

MvBZ Visiting Fellows Workshop 2019

Freie Universität Berlin, Rost- und Silberlaube, Habelschwerdter Allee 45
Room: KL 29/139

July 3, 2019

- 12:00 – 12:15 Welcome and Introduction (Susanne Lettow, MvBZ)
- 12:15 – 13:00 Giti Chandra (Reykjavík)
The Anonymous Feminist: Agency, Trauma, and Personhood in the
#MeToo Movement
- 13:00 – 13:45 Eliza Steinbock (Leiden)
Cherishing and Perishing in Transgender Portraiture
- Lunch break
- 14:15 – 15:00 Ayse Dayi (Istanbul/Berlin)
Neoliberal Health Restructuring: The Debt Economy and Abortion and
Birth Control Rights in Turkey
- 15:00 – 15:45 Liina Mustonen (Helsinki)
In Defense of the Modern and Fashionable: Politics of Gender in Egypt
during Times of Transition
- 16:00 – 17:00 Coffee/Informal Discussion at Restaurant *Galileo*

18:00 – 20:00

Vortrag und Diskussion im Rahmen der Reihe *Begriff und Politik. Perspektiven der
Geschlechterforschung* , Raum: KL 29/235

Schirin Amir-Moazami (Freie Universität Berlin, Institut für
Islamwissenschaften): Impulsvortrag zum Begriff "Minderheit"

Moderation: Susanne Lettow (Freie Universität Berlin, MvBZ)

Organisation und Konzeption: PD Dr. Susanne Lettow
Kontakt: susanne.lettow@fu-berlin.de

Abstracts

Giti Chandra (Reykjavík)

The Anonymous Feminist: Agency, Trauma, and Personhood in the #MeToo Movement

One of the more controversial aspects of the MeToo movement has been the production of lists naming perpetrators. The people contributing to these lists have as often preferred to remain anonymous as not. These unnamed people are seen either as weak and malicious, hiding behind their anonymity in order to wage vendettas against the named perpetrators, or as weak and faceless, defined by and forever trapped in their victimhood. Contextualising this discussion within trauma studies, this presentation will look at the implications of this anonymity for notions of agency and victimhood, and offer alternative, more inclusively feminist, ways of thinking of anonymity and personhood.

Giti Chandra is currently Senior Researcher and Lecturer, UNU-GEST, and also teaches in the University of Iceland. She has been Associate Professor at the Dept. of English, St Stephen's College, Delhi. She has taught in and been a fellow at Rutgers University, New Jersey, from where she did her Doctoral work on Women and Violence. She is the author of *Narrating Violence, Constructing Collective Identities: To witness these wrongs unspeakable* (Palgrave Macmillan 2009). Her current works in progress include a book length study titled *In Visible Texts: Hidden and Spectacularised Violence in Colonial India and Africa* and co-editing the *Routledge Handbook* on the MeToo movement. Dr. Chandra has served as Chairperson of the College Complaints Committee Against Sexual Harassment in St Stephen's College, as Adviser to the Gender Sensitization Committee, and as the External Expert on the Sexual Harassment Complaints Committee at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication.

Ayşe Dayı (Istanbul/Berlin)

Neoliberal Health Restructuring: The Debt Economy and Abortion and Birth Control Rights in Turkey

The "Health Transformation Program," started by the AKP (Justice and Development Party) in 2003 in Turkey, is part of the global neoliberal "Health Sector Reforms-HSRs" undertaken since the late 1980s and early 1990s with the support of World Bank advisers and reports, in various 'developing' countries such as Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, Taiwan. Alongside neoliberal policies, there has also been a rise in the New Right under the AKP regime, which has at its center anti-women discourses, policies and implementations, including a pronatalist discourse and implementations and statements equating abortion with murder. To contribute to the existing feminist literature that analyzes the intricate links between capitalism, neoliberalism and gender, especially on connecting the latest stage of neoliberalism—the debt economy- to reproductive rights, we designed a multisite feminist research to investigate the effects of neoliberal health-structuring on reproductive rights in Turkey, France and the U.S. In this paper, I discuss our findings in Turkey, focus-group interviews with healthcare providers working in family health centers and women receiving care, in order to reveal how the gender regime in Turkey is being transformed via reproductive and body politics.

Analyzing our existent data on Turkey in light of the writings on the debt economy, we observed the neoliberal mechanisms of the dismantling of the public/privatization and the creation of individual debt and quantification of care (as related to mathematization of life and language). We witnessed how these neoliberal mechanisms interact with the conservative discourse leading to the erosion of women's rights to access contraceptive and abortion care in Turkey and a transformation of the gender regime through the alteration of its reproductive politics.

Ayşe Dayı is an Academy in Exile visiting fellow at Freie University. Originally from Istanbul, Turkey, she received her doctorate from Pennsylvania State University in U.S., worked as an Assistant Professor in U.S (gender studies) and Turkey (psychology), completed a visiting scholarship at the CEMS lab (Centre d'étude des mouvements sociaux) at EHESS in Paris, France, and held a Senior Researcher position at the Science and Technology Studies Lab at UNIL: Université de Lausanne, Switzerland before coming to Berlin. Ayşe Dayı's research, teaching and activist interests are in women's health, health psychology, medical sociology, reproductive health rights, health services and policies, neoliberal globalization and health, transnational feminism, post-structural theory and qualitative methods. Her most recent publication on neoliberal health reform, the debt economy and reproductive rights in Turkey can be found on <https://journals.openedition.org/cedref/>.

Liina Mustonen (Helsinki)

In Defense of the Modern and Fashionable: Politics of Gender in Egypt during Times of Transition

This paper looks at how specific gendered practices and ideas about womanhood were instrumentalized in the recent struggle for political authority in Egypt. It explores how Cairo-based and socio-economically privileged women engaged in what Lila Abu-Lughod (1998) calls 'politics of modernity.' Scholarship has illustrated how the characterization of practices as modern, as indicating a progress from older and previous forms of being, has done political work in various colonial and post-colonial contexts. Postcolonial studies have particularly highlighted how divisions between the 'emancipated, free, and modern West' and the 'reactionary East in need of civilization' have been connected to various colonial policies and nation-building projects (Mohanty 1988, Yegenoglu 1998, Burton 1998, Abu-Lughod 2013). In 2012, in the aftermath of the Egyptian uprising, when the Muslim Brotherhood and the ultra-conservative Salafi parties won a majority in the elections (and later the country's presidency), the figure of the 'modern woman' gained renewed political significance. Based on an analysis of Egyptian women's magazines, interviews and ethnographic research, this paper therefore provides a contemporary example of political usages of modern gendered subjecthood.

Liina Mustonen teaches gender and politics in the Middle East (and Europe) at the University of Helsinki. She received her PhD in Social and Political Sciences in 2017 from the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence. She has conducted extensive fieldwork in Egypt and in Lebanon. In her current research, she looks at the interplay between gender performativity and mobility in the migration between Europe and the Middle East.

Eliza Steinbock (Leiden)

Cherishing and Perishing in Transgender Portraiture

The presentation uses the interdisciplinary category of *portraiture* to bridge different objects of study: artistic portraits, media representations, and ethnographic studies of artists. These working artists include J. Jackie Baier and Yishay Garbasz in Berlin; Elisha Lim, Syrus Marcus Ware, and Kiley May in Toronto; Muholi Muholi and Collen Mfwaze in Johannesburg; and Robert Hamblin and Gabrielle LeRoux in Cape Town. My objective is to investigate how and to what effect these forms of portraiture yield archives of transgender experience. *Cherishing and Perishing in Trans Portraiture* studies trans* experiences of biopolitics and necropower *vis-à-vis* artistic creations of trans lives surviving even within death-worlds. I investigate how in their structures of feeling—their tone, restraints, impulses—artworks can capture and express the human and nonhuman sensations circulating within diffuse networks of control.

Eliza Steinbock is Assistant Professor of Cultural Analysis at Leiden University's Centre for the Arts in Society, where they are involved in critical diversity issues. Eliza trained in cultural analysis (PhD 2011) and investigates visual culture mediums like film, digital media, and photography, with a special focus on dimensions of race, gender and sexuality. Their current book project is the culmination of a NWO Veni grant on contemporary transgender (self) portraiture in the wider field of visual activism, which includes interviews with trans-identified cultural producers based in Toronto, Berlin, Cape Town and Johannesburg. Their first book is *Shimmering Images: Trans Cinema, Embodiment and the Aesthetics of Change* (Duke University Press, March 2019). www.elizasteinbock.com