

## Politics of Care in Gendered Fields: Researching Welfare and Power in Africa and beyond (Application until July 15, 2021)

The provision of care for children, sick people, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups links various societal spheres, as it is embedded in realms of kinship, community, economy, religion and bureaucratic institutions. The question of how to care thus relates the state and its citizens in manifold modalities that range from partnership, cooperation, substitution to tension and conflict. Changes in care regimes might reveal and reinforce hierarchies and power structures as they challenge and transform them. In the face of institutionalized care regimes, as well as communally organized care arrangements, both care-givers and recipients of care are subjected to differentiation on the basis of various categories such as race, gender, ethnicity, class/economic background, religion, and sexuality. Over the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has not only exemplified vulnerabilities in care arrangements in many parts of the world, but also contributed to a new awareness of how care is arranged and negotiated, and shaped by hierarchies and power regimes.

We ask: How does intersectional positioning inform the provision and reception of care? How does this change over time? How are care arrangements negotiated, acted out, and altered between individuals, families, communities, (religious) authorities and the various state actors and institutions? How do changing family patterns and gender roles inform practices of and discourses around care? Who cares, for whom, and why? How are these concerns and questions represented in social media or public spaces? How does the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic affect regimes of care, in different places and for different actors? And finally, how is planetary care and care for non-human species being negotiated in the face of yet another current crisis, namely that of climate change?

The debates around the politics of care are an exciting and growing field of study within Anthropology and the social sciences in general. These debates provide a large frame for students' empirical research. Guided research is offered in West Africa, mainly Ghana, where rapid social change and economic growth are leading to an increasing institutionalization of care practices through established sites such as hospitals and kindergartens, but also eldercare homes, rehabilitation centres, and the like. Masters-level Students from University of Bayreuth and the University of Ghana will work together on synergic research projects under the supervision and guidance of senior researchers from both institutions. We also offer students the opportunity to carry out research in Benin and to relate their projects to two existing research projects there. In addition, students may choose to realize independent projects in a location of their choice.

The preparation for this project encompasses an intensive methodical, empirical, and reflexive formation that sets the foundation for prolific individual ethnographies to be realized under the umbrella topic of care and power. Fieldwork will be partly funded by the University of Bayreuth.

Responsible in Bayreuth: Prof. Dr. Erdmute Alber and Anna Madeleine Ayeh M.A. (University of Bayreuth)

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Countries of Research: Ghana, Benin, or country of choice