the cross-cultural validity of the sensitivity construct, as well as the sensitivity-secure base behavior link in young children, in order to draw on the universality-cultural specificity debate.



SARAH SALMHOFER [University of Vienna/Austria]

Maternal and paternal investment into the care of young Malawian children

Given wide ranges of resource scarcity in Malawi, this paper investigates maternal investments as related to various goals starting from child's survival to mental and social growth, and explores whether these investments interfere with the allo-caregivers.



SABRINA LEODOLTER [University of Vienna/Austria]

Family functioning and attachments in the rural area around Zomba

This paper focuses on mother-child-attachments in different family structures in rural Malawi. Locality and size of the family, perceived support from relatives and emotional closeness to others seem to be related to the mother's attachment quality.



MELANIE SOPHIE LEIDWEIN [University of Vienna/Austria]

Multiple attachments of children in the rural area around Zomba

This paper examines differences in attachments which were formed by the mother vs. a primary allo-caregiver in terms of their features and functions, first asking who serves as primary allo-caregiver.



AVI SAGI-SCHWARTZ [University of Haifa/Israel]

Shared care and the interplay of multiple attachments in historical Kibbutz

Revisiting research in Israel that had been carried out around the time when Kibbutzim were considered the best place to raise a child, we take a second look at the data, and explain why this system must have collapsed, and what can be learned about the risk of children raised at night without their parents.

