

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

LECTURE SERIES FB07

29.01.

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(Ethnology)

**Doing being parent –
Performative parenting
in Côte d'Ivoire**

In my current research I examine care-giving practices of young, educated, and socially and geographically mobile parents in Southern Côte d'Ivoire and look at their “doing being parents” (to paraphrase Sachs 1984) as identity work and as a way of enacting different forms belonging (such as to a particular generation, to a particular social class). Parenting as practice involves different actors, experts, texts and performances in the making of good mothers and fathers, a “proper childhood” and successful parenting. In order to research parenting as performative practice, I want to propose three conscious choices: First, I want to look at the way how parents navigate between different ideas of what constitutes good child-caring practices taking parents serious in their choices; second, by studying fathers and mothers as parents the project aims at avoiding methodological genderism, paying attention to gender differences as they emerge from the observations, not carry them along with a particular research design; and finally, doing fieldwork as a mother and with children will be used to experience interactive situations that invite for self-reflexivity and the explicit expression of taken for granted choices and practices. In my talk I want to present first insights into an ongoing research-project, reflect upon fieldwork as performative method and allow the audience to sneak in the making of ethnography by unfolding the process of analyzing ethnographic data.