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**“African Studies – Multiple And Relational.”
Intercontinental Conference On Africa-Centric
African Studies In Bayreuth, 7–10 December 2017**

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“AFRICAN STUDIES – MULTIPLE AND RELATIONAL” Intercontinental conference on Africa-centric African studies Bayreuth, 7–10 December 2017

Petr Skalník

The Institute of African Studies, founded in 1990 in the northern Bavarian city of Bayreuth, Germany, as an expression of the concerted effort of German education and research on Africa that started in this city already in 1975, decided to reach a world-wide recognition by applying for an excellence status. Part of these ambitious strivings was the most representative conference reported here, that brought together Africanists from around Africa, Europe and the world so that they together reevaluate and perhaps reform African studies that until now were mostly a playground of non-African scholarship. Even though this initiative is German, i.e., coming from outside of Africa, it proved to be a major step to de-Eurocentricise research and teaching on Africa. Germany, although originally a colonialist country, has for many post-World War II decades proved that its African studies is Africa-centred and thus not neo-colonialist. To give a voice to Africa and the South in general, a heliocentric revolution is in the making. Africanists located outside of Africa, even though they still are stronger numerically and certainly financially, will have to compete with African scholars who bring their perspectives into the new approach in knowledge production on Africa.

After the welcoming speeches by the organizers (Rüdiger Seesemann, Franz Kogelmann, Ute Fendler and Doris Löhr), the conference started by a survey of African studies in all continents, starting with Africa. Altogether five African centres (Legon, Rabat, Cape Town, Maputo, Dakar), three Asian (Beijing, Mumbai, Seoul), one Australian (Perth), six European (Bordeaux, Hradec Králové, Naples, Lisbon, Leiden, London) and five American (Bloomington, Salvador de Bahía, Gainesville, Santiago de Cuba and San José of Costa Rica) centres and countries were introduced at the conference. On the first day

Lungisile Ntsebeza's contribution raised the question over 'African' in African studies. On the second day the Brazilian Livio Sansone directly called for academic equality in African studies. There were two round tables during the conference. The overall sentiment was that we are at an important turning point that should make Africa central in the worldwide efforts to study and understand African societies, cultures, economy and religion. Godwin Murunga of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), based in Dakar, Senegal, stressed the role this all-African institution plays in this process.

The final roundtable confirmed the overall sentiment of the conference. A kind of movement began and this feeling was supported by the invitation by Yongkyu Chang, head of the Institute of African Studies at the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in South Korea, to continue the debate with another conference problematising African studies in October 2018. This time, concrete steps in carrying out the task of Africa-centric African studies will be discussed. It was also agreed that a publication will result from the Bayreuth seminal conference. Thus, the results of this successful meeting will become available to all interested.