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Interdisciplinary Workshop

Unpacking Gendered Dimensions of Politics and Practices of Belonging: Theoretical and Empirical Approaches

7 – 8 February 2019

University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland



Interdisciplinary Workshop
**Unpacking Gendered
Dimensions of Politics and
Practices of Belonging:
Theoretical and Empirical
Approaches**

7 – 8 February 2019
University of Neuchâtel

Avenue 1er Mars 26
2000 Neuchâtel
Room D71

Organizers

Janine Dahinden
Carolyn Fischer
Joanna Menet
Anne Kristol

Participation is free. Please
register for the event until
January 31 by e-mail to:
maelle.redois@unine.ch

Aims of the Workshop

Migration and mobility have been key features of societies in past and present. Yet, rather than being acknowledged as integral parts of social life and social transformation, migration and mobility tend to be juxtaposed with sedentarist and nationalist beliefs and thus stir struggles over belonging and participation. Often, migrants and ethnic minorities are at the heart of such struggles, which are fueled by politics and public discourse at local, national and transnational levels. As a result, migrants and ethnic minorities are cast as protracted outsiders and confronted with multiple boundaries. The boundaries between migrants and those perceived as native citizens often extend over generations and continue to affect persons and groups who have no migration experiences themselves. This moves questions of citizenship and belonging, including concomitant power structures to the foreground. At the same time, those affected by lasting boundaries confront them as part of everyday practices and political projects.

Previous research often applied a group-based approach to understanding the dynamics of contestation among different migrant- and non-migrant segments of society. Whilst yielding detailed insights to specific social contexts, group-based approaches entail a risk of slipping into essentialist reasoning. As a result, dimensions of belonging which are not related to someone's ethnic or national background are being eclipsed. One aspect that remains particularly understudied is how gender shapes ideas, perceptions, articulations and claims of belonging and how it affects forms of self-positioning in everyday social settings.

To address these research gaps, this workshop collates theoretical and empirical contributions that explore struggles of belonging in terms of everyday practices and political projects at individual, collective and institutional levels from a gender perspective. In their papers, workshop participants break away from group-based epistemologies and attempt to identify cross-cutting dimensions, determinants and articulations of belonging. Contributions to the workshop also illuminate, how gender affects ideas and practices that are related to participation and belonging among migrants and their descendants.

Thursday, 7 February 2019

Workshop Venue: Avenue du 1er-Mars 26 (Main Building), Room D71

12:00 – 12:30 Business lunch

12:30 – 13:00

Welcome and introduction

Janine Dahinden, Carolin Fischer, Anne Kristol and Joanna Menet (University of Neuchâtel, CH)

13:00 – 14:00

Jan Willem Duyvendak (University of Amsterdam, NL)

Understanding Progressive Nativism: The Dutch Case in Perspective

Discussant: Christine Lang (Max-Planck-Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity Göttingen, DE)

14:00 – 15:00

Anne Kristol, Joanna Menet, Janine Dahinden and Carolin Fischer (University of Neuchâtel, CH)

Negotiating the Imperative of Gender Equality: Institutional Categorisations and Individual Positionings

Discussant: Marta Bivand Erdal (Peace Research Institute Oslo, NO)

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee break

15:30 – 16:30

Christine Lang (Max-Planck-Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen, DE)

Accessing the Public Service: Gendered Differentiations of 'Migrants' and How They Shape Inclusion

Discussant: Melanie Eijberts (Amsterdam University College, NL)

16:30 – 17:30

Nils Witte (Federal Institute for Population Research, DE)

Do Responses to Stigmatization Vary Between Men and Women? A Dual Process Theory Approach

Discussant: Margaretha van Es (Radboud University Nijmegen, NL)

17:30 – 18:00

Discussion of special issue proposal

19:00 Dinner

Friday, 8 February 2019

Workshop Venue: Avenue du 1er-Mars 26 (Main Building), Room D71

09:00 – 10:00

Marta Bivand Erdal (Peace Research Institute Oslo, NO)

Gendering Transnational Living

Discussant: Jan Willem Duyvendak (University of Amsterdam, NL)

10:00 – 11:00

Caitlin Nunn (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK)

Conceptualising Refugee Youth (Non-)Belongings in Resettlement: A Gender Perspective

Discussant: Carolin Fischer (University of Neuchâtel, CH)

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30 – 12:30

Margaretha van Es (Radboud University Nijmegen, NL)

'Taming Muslim Men': Constructions of Deviant Muslim Masculinities in Public Debates about Violent Extremism

Discussant: Nils Witte (Federal Institute for Population Research, DE)

12:30 – 13:30 Sandwich Lunch

13:30 – 14:30

Melanie Eijberts (Amsterdam University College, NL)

Through the Lens of Gender: Women of Moroccan and Turkish Descent Challenging the Boundaries of Dutchness

Discussant: Caitlin Nunn (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK)

14:30 – 15:00

Wrap up and next steps

Marta Bivand Erdal
(Peace Research Institute Oslo)
Gendering Transnational Living

This paper addresses the question: How, when and where does gender matter (or not) in the experiences of belonging of people leading transnational lives? Here, leading a transnational life, describes a situation where individuals spend resources and time, in a sustained way, in two or more geographic contexts, across international borders. It narrows down the focus from 'transnationalism' to actual 'transnational living'. It also broadens the scope, from 'migrants' to those individuals who happen to lead transnational lives, regardless of other categorizations. Through this it contributes to move beyond a group-based approach. The paper builds on 101 interviews with individuals (85) and couples (16) who lead 'transnational lives', half and half women and men. The sample comprises 'transnational living' with different contexts, including within Europe, e.g. Norway-Poland; Netherlands-Germany, and long-distance, e.g. Norway-Pakistan, or Netherlands-Morocco. It thus combines the experiences of individuals within an intra-EU setting, with those whose transnational lives stretch outside of Europe. Drawing on this data set, the paper offers analysis of how gender matters (or not) for experiences of transnational living, with an emphasis on processes of constructing and maintaining belonging in the context of transnational lives. Three areas emerge as salient: parental roles and the upbringing of children; views on migration-related diversity; as well as citizenship and political participation. Common to all three areas is that research participants draw on own experiences – as well as (national) stereotypes – in their reflections, with varying ways of self-positioning. By contrast, the ways in which gender matters (or not), varies between these three areas, as well as within the sample, and provokes questions about how, when and where class (financial circumstances, social position, and education), culture, race and religion trump gender in processes of constructing and maintaining belonging in one or more geographic contexts.

Jan Willem Duyvendak
(University of Amsterdam)
Understanding Progressive Nativism: The Dutch Case in Perspective

Right-wing parties across Europe concern themselves with the same issues today: the perceived decay of national and European culture; criticism of multiculturalism; and the adverse, if not dangerous, effects of immigration, especially when from countries in which Islam is a predominant religion. Serving as an exemplary case of the broader European trend, the Netherlands has its own idiosyncrasies, most notably the embracement of homosexuality and gender in nativist imageries. Nativist discourses have become hegemonic, with progressive assumptions regarding gender and sexuality being shared from the far right to the left.

Melanie Eijberts
(Amsterdam University College)
Through the Lens of Gender: Women of Moroccan and Turkish Descent Challenging the Boundaries of Dutchness

Migrant women of Moroccan and Turkish descent in the Netherlands are often perceived as a homogeneous group. They are depicted as passive victims of religion and oppressive husbands and thus in need of help with their emancipation and integration into Dutch society. What is often overlooked is that these women not only vary in terms of ethnicity, but also in terms of their generational status, age, and their class/educational background. The different intersections of these categories position them differently in Dutch society and differently affect their perceived agency. This paper illuminates how, based on their intersectional (self-) positionings, migrant women of Moroccan and Turkish descent embark on different paths to integration/participation and create a sense of belonging at individual and the family level (through everyday practices and challenging public discourses) as well as collective (organizational) levels.

Particular attention is paid to the role which other female family members and members of their community play. To this end, the paper adopts a gender perspective and applies an intersectional framework to analyse qualitative data deriving from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with first- and second-generation women of Moroccan and Turkish descent with different educational backgrounds and of different ages. The paper unpacks how gender shapes ideas, claims, and everyday practices that foster a sense of belonging and contest essentialist concepts of Dutchness on the one hand and the boundaries that some members of their respective migrant communities impose on them as women on the other hand. This way, the paper uncovers the workings of multiple, gendered power structures that shape ideas and practices of belonging.

Anne Kristol, Joanna Menet,
Janine Dahinden and
Carolin Fischer
(University of Neuchâtel)
**Negotiating the Imperative of
Gender Equality: Institutional
Categorizations and Individual
Positioning**

Gender features centrally in recent debates about the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in Western European societies. In particular, gender equality has emerged as a normative paradigm according to which migrants, ethnic and religious minorities are classified as more or less compatible with their societies of settlement. Previous research has shown how normative ideas of gender equality feature in public discourse and immigration policies and promote particular realities of exclusion. However, it remains little explored how normative ideas of gender equality operate at a micro level, how they shape the implementation of state policies and how they affect those who are framed as unequal others. This paper analyses how principles of gender equality inform politics of belonging and how they are enacted through the practices of public administrators and through the individual positioning of those classified as others. Empirically the paper draws on two different case studies: An ethnography of institutions in charge of Swiss naturalization procedures and a study on reactions to othering and discrimination among migrant descendants in Zürich. This way, the paper addresses different levels of analysis and captures the narratives of different actors. It illuminates first how ideas of gender equality shape the implementation of state policies and promote the exclusion of mostly non-western others. Second, it shows how individuals who are constructed as inherently unequal negotiate the imperative of gender equality, position themselves towards external classification as non-belongers. The paper contributes important facets to a better understanding of the role gender plays in contemporary migration regimes and concomitant politics of belonging. It sheds light on the gendered underpinnings of migration politics in which both state and civic actors are involved.

Christine Lang
(Max-Planck-Institute for the
Study of Religious and Ethnic
Diversity, Göttingen)
**Accessing the Public
Service: How Gendered
Representations of Candidates
of Immigrant Descent Shape
Recruitment Decisions**

The access to state institutions is an important field of struggles over participation and belonging of immigrants and their descendants. In many European countries of immigration, the public service is still predominantly 'white'; people of immigrant descent in bureaucratic decision-making positions are scarce. In the past years, public and political demands for more staff members with a 'migration background' in the public service have increased. Looking at the example of recruitment in public administrations in Berlin, Germany, this paper investigates how representations of migration-related difference matter in recruitment decisions and shape the inclusion of immigrants and their descendants in the public service. Drawing on qualitative empirical material (interviews, documents, participant observation) and organizational theory, the paper takes an intersectional perspective and shows that a gendered dimension is inherent in the administrative representations of candidates of immigrant descent and their 'fit' in the organisation. Three distinct constructions of potential staff

members with 'migration background' are identified in which ethnic and gender differentiations closely intersect: the 'cultural other', the 'needy object of integration efforts' and the 'poster child'. These intersectional constructions may shape recruitment practices and, in consequence, the access to the public service, since they are 'functional' for the organisation in several ways: they reduce uncertainty in recruitment decisions; they secure legitimacy and recognition; and they allow presenting the administration as an open and modern employer. While some of these representations seem to change and lose their importance for administrative recruitment, others remain bright markers of 'otherness'. The paper contributes to the understanding of gendered dimensions in the politics and practices of belonging by shedding light on the organizational level and uncovering the dynamic intersections of different categories of differentiation shaping inclusion.

Caitlin Nunn
(Manchester Metropolitan University)

Conceptualising Refugee Youth (Non)Belongings in Resettlement: A Gender Perspective

Refugee resettlement, like other modes of immigration and integration, is a gendered process, with gender informing who is resettled, their relations and attachments across multiple, multiscalar spheres of (non)belonging, and the politics that enable and constrain them. Moreover, forced migration more generally is highly gendered, presenting specific risks and challenges for men and women that can continue to resonate in resettlement. For young people, refugee status, gender, and life stage frequently intersect to mediate (non)belonging in and beyond the resettlement setting. Yet the role of gender in the lives of these young people is neither constant nor coherent, differing across time and national and ethno-cultural context, as well as sub- and transnational spheres. How, then, can we begin to map the gendered dimensions of refugee youth (non)belongings?

This paper addresses this question by proposing a conceptual framework that, in positing (non)belonging as more than an emotional attachment – as also, variously, formal, practical, embodied, sociocultural, and inherited – and as a dialogic process mediated by both individual motivations and resources and wider politics, enables us to attend to the complex role of gender in refugee youth (non)belongings. Drawing on two case studies from a recent participatory arts-based study of refugee youth (non)belonging in non-traditional resettlement locations (Karen youth in Bendigo, South East Australia, and Syrian and Kurdish Syrian youth in Gateshead, North East England) I apply this conceptual framework to aspects of pre-settlement experience, host society encounter, institutional intervention, and ethno-cultural politics and practice. In doing so, I begin to sketch some of the gendered dimensions and determinants of refugee youth (non)belonging in resettlement.

Margaretha A. van Es
(Radboud University Nijmegen)

'Taming Muslim Men': Constructions of Deviant Muslim Masculinities in Public Debates about Violent Extremism

In contemporary Europe, Muslims are increasingly being made hyper-visible as a minority that is fundamentally different from the dominant majority, fails or even refuses to integrate into European societies, and hence poses a serious threat to these societies and their secular, liberal values. This paper explores the role of gender in the constitution of the Muslim Other. Whereas there is a growing body of literature that critically addresses how Muslim women's bodies are used as sites of contestation over Islam and Muslims' acceptability, this paper focuses on the social construction of European hegemonic masculinities and 'deviant' Muslim masculinities. To this end it analyses Norwegian public debates about violence committed in the name of Islam. A central argument is that Muslims are under constant pressure to prove that they are peaceful and loyal citizens, and that the often-repeated demands on Muslims to denounce terrorism can be seen as attempts to

discipline 'hyper-masculine' Muslim men while simultaneously reinforcing the 'gaze of suspicion' directed at them. However, this paper also shows how these gender dynamics are complicated by the growing public attention on radicalisation among Muslim women, and by public perceptions of the hijab as symbolic of the threat of Islam and Muslims in general. Last but not least, this paper will discuss how these demands on Muslims to denounce terrorism create a 'conditional belonging' for Muslim minorities, and how Muslim men and women negotiate the symbolic boundary drawn between a Norwegian 'us' and a Muslim 'them'. Thus, instead of merely taking an anti-essentialist stance to social constructions of 'deviant' Muslim masculinities, this paper also intends to analyse how anti-Muslim racism shapes the terrain on which the resistance of Muslims against their marginalisation is made possible in the first place.

Nils Witte
(Federal Institute for Population
Research, Wiesbaden)

Do Responses to
Stigmatization Vary Between
Men and Women? A Dual
Process Theory Approach

Migrants regularly face stigmatization in countries of immigration. Previous research has pointed to varieties of migrants' responses to stigmatization. The variation of response strategies by receiving context and available cultural repertoires has been a major focus (Lamont et al. 2016). Less is known about the variation of response strategies by social categories. This paper explores the variation of responses to stigmatization between men and women. The model of frame selection, a dual process model that has been developed based on the bounded rationality variety of rational choice theory (Kroneberg 2005; Esser 2009), serves as the analytical framework. The model of frame selection systematically accounts for the variable rationality of social actors by differentiation of two modes of information processing that are activated unconsciously: one is automatic spontaneous and the other one reflective calculating. Actors may switch unconsciously between these two modes of information processing at three stages of selection: selection of an interpretational frame, selection of a behavioral frame, and selection of an action. The two modes and the three selections represent the MFS's analytical scaffolding. I argue that this is a sound basis for a further systematization of responses to stigmatization. The aim of this theorization is to improve our understanding of the variation between responses to stigmatization and eventually strategies of boundary work. Why do some actors prefer particular responses and certain types of boundary work? And why does this vary depending on social and cultural contexts? The model of frame selection allows for a systematic analysis of responses to stigmatization. The intra-individual and context-dependent variation of responses to stigmatization can be understood as conditioned by personal and situational resources, and limitations. Some kinds of stigmatization are costlier than others and so are the responses. Consequently, gender differences in responses to stigmatization can be expected where personal and situational resources vary systematically between genders. Also, the kinds of stigmatization that men and women encounter could vary systematically. Whether such gender variation does exist, is examined based on 16 in-depth interviews with Turkish citizens living in Germany. These interviews focus on the perception of symbolic exclusion and the ways minority members respond.
