

Abstracts & BIO-Notes

Annual Conference 2015

Section of Women and Gender Studies in the German Sociology Association

A. Speakers

1. Prof. Dr. Iman Attia

(Professor in Diversity Studies, Racism and Migration as well as in theory, methods and practices of Intercultural Social Work, Alice-Salomon University, Berlin)

Iman Attia, is Professor in Diversity Studies, Racism and Migration as well as in theory, methods and practices of Intercultural Social Work at the Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences, Berlin. Her areas of teaching are racism and migration studies. Further, she has conducted research on anti-Muslim racism and its relation to other forms of power in society. Currently, she is conducting a research project on "Sites of Memory. Forgotten and entangled histories". One of her recent publications is the co-edited volume *Dominanzkultur reloaded*. (Gedenkschrift für Birgit Rommelspacher, 2015) and the co-authored book with Yasemin Shooman and Alexander Häusler on anti-Muslim racism in far-right politics.

Intersections, Analogies, Antagonisms. Antiracist Perspectives on white Anti-/Feminism in neoliberal Times

Anti-feminist discourses often go hand in hand with anti-Muslim positions. Cultural-racist and masculinist argumentation position their advocates as victims of politics, trapped in the ideological entanglement of multiculturalism and feminism. Departing from Christian occidental supremacy, these positions continue colonial patriarchy by mobilizing traditional imaginaries of the unbroken heterosexual family unit and gender roles. While in the academic context this anti-feminist mobilization is countered through petitions, investigations and conferences, their racist implications remain largely unaddressed. This anti-feminist critique appears to focus on Whiteness as it does not consider the privileges and effects resulting from racialized white positioning and it neglects the specific experiences of Black, migrant and People of Color.

2. Dr. Anna Carasthasis

(Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisboa)

Anna Carasthasis received her Ph.D. in Philosophy from McGill University. She is currently a postdoctoral research fellow in TRANSRIGHTS, a European Research Council funded project based in the Institute for Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon, and an M.Sc. candidate in Gender, Society and Culture at the Department of Social Anthropology and History of the University of the Aegean, studying LGBTQ social movements. Her monograph on intersectionality is forthcoming from University of Nebraska Press.

Whose Crisis? Which Crisis? Border Thinking about Debt, Austerity, Migration and Racism

In this paper, I explore how in the current period of austerity, “crisis” is negotiated through twin projects of structural adjustment and migration management in Greece. I introduce the concept of “nesting crises” to show how in leftist-nationalist discourses promoting solidarity, the debt crisis and austerity, on the one hand, and the arrival of refugee claimants, on the other, are constructed as threats to sovereignty, while discursively they function to construct the borders of the normative national subject, the (dis)entitled citizen. I am especially interested in how they interact in gestures of ownership or territorialisation of crisis, in the conditions under which, affectively and politically a “crisis” becomes “ours” rather than “theirs,” and constitutes the “we” and the “they.”

3. Dr. Umut Erel

(Lecturer in Sociology, Department of Social Sciences, the Open University)

Umut Erel's research interests are in migration, ethnicity, gender and class, culture and representation empirically and theoretically. She has explored issues of intersectionality, the social construction of skill and notions of belonging in recent research projects (e.g. on Refugee Women in London’s voluntary sector and on migration and cohesion in the context of the East of England). She is interested in how these issues play out in practices of citizenship, differentiated along gender and ethnic lines. Amongst her recent publications are *Migrant Women Transforming Citizenship* (Ashgate, 2009). She is currently exploring migrant women’s mothering practices as citizenship practices in their own right and with

respect to shaping their children's ethnic, cultural, political identities and modes of citizenship, based on two pieces of empirical research on European mothers in London (2011) and Polish, Turkish and Kurdish mothers and children in London (2008).

Saving and Reproducing the nation: education and families as sites of contestation

New trends in far-right and popular cultural rhetoric in Europe develop some coherence around the imagination of a beleaguered nation, under threat from multiculturalism and overbearing feminism. In this discourse, in particular white, hegemonic masculinities are seen under threat. Both multiculturalism and feminism are seen as a danger to the flourishing of white, hegemonic masculinities. More so, feminism and multiculturalism are viewed as challenging the social order that makes the nation a 'homely' space. In this discourse, anti-feminist and anti-anti-racist activists or intellectuals perceive themselves as saviours of the nation. In this paper, I will look at how this plays out in two key sites of reproducing the nation. One is in education, in particular higher education and how feminism and gender studies in particular are presented as threatening the nation. The second site of reproduction is the family, in particular migrant, black and ethnic minority families who are seen as undermining the cultural cohesion and continuity of national identity and Europeanness.

4. Prof. Dr. Suvi Keskinen

(Academy Research Fellow, Associate Professor in Sociology, Department of Social Sciences, University of Turku)

Suvi Keskinen is University Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Turku in Finland. During 2014-2019 she holds the Academy Research Fellow position. Her research interests include postcolonial feminism, critical race and whiteness studies, politics of belonging, nationalism, political activism and violence. She has conducted research on right-wing populism and anti-immigration movement, media and political debates on migration and racism, gendered violence and welfare state. Among her publications are the co-edited book *Complying with Colonialism. Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region* (2009, Ashgate), and the articles 'From Welfare Nationalism to Welfare Chauvinism. Economic Rhetoric, Welfare State and the Changing Policies of Asylum in Finland' (forthcoming, *Critical Social Policy*), 'Re-constructing the Peaceful Nation. Negotiating Meanings of

Whiteness, Immigration and Islam after a Shopping Mall Shooting' (2015, *Social Identities*), 'Anti-feminism and White Identity Politics. Political Antagonisms in Radical Right-wing Populist and Anti-immigration Rhetoric in Finland' (2013, *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*), and 'Limits to Speech? The Racialized Politics of Gendered Violence in Denmark and Finland' (2012, *Journal of Intercultural Studies*).

'War against Multiculturalism', White Border Guard Masculinities and Anti-racist Responses

In July 2015, an MP from the neo-nationalist (True) Finns party, Olli Immonen, declared war against multiculturalism on his facebook -page and urged his fellow companions to 'fight until the end' for the homeland and 'one true Finnish nation'. Written only a couple of days after the anniversary of the extreme right attack on Oslo government buildings and *Utøya* island in 2011 by Anders Behring Breivik, the posting was received by disbelief and wide condemnation in Finnish public. Yet, the leading politicians of the (True) Finns party were reluctant to take a stand on the views presented by Immonen and the other centre-right parties found it difficult to interfere in matters of a party they formed the government with. In just a couple of days, a movement called 'We have a dream' sprung up in Finnish cities with over 20 000 people demonstrating for lived multiculturalism and against racism, as exemplified by Immonen's posting.

In this presentation, I will analyse the events from the perspective of 'white border guard masculinities' (Keskinen 2013) and discuss the site that criticism towards multiculturalism creates for circulating racist and exclusionary nationalist ideas. While this process has resulted in a normalisation of racism, at the same time resistance towards such normalisation has also strengthened. The presentation will discuss how notions of gender, nation and race intersect both in the militant rhetoric of defending the (ethnically and racially) homogeneous nation and in the civil society responses to such political agendas.

5. Prof. Dr. Diana Mulinari

(Professor of Gender Studies, Department of Gender Studies, University of Lund)

Diana Mulinari's areas of teaching and research are gender, inequality and visions of gender justice (and resistance to these visions). Central to her research is the understanding of how gender and sexuality, class and "race"/ethnicity do the social and make the political. Among

her publications are *Transnational corporations from the standpoint of workers. Thrown Together. Working Apart*, co-edited with Nora Rätzhel and Aina Tellefson, (Palgrave, 2014) and *'Birth work. Suffering rituals in late modernity. A case study from a birth clinic'* (Routledge, 2012), 'Violence, racism and the political arena: a Scandinavian Dilemma' in *NORA. Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*. Vol. 20, 1.

Anti-feminism agenda? Exploring right wing xenophobic parties

While culture has become a central issue in European debates about migration, European right wing xenophobic parties have shifted the agenda from notions of race to notions of cultural difference. The article takes its point of departure in a study of women activist in the Sweden Democrats, a racist party with more than 13% of electoral support in 2014 Swedish elections. A central topic analysed is the tension confronting racist parties between notions of gender equality as a Swedish/European value and their anti-feminism. Finally the problematic link between the Sweden Democrat's agenda regarding migrant women and mainstream feminism will be explored.

6. Dr. Mariam Popal

(Researcher at the Department of Advanced African Studies at the University of Bayreuth)

Mariam Popal, Researcher in the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies & *Habilitation* candidate (second theses) at the Department of English & American Studies, University of Bayreuth.

The (Con-) Textual Aesthetics of Philosophical Imagining in Feminist Postcoloniality

(Postcolonial) feminism seems to have come to a cross-road. Whereas on the one hand in (so called) postfeminist, neoliberal white accounts, there is an essentialist celebration of what it means to be a 'woman'. There is on the other hand a mediatized and digitalized anti-feminist and anti-queer masculinist pushback that has found ground to express its violent and injurious hate speech while at the same time there exists a flourishing silencing diversity-tokenism that renders any kind of resistance and naming of racist agendas obsolete and rather normalizes neo-racist structures within global hegemonic and dominant configurations of power. What then can be meant by reloaded perspectives in and along postcolonial feminist thinking? In how far can a reloading be apart, something different from the text that already

exists? Is it possible to plan such an intervention? What is expected of reloaded perspectives for performing critical, political theory within a neoliberal postcolonial, digital globalized capitalism and commodification culture? Taking these questions as a framework the paper looks out for bifurcated perspectives of a postcolonial feminism reloaded and what it could be. On the one hand it will revolve around institutional neo-liberal diversity tokenisms and within rhetorics and discourses of ‘Western new materialism’/’new realism’. On the other hand, the paper takes invisibility_violence and the concepts of life and death within gender performativity after 9/11 as an other form of colonial neo-racism as its point of departure, renaming 9/11 as a racist anti-Muslim neo-orientalist colonial new materialist warfare that had found its pivotal point in the enduring Afghan war(s). I will argue that this bifurcation belongs together and is part of a lingering longer history in which geopolitics, the imaginary mapping of sexuality and (hegemonic) forms of racist and misogynist thanatopolitics are linked together. I will thereby focus on English literatures (beginning with Shakespeare) on the one hand and Afghan literatures as a theory field of critically reloading questions of de-humanism on the other hand within perspectives of de-colonial interventionist feminisms to come.

7. Prof. Dr. Andrea Petö

(Professor at the Department of Gender Studies, Central European University, Budapest)

Andrea Petö is Professor at the Department of Gender Studies at Central European University in Budapest, Hungary, a Doctor of Science of Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Her books include: *Women in Hungarian Politics 1945-1951* (Columbia University Press/East European Monographs New York, 2003), *Geschlecht, Politik und Stalinismus in Ungarn. Eine Biographie von Júlia Rajk. Studien zur Geschichte Ungarns, Bd. 12.* (Gabriele Schäfer Verlag, 2007) and together with Ildikó Barna, Presently Prof. Petö is working on gendered memory of WWII and political extremisms.

Anti-gender movements in Europe: possible interpretation frameworks

The talk is analysing the state of anti-gender movements in Europe, assessing the impacts of counter strategies by progressive actors. It argues that anti-gender movements are a new phenomenon in European politics which require new methods to react from progressive forces. If progressive politics forgets its value innovative grass-root origins, then only using

the already invented gender equality policy measures will not prevent this new phenomenon to prevail in the long run.

8. Vanessa-Eileen Thompson

(Research Associate at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Goethe University Frankfurt)

Vanessa Eileen Thompson, M.A., is a research associate at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Goethe University Frankfurt. Her research and teaching is concerned with black political theory, feminist decolonial and postcolonial studies as well as cultural studies. She is currently working on her PhD thesis entitled *The Fanonian Echo in Paris: Anti-Black Racism, Colonial Alienation and Black Activism*, in which she explores forms of black activism and looks at how French republicanism operates through the re-production of gendered coloniality.

"But Some Of Us Are Brave". Between Anti-feminism and Diversity Politics within German Universities

Contemporary articulations of anti-feminist (hate) movements, discourses and rhetoric across Europe demonstrate that anti-feminism re-emerges as a wide-ranging phenomenon. The recent attacks against Gender Studies programs and specific Gender Studies scholars in the media as well as in scientific landscapes in Germany have demonstrated that anti-feminism not only operates in different degrees through rationales of various strands of right-wing populism, conservatism and the mainstream but that it also intersects with forms of (neo-)racist hate movements and everyday racism(s) as well as trans- and homophobic articulations.

Despite the feminist recognition of these intersections outside of academia, the discussion on the intersected workings of anti-feminism, racism, trans- and homophobia *within* the neoliberal university is marked by severe silences or non-performative commitments. This is articulated in the rhetoric of diversity which deflects workings of racism and intersecting relations of oppression.

In this presentation, I will discuss the intersectional dynamics of exclusion on an epistemic, representational and institutional level. Drawing upon recent examples of anti-feminist attacks as well as articulations of anti-blackness and "Why is my professor not Black" debates in Germany, I will explore disqualificatory regimes within the neoliberal university.

In the second part, I will look at the conundrums and challenges that the managerial paradigm of diversity poses for critical gender studies from a postcolonial-feminist perspective. The presentation concludes with some thoughts on the (im-) possibilities of intersectional solidarities within and beyond the university landscape.

9. Prof. Dr. Elena Zdravomyslova

(Professor, Department of Political Science and Sociology, co-coordinator of the program "Gender Studies" at the European University at St.Petersburg)

Elena Zdravomyslova held research positions at UC Berkeley (California), the New School for Social Research (New York), the Collegium for Advanced Studies (Helsinki), the Alexanteri Institute (Helsinki), and the Central European University (Budapest). The book “Paradigmy sotsiologii obshchestvennykh dvizhenii” [Sociological paradigms of social movements], based on research conducted in Berkeley and New York, was defended as a candidate’s dissertation at the Sociological Institute (RAS) in 1993. Among here recent publications are:

(2012) Making and managing class: employment of paid domestic workers in Russia. In: Rethinking class in Russia. Ed. by Suvi Salmenniemi. Farnham: Ashgate, (co-author Anna Rotkirch, Olga Tkach; (2010) 'What is Russian Sociological Tradition? Debates among Russian Sociologists'. In: The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions. Ed. by S. Patel. Sage. Pp.140-151; (2010) Working Mothers and Nannies: Commercialization of Childcare and Modifications in the Gender Contract. *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 28(2): 200-225.

Conservative Mobilization in Contemporary Russia: National Ideas/Ideologies, Gender Naturalism and Antifeminism

Religious public initiatives, parent’s organizations with such allies as political parties, deputies of local legislatures and the Duma have been engaged in the conservative mobilization in Russia. The current wave can be dated back to 2011 electoral campaigns and still continues. Conservatives appeal to the Parliament with bills limiting women’s reproductive rights; they initiate mitigation processes against the members of the LGBT community; they pass the so called ‘Anti-gay law’, they protest against programs of sexual education, they question international regulations on gender equality. The machinery of such

conservative pokhod is elaborate and combines institutional and non-institutional forms of collective action, they are backed both by the state, the dominant party United Russia, nationalist organizations, the Russian Orthodox Church and international conservative actors. This conservative mobilization is intertwined with the ideology of Russia's historical path referred to as a mission to save the corrupt Western civilization in the 21st century. The master frame for all these conservative activities is that of a MORAL CRISIS of the Russian society, which is described as crisis of the 'traditional family', 'natural sexual relations', 'natural' gender roles. In the paper I will elaborate on the mobilizing framings of conservatives and their public resonance. I will concentrate on the rhetoric of anti-feminism and gender naturalism and deconstruct its connection with the explicit conservative ideology of the Russian authorities today.

10. Prof. Dr. Carmen Romero Bachiller

(Associate professor, Department of Sociology V, Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Carmen Romero Bachiller's main research interests are bodies and practices as products of relational materiality, considering vulnerabilities and privileges from a feminist and queer intersectional perspective. She is working on the reconstructions of biomedical knowledge and practices by lay/activist collectives, from a STS/STG and a situated knowledges/standpoint feminist perspective.

Who is afraid of Feminism? Craving the way for a feminist queer-antiracist agenda in the new political arena in Spain

In this presentation I will offer an overview of the complex and contradictory situation of the feminist agenda, and in particular a trans-feminist, queer and antiracist agenda in Spain. In particular, I will focus on the changes occurred under the current crisis and with the up rise of new social movements and political parties. From the 15th May with the Camp at Sol Square, to the new political panorama with Podemos –We can- and Ciudadanos –Citizens- as emergent new political parties, the feminist/queer/antiracist agenda, yet very present has had various shifts and its reception is one plenty with ambivalences, backlashes and various criticisms. Under the pressure of high increase of inequalities and multiple evictions feminism seems to have returned to be subsumed in many cases to capitalists inequalities in the progressive political agendas. On the other

hand, crisis has tended to put public investment in gender, antiracist and all intersectional politics in suspension as “secondary”. There is as well an invisibilisation of racism and some very minority extreme right groups have appeared offering food just for Spanish people. At the same time the expulsion of people without papers from regular attention by Social Health System has provoked great criticisms and lead to movements such us Yo sí Sanidad Universal –I, Yes, Universal Health- promoting health professionals working in the public Social Health System active disobedience offering care for those legally excluded. In this panorama a new progressive political party such as Podemos has argued –not without controversy- that in order to promote what they call a “Winning Feminism” maybe it is necessary to drop the term “feminism” as such. On the other hand, Ciudadanos, seems to avoid all gender based politics appealing to a individualistic liberalism. Those are just some hints that offer an overall of the complex panorama at the moment in Spain, which I will like to display for collective discussion and reflexion.

B. Discussants

1. Dr. Noa Ha

(Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre of Metropolitan Studies, Technical University Berlin)

Noa Ha holds a PhD in Architecture from the Technical University of Berlin, where she is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Center for Metropolitan Studies. Her research interrogates the production of space from a feminist, de-colonial, critical race theory perspective and was funded by the Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation and the Technical University Berlin. Currently she is conducting a study on the spatial production of Asian diasporas in European cities. She recently published *Street Vending in the Neoliberal City. A Global Perspective on the Practices and Policies of a Marginalized Economy*, co-authored with Kristina Graaff (Berghahn, 2015).

2. Nadia Shehadeh

(Blogger and Member of the German feminist blog Mädchenmanschaft e.V.)

Nadia Shehadeh is an activist, writer and social scientist. She is working on feminism, racism, pop- und counter-culture. She has analysed racist discourses in the book "Neukölln ist überall" of Heinz Buschkowsky and in 2013 she explored the FEMEN movement and their praxis of doing politics. She regularly publishes on her blog <http://shehadistan.com>.