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Call for Papers

Negotiating Gender Relations – Arab Women and the Transformation of Arab Societies

Arab societies are currently in a situation of political and socio-economic transformation, the long-term consequences of which are difficult to predict. The upheavals of the Arab Spring had a wide range of consequences, from revolution to restoration. The authoritarian social contract was in a crisis, however, the majority of society has not experienced fundamental changes with regard to political participation, civil rights and socio-economic security. In fact, most Arab societies are being shaken by profound crises.

Notwithstanding this, there has been an ongoing active controversy about the social position and living conditions of women. Throughout the 20th century, women in the Arab world were continually questioning cultural, political and religious foundations of gender relations under changing (international) political conditions. It is not just since the Arab Spring that they have expressed their criticism and ideas about gender equality. Under various political and socio-economic circumstances have they developed gender-political strategies and expressed their concerns. In the course of the 20th century, women's movements and organizations unfolded in different degrees of intensity and directions, including counter-movements and opposite views. The associated negotiation processes affect all social fields, not only economic and political participation, citizenship, law and religion, but also (feminist) civil society, culture and public space, masculinity, (homo)sexuality and (queer) identities, domestic gender relations, health issues and fertility, mother policies and care, unmarried women, prostitution and violence.

This special issue will focus on these developments, i.e. gender-political and feminist involvement of women in various Arab contexts such as Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq and Saudi-Arabia, thus providing insight into the specific conditions and concerns of gender-political involvement. The thematic focus of such involvement will be discussed with regard to legal, economic or religious aspects. Special attention will be paid to the dominant dynamics underlying the controversy and handling of gender relations, i.e. the respective (political) conditions that have enabled or prevented discourses on gender inequality. Furthermore, questions such as how a concrete change has been promoted in specific fields of social life and how it is reflected in terms of political, legal, economic,

religious as well as private aspects will be dealt with. We therefore encourage authors to submit contributions that

- examine the ways in which transformation processes, (political) negotiation and the discourse of gender relations are carried out in selected countries, e.g. from a comparative perspective;
- embed the development of gender relations and discussions hereof in the context of (current) political changes and social transformation processes and show how women in Arab societies have changed gender relations;
- depict directions and changes of the social conflict on the gender contract and the enshrined notions of femininity/masculinity, sexuality, etc. with regard to selected topics and social fields such as economics, politics, religion, law, health, education, etc.

Possible questions/research topics:

- To what extent does the extensive social and political involvement of women express or reflect changing gender relations? To what extent has such involvement resulted in a change of their social status and gender boundaries with regard to structural, institutional or socio-cultural aspects?
- To what extent are the conditions for negotiating and transforming gender relations structurally determined by the overall given political, religious or economic constellations in a society and how do conflicts that affect a society as a whole, e.g. concerning relations of religion, law and politics, may promote or hinder a societal debate on gender issues?
- In how far do global political interdependencies influence the opportunities of women in Arab societies to demand gender equality and to make gender issues more visible? To what extent do global conditions make it easier or more complicated for Arab women to position themselves in global, e.g. post-colonial discourses?

This special issue aims at examining internal perspectives of Arab women on the respective constitutive conditions of gender inequality and possible directions of transformation in selected Arab contexts. References to postcolonial theories are very welcome. In this context, religion is not assumed to be the primary source of gender inequality. Contributions with a theoretical approach are as welcome as empirically based case studies. Authors from Arab countries are particularly invited to submit papers.

Procedure and timetable

Please submit a one- to two-page abstract by **7 December 2015**. Non-German speakers are welcome to submit their articles in English. The Editorial Department works with the online editing system OJS. We would therefore like to ask you to register as an author of the journal GENDER at www.budrich-journals.de/index.php/gender and to submit and upload your abstract there. A guideline for the use of OJS is available at www.gender-zeitschrift.de/index.php?id=manuskripte.

Once your abstract has been assessed and judged suitable for this issue, you will receive an invitation to submit. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by **15 January 2016**. The deadline for submission of the final manuscript is **3 July 2016**. Manuscripts must not exceed 50,000 characters (including space characters). All submissions will be reviewed in our double-blind peer review process based on which the final selection of contributions to be published will be made. The editors may give instructions to revise the contribution, which is the rule rather than the exception. In case of a high number of positively peer-reviewed contributions, the Editorial Department reserves the right to make a final selection of articles and to publish some contributions in a later issue.

GENDER. Journal for Gender, Culture and Society

GENDER. Journal for Gender, Culture and Society was founded in 2009 as a journal on women and gender studies. It provides a forum for academic debate and discourse between academics and practitioners.

The journal covers a broad range of social and cultural topics, addressing both socio-political issues on equality and justice as well as issues regarding the staging and cultural interpretation of gender. The journal aims to cover a wide range of topics and academic disciplines in which women, men and gender issues are reflected. Given the journal's multi-disciplinary setting, we welcome analyses from, for instance, sociology, educational science, political science, cultural science and history which correspond to the interdisciplinary nature of gender studies. Analyses of local, regional and global influences on gender relations are also of interest.

GENDER. Journal for Gender, Culture and Society is published in three issues a year and some 480 pages per annum. Contributions to the special issues and to the free section are double-blind peer reviewed.

Contributions to the free section are always welcome, irrespective of the focus of the special issue.

Do you have any questions?

For further information please contact the editorial team of the special issue "Negotiating Gender Relations – Arab Women and the Transformation of Arab Societies": Ulrike Bechmann (Guest Editor, Graz), ulrike.bechmann@uni-graz.at; Viola Raheb (Guest Editor, Vienna), viola.raheb@univie.ac.at; Heidemarie Winkel (Guest Editor, Bielefeld), heidemarie.winkel@uni-bielefeld.de; Sabine Schäfer (Editor, Bielefeld; sabine.schaefer@uni-bielefeld.de or the editorial team (redaktion@gender-zeitschrift.de).

A style sheet for authors is available at <http://www.gender-zeitschrift.de/en/manuskripte/>

We look forward to receiving your contribution.