

African Studies in Germany through the lens of Critical Race Theory

Initiative: Aufbruch - Neue Forschungsräume für die Geistes- und Kulturwissenschaften

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Using the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT), this project proposes a fresh engagement with the colonial roots of African Studies in Germany and the absence of race as an analytical category in the field. We intend to identify the underlying problems in African Studies which is arguably a space that privileges whiteness as a harbinger of objective knowledge about Africa. Against this backdrop, we propose to examine canon literature on Africa in German universities through CRT. We will engage with the dominant literature on/about Africa and how the selection is made - who gets omitted and why? In so doing, we intend to interrogate the deep-seated theoretical and methodological issues that underpin the gap between 'activist' knowledges and those produced by scholars who claim value neutrality. We argue that the idea of Germany as post-racial society obscures that its politics of knowledge production were and are still deeply racialized. It is our assertion that the questions we raise in this proposal will introduce useful conceptual and theoretical tools that offer vocabularies and spaces for a more rigorous engagement which, beyond the artificial divide, will bring together scholarly and activist knowledge production on Africa.

Projektbeteiligte

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