

Call-for-papers

Conference at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW, Ghana),

21.-23. Mai 2020

Organizer:

- Em. Prof. Dr. Bea Lundt (Europe-University Flensburg/DAAD-Guestprofessor at the University of Education, Winneba)
- Nina Paarmann M.A. (PhD-Candidate, Europe-University Flensburg, ass. UEW)
- Dr. Edmond Agyeman (Lecturer, UEW, African Studies)
- Gertrude Nkrumah (MA, UEW, History Education)
- Justina Akansor (MA, UEW, History Education)

Topic: Gender in Transcultural Perspective (Europe-Africa)

At the World Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995, one of the most spectacular encounters between European and African women took place. It was about the sacrificial role that European feminists ascribed to African colleagues. These vehemently resisted because they saw the situation of gender completely misjudged. They pointed out that it was only the colonial rulers who tried to introduce the dominant dualism between the sexes in Europe of the 19th century in African countries. This banished women to reproductive domestic activities in the household and rated their work as inferior to that of the man in professions and politics of the public. But precolonial patterns of gender roles and relations survived. The "gender"- concept was developed on the example of European conditions, which are not true for Africa, where there were permeable, fluid gender concepts, and participation of women in power was just as widespread as their professional activity in the community. African and European countries have their own feminist theory-tradition, which on both continents is very diverse in itself. On the background of postcolonial challenges both are on search for new approaches to understand issues about women and men in overcoming essentialistic positions. In the last years there was a specific interest to have an exchange and to discuss gender-phenomenons on both continents in their transcultural entanglement.¹

The programmatic volume "Africa after Gender" (2007)² with its introduction "When was Gender?" brought together examples of a successful historization of European research concepts and pointed the way for numerous representations that highlighted differences and similarities: beyond the traditions of the *extended family* and the *nuclear family* approximations are obvious: even in Europe, the patchwork family has created new family situations in which kinship, even the gender of the connected persons are no longer crucial. The central factor is "caring", which is taken over by individuals within a group. As is the case with polygamous living situations in Africa, there is also an increasing pluralization of concepts of life in Europe. On the other hand, differences have become clearer as well:

¹ Published in German Language: Anke Graeneß, Martina Kopf, Magdalena Kraus: Feministische Theorie aus Afrika, Asien und Lateinamerika. Wien 2019; Natasha A. Kelly (Ed.): Schwarzer Feminismus. Grundlagentexte, Münster 2019.

² Catherine M. Cole, Takyiwaa Manuh und Stephan F. Miescher (Ed.): Africa after Gender? Indiana University Press 2007. Introduction, p. 1-16.

African religiosity defines the biological female body spiritually in its different phases of life, and thus seems to be in contrast to European models. The strong attachment to the ancestors is also atypical for Europe. Circular time concepts differ from the European linearity of progress orientation.

In recent years a number of new publications have dealt with questions of transculturality in gender research, collecting the manifold factors of the *entangled History* which lead to hybrid identities.³ These are currently to be found in the West African coastal regions with its high urbanity and a long tradition of European educational offerings.

The conference aims to bring together scholars from Africa and Europe to discuss perspectives on gender similarities and differences in selected case studies.

We welcome offers of gender research from the fields of cultural studies, which present a phenomenon of gender on one or both continents in a transcultural perspective.

As part of the conference, the new publication: *Polygamous Ways of Life. Past and present in Africa and Europe.* ed. Bea Lundt (Berlin /Winneba), Henry Kam Kah (Buea, Cameroon) will be presented. Another book publication will be presented on this conference as well.

For the African guests, the travel and accommodation costs during the conference will be covered. Some other participants may also be reimbursed proportionally. European travelers are advised to extend their stay and use the offers of cooperations with different Universities. Subsequently (on May 24th, 2020), a joint excursion to Cape Coast Castle / Elmina Castle or Osu Castle (Accra) will be offered.

Abstracts are requested until 31.12.2019 to Bea Lundt: bea.lundt@gmx.de and Nina Paarmann: nina.paarmann@gmx.de

³ Research at UEW (Ghana) showed the manifold entangled Gender- and Lifeconcepts of students. See: Nina Paarmann: *Geschlechterwelten Westafrikas – eine Analyse studentischer Selbstbilder*. Erfurt 2017. Henry Kam Kah: *The Sacred Forest. Gender and Matriliney in the Laimbwe History (Cameroon), 1750-200* (Hist. Diss.), Lit-Verlag Berlin 2015.