

"GENDER TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE HORN OF AFRICA " Call for papers for an international conference

10-12th July 2011, University of Sana'a, YEMEN

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The French Research Centre for Archaeology and Social Sciences in Sana'a (CEFAS) is calling for paper proposals for an international conference on the theme of "Gender Transformations in the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa".

The conference will focus on recent social changes, spatial and social mobilities, as well as on locations, possibly emerging and alternative places for such changes. The theoretical framework will involve methodological reflexivity regarding our preconceived notions when dealing with the issue of gender, especially in this region. It will elaborate on the centrality of the migration experiences and their impact on gender transformations.

Gender is understood here as a social construct involving interactions between both femininities and masculinities. An interactionist perspective will be adopted, where gender relationships are at the heart of our analysis so that studies of masculinities are also called upon. It will consider works in contemporary history and social sciences.

Four major themes will be considered:

1. Public Policies and Gender Development

Whether in rich or poor countries, women are viewed as specific targets of human rights and development programs. In the Arab Gulf states, political participation is meant to lead to democratization. In Yemen and the Horn of Africa, women's empowerment is assumed to lead to growth and population control.

What are the practices on the ground? Is this external discourse incorporated in public policies? Who are the actors in the different countries, at the regional or transnational level? Do they appropriate, reformulate, or reject such discourses, and if so, how?

2. Employment, Professions and Labor

Papers will deal with, on the one hand, women's experiences in the workplace, across sectors, competence and nationalities (from high skilled or low skilled jobs, formal or marginal professions, taken into account for instance also political careers and activism). Social mobility and spatial mobilities, especially labour migrations are central here, especially since a majority of migrant workers are women (domestic workers, medical staffs, teachers...). The aim is to study the manners in which new professional women's subjectivities, new professional femininities are gradually created.

What are the interactions in the workplace? Who are the main actors? How do relationships between men and women change/evolve accordingly? How, on an everyday basis, are new professional and gender subjectivities negotiated?

3. Intimacy and Moral debates

Social change, politics, religious practices, conflicts, mobilities, and pathways (such as higher education and work, health care and for instance access to means of contraception and to new procreation technologies...etc.) transform the everyday relationships between men and women in the couple, the family, but also in the public spheres and activism calling for an active citizenship or personal rights for example. In what manner do intimacy, personal and moral issues affect wider transformations having an impact on gender relations? And how are personal relationships affected by such wider changes? This theme welcomes works on actual, emerging and eventually subversive femininities and masculinities, their changing relations in the intimate and personal spheres and their impact on political, moral and ethical contemporary debates.

4. Practices of the spaces and alternative places for socialisation

Circulations and exclusion along gender and national status...etc., linked to urbanisation, and the globalisation of technology, knowledge and social habits, are changing practices of space(s). The notion of space includes universities, internet cafés, bars and restaurants, chambers of commerce and trade unions, local councils, dating and recruitment agencies, malls as well as virtual places such as internet and the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies). Such intrinsically hybrid places provide new opportunities for socialising, constructing new subjectivities and new habits. What kind of negotiations between different values and competences regarding mobility and socializing are emerging with these new practices of spaces?

Methodology

Papers should be grounded on fieldwork studies or original written, oral or audiovisual sources and the proposals should state clearly these sources and the methodology used.

The proceedings of this conference will be published in two separate Journals in English and French, and will be compiled in a book in Arabic.

All the proposals should be submitted in English. The working languages of the conference will be English with a translation provided into Arabic. Participants should state very clearly in the subject of their e-mail under which of the four above themes their proposal is intended to belong and if they wish to present in English or Arabic.

Abstracts of 300 words and a short biographical note are to be sent for **15th of February 2011** to Gender2011@cefass.com.ye. The deadline for final papers is **10th June 2011**.

Funds will be available for a selected number of participants. We ask participants to claim expenses from their home institution wherever possible so that we can reserve funding for those who need it most.

Coordinators

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Scientific Committee

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ESO (Espaces et sociétés, CNRS, Angers)

University of Leeds

University of Sanaa, Gender and Development Research & Studies Center

University of Aden

University of Djibouti

IEMAM (Institut de Recherche sur le Monde arabe et Musulman, CNRS, Aix-en-Provence)

Netherlands Association for Gender Studies and Feminist Anthropology

Université de Bolzano

CEFAS (Centre français d'archéologie et de sciences sociales de Sanaa)

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