



Responsibilizing parents to overcome blindness:

Changing intergenerational relations through education for all in Northern Benin

Speaker: Prof. Erdmute Alber

The lecture traces how the large Education for All campaigns transformed parental responsibilities, not only in terms of the costs of enrolment and the maintenance of schools, but also in terms of other changes in children's life courses, which are related to their schooling trajectories under difficult conditions. Alongside parental responsibilities for schooling, responsibilities for marriage, child birth, fostering of grandchildren, and additional apprenticeships for sons and daughters are increasing as well. Different from previous generations, marriage and schooling are no longer seen as alternative parental investments in children's futures. Instead, parents of today have become responsabilized for multiplicities of supporting children in their uncertain trajectories of making a living. In this perspective, Education for All is taken as an alibi that veils the absence of the state in sufficiently covering the costs for formal education, as well its responsibility for the increasing lack of job opportunities for which formal education is required.



Erdmute Alber is professor of social anthropology at the University of Bayreuth. Her research focusses on processes of social change and the interdependencies and mutual entanglements of politics and kinship, primarily in West Africa. Her work is based on historically informed field research and empirical fieldwork. Current topics are women in politics, new illiteracies education, and aspirations of youth. Alber has long done research on the politics and practices of child fosterage in West Africa as well as on power and chieftaincy, education, inter-generational relations, and middle classes.



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