



2009 CONFERENCE

IDENTIFYING THE PERSON: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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Abstract

Identification of Individuals:

Arrangements between Custom and Modern Civil Status Registration

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A working session (March 2009) initiated by the team Anthropology of Writing allowed, through the presentation of empirical studies, to put forward several types of links between the customary identification of individuals and French-style civil status registration. Custom identifies individuals through their names, the reference to a clan, a territory, a family relationship and marks each event of one's personal life with peculiar rituals: birth, marriage, death. Because of the globalisation of civil status registration and universal rights, this customary civil status must now join with civil status registration, which generates an identity model favouring marks such as surname, first name, place of birth and sex. A more thorough examination of the issue may be provided by an analysis of the situation in Mayotte. The implementation of the Statute of Department (approved by Mahorais on 29th March 2009) in this former French overseas territory reveals how difficult it is to impose a civil status regime on registers formerly administered by religious authority. The abandonment of children by illegal immigrants deported from the island worsens the situation, all the more so as they haven't any civil status or formal education.

The Documentation of Individual Identity:

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