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## Friday Research Seminar in Africa Studies

# **The relevance of research – or is another policy report what Africa needs?**

with **Terje Oestigaard**

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**Friday 25 May 2018, 10.15-11.30**

House 3, room 2028, Engelska Parken  
Thunsbergsvägen 3H, Uppsala

Following UNESCO, 'Poverty is also social, political and cultural'. Research in Africa is measured today against criteria of policy relevance, thus becoming often a means for something else. However, research on the social and cultural dimensions of poverty, or on cultural heritage in a broad sense, may aim at something different from policy relevance, or from changing current conditions - an objective that becomes particularly problematic when it seeks solutions to Africa's challenges elsewhere, rather than in indigenous cultures and values.

Reflecting on almost 15 years fieldwork from the sources of the Nile (Ethiopia and Uganda) to the sea (Egypt), the seminar addresses the lack of empirical documentation of African traditional religions and cultural heritage, raising the question of how the social and cultural sciences can best contribute to African development.

If social and cultural poverty is an important issue, then another policy report is perhaps not what Africa needs: what is the best way of spending scarce research resources?

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