POLITICAL MASCULINITIES AND SOCIAL TRANSITION
CALL FOR PAPERS
Interdisciplinary Conference at Landau University, Germany, 27-29 November, 2015.

This is the first of two conferences, with the second one taking place in Cambridge, UK, in 2016.

Organisers
Kathleen Starck, University of Koblenz-Landau
Russell Luyt, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge

Confirmed Keynote (more to follow)
Henri Myrttinen, International Alert, Senior Research Officer on Gender in Peacebuilding

CFP
We are currently located at a point in history in which we can observe a tremendous number of societies undergoing rapid changes. Such changes influence gender orders within these societies that, in turn, determine their political and social orders. We want to examine the transitions in political masculinities brought about by such refashioned social structures and social systems, which are unfolding locally, at national level and worldwide.

We define “political masculinity” as including any kind of overt “political player” such as representatives/institutions of the state (police, military, intelligence, parliament, monarchies), the state itself, politicians, political parties, trade unions, lobbyists, NGOs, insurgents, political journalism, activists, voters, etc. However, we also emphasise less overt, or “hidden”, political masculinities such as global businessmen, as well as political structures and their relation to masculinity.

With regard to “transitional societies”, cases in point include, for example, European post-communist states, post-apartheid South Africa, countries of the “Arab Spring”, and nations with rapidly growing economic power such as Brazil, China and India. Further examples include cultures, which due to processes of globalisation and digitation of communication have experienced far-reaching social, political and economic changes, including (civil) war, revolution, economic collapse, new nation-building, forms of religious fundamentalism and grassroots protest movements such as “Occupy”. This includes the challenges posed by these processes to the relative stability of Western liberal democracies.
Rather than thinking about these key moments in history as single points of rupture, which produce “crises”, these may be examined as transitions that impact upon existing gender orders and political masculinities. That is to say, change is not seen to emerge from a single point of “crisis” in which we explore the “predicament” and its implications, but may alternatively be viewed as a process that is embedded in a broader socio-political milieu.

The main issue that we want to address, besides examining the characteristics of political masculinities in different transitional societies, is whether there is a certain trajectory in the characteristics of political masculinities during social transition that can be identified across cultures and times. Specific questions emerge:

- In what ways are “old” and “new” concepts of political masculinities and their location within the overall gender order negotiated and which “old” characteristics are retained or replaced within transition?
- Are there social mechanisms that accelerate or slow down the transition of political masculinities and whose interests do they serve?
- How stable are political masculinities in transition and can changes brought about by transition be reversed once the transitional conditions cease to exist?
- To what extent may processes of transition result in an individual “political masculinity identity” that is complex and contradictory, or arguably even psychically divided and multilayered?
- Further points of discussion are welcome.

We strongly encourage proposals from as many academic disciplines as possible, either focusing explicitly on political practices, individuals and structures, or concentrating on representations of these. We also distinctly welcome proposals from non-academic organisations.

Please send an abstract of not more than 250 words to either:
Kathleen Starck, University of Landau, Germany: starck@uni-landau.de
Or
Russell Luyt, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK: russell.luyt@anglia.ac.uk
by 13 March, 2015.

Registration
Details will be published soon on the conference website:
www.uni-koblenz-landau.de/landau/fb6/philologien/anglistik/Page/Research/PolMascCon/SocTran
The registration fee is €50.

Conference Venue
University of Koblenz-Landau, Campus Landau, Landau/Pfalz, Germany.