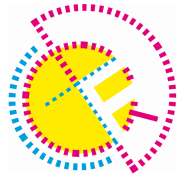


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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### EXPLORATIVE WORKSHOP “DECOLONIAL METHODS, PERIPHERAL SELVES: THE MIGRANT FIGURE BETWEEN (SOUTH)EAST EUROPEAN AND GLOBAL SOUTH ENTANGLEMENTS”

**10-11 July 2020**

**Venue:** JUSTUS LIEBIG UNIVERSITY GIESSEN

**Supported by:** Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung, Justus Liebig University of Giessen, Arbeitsgruppe Europe’s East, Research Network in Queer Studies, Decolonial Feminisms and Cultural Transformation (QDFCT) and ‘Dialoguing Between the Posts’ international research network

If you would like to participate, please send the following documents to [majstorovic.danijela@gmail.com](mailto:majstorovic.danijela@gmail.com) and [polinamanolova@gmail.com](mailto:polinamanolova@gmail.com) by 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020

- 500-word detailed paper abstract that includes indication of the thematic cluster to which you would like to contribute to and your methodological approach
- a short CV (max. 300 words)

Travel and board will be covered for selected participants.

#### CONFIRMED SPEAKERS:

1. Catherine Baker, University of Hull
2. Elissa Helms, CEU Budapest/Vienna
3. Maple Razsa, Colby College
4. Andrej Kurnik, University of Ljubljana
5. Nidžara Ahmetašević, independent researcher Sarajevo
6. Gorana Mlinarević, independent researcher Sarajevo
7. Manuela Boatcă, University of Freiburg
8. Anna Amelina, BTU Cottbus
9. Boris Buden, Bauhaus Universität Weimar
10. Mariam Popal, University of Bayeruth
11. Noa Kerstin Ha, Technische Universität Dresden
12. Sabine Hess, University of Göttingen

Workshop organizers at the University of Giessen: Danijela Majstorović, Andreas Langenohl, Encarnacion Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Huub Van Baar, Philipp Lottholz, Polina Manolova, Zoran Vučkovic

## Background of the workshop DECOLONIAL METHODS, PERIPHERAL SELVES: THE MIGRANT FIGURE BETWEEN (SOUTH) EAST EUROPEAN AND GLOBAL SOUTH ENTANGLEMENTS

### *Introduction*

Provincializing “postcolonial Western Europe” by looking at its present-day border regimes and the ways in which “borders’ outside” has become synonymous with periphery presents an opportunity for decolonial politics that unites the postcolonial and postsocialist worlds despite their “uneasy” solidarity (Roediger 2017). Peripheries are mobile, multiple, and ever shifting as are the borders that constantly “multiply labor” (Mezzadra and Nielsen 2013) and produce new subjectivities (selves) on the move from war, poverty and terror in a situation of having become “the Black of the world” (Mbembe 2017: 3).

More so than the available theory, the figure of the migrant, emerging as the subject of postcolonial and postsocialist studies but also the “new worker” and the “new transnational woman” or, more recently, “the new maid in the global care economy” (Lutz 2011; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010), is the one that connects the fields of postcolonial, decolonial, and cultural studies including feminist theory and Marxism beyond the interdisciplinary - which intersectional approaches to the study of marginality have shown more than once (Fathi 2017). If there were “no borders, there would be no migrations- only mobility,” says Nicholas de Genova adding that labor “supplies the technical key that opens up the practical linkage between the antithetical poles of bare life and sovereign (state) power (de Genova 2010: 50). In bringing the aforementioned scholars together, we seek to explore different epistemologies and methodologies on the study of migration, especially since the 2015 wave of Middle Eastern and North African refugees and migrants and their South(East) European counterparts on the route to the EU, while adding to critical migration scholarship beyond the core/periphery dichotomies.

In proposing decolonial methods in social science and humanities research (see Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010; Tuhiwai Smith 1999), one is always inevitably invited to reflect on one’s politics. In other words, it is always a challenge to recognize how imperial codes and grammars have come to shape research on the so called “postcolonial” or “peripheral” or “postsocialist selves” even among those of us who have used feminist or participatory action approaches including the discourse-to-affect methodological shift. One of the first aims of the workshop is to discuss researcher’s positionality and epistemology while promoting a methodology that seeks to be decolonial in studying postcolonial or postsocialist or otherwise peripheralized selves, which the migrant figure subsumes beyond historical, geographical and cultural differences.

### *(South)east European and Global South Entanglements*

Scholarship on the socialist but also postsocialist Yugoslavia, now termed Southeast Europe or the Western Balkans, and other East European countries as “the quasi or the other Europe” (Boatcă 2012), has been difficult to analyze in terms of decolonial trajectories due to different paths to modernity and different imperial legacies from the Ottoman to the Habsburg and then, later, after the 1990s wars, the neocolonial administration of the international community and local ethnocapitalists. Some parallels can be drawn though such as, for

instance, the role of Tito's Yugoslavia in the Non-aligned movement, neocolonial governance in postconflict Bosnia (Majstorović 2007) or race in the Yugoslav region "between the postsocialist, postconflict and postcolonial" (Baker 2018). Still in the process of supposedly producing research on the ex-Yugoslav conflicts, transition from socialism to capitalism, peripheralization, reconciliation, repatriarchalization, (forced) migration etc. the increasing competition, precarity, marketization of ideas, concepts, and academic selves led to the bizarre result that it was/is "profitable" to produce knowledge on former Yugoslavia as an "indigenous" (and also migrant) scholar already "equipped" with the core language and "cultural" competence (Laketa, King-Savić, Tošić 2019).

### *Social production of periphery*

The EU border located in this periphery, given that there are European countries which are still not part of the EU, has shown hybrid and unequal power relations, asymmetrical obligations and overlapping regimes whose boundaries do not coincide (Kouvelakis 2018), detention centers and reception centers deep in the exterior of the EU. Currently the closest EU border is the one in the northwestern BiH, in the area of *Krajina*, where some 5-6 reception centers contain around 7000-10000 of refugees since 2018, while since 2015, people of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been massively leaving for West European countries through different labor regulations in hundreds of thousands in the third largest migration wave since WWII. What connects them are poverty, uncertainty, peripherality, crisis and war (even though war in Bosnia ended in 1995, many will still say the war is still going on) and what differentiates them is above all race. Not all will be able to go just as not all will be able to stay in Bosnia, but this "backroom of Europe" is de facto the closest border to the EU and potentially a place on the verge of security and humanitarian catastrophe.

While discussing decolonial methods in studying "postcolonial", "postsocialist", "postconflict" and other peripheral selves, the figure of the migrant, both as a bodily locale, embodied border and a political subject but also as an encounter, such as an encounter with or between migrants, struggles, experiences and histories of people from seemingly disconnected parts of the world come into horizon. It has never been more difficult to demarcate how political and religious persecution may interact with economic deprivation rendering the difference between forced migration and economic migration obsolete (see Castles 2006; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2018). To understand the interplay between the social, the economic and the political, the new Western Balkans frontier becomes a site for studying, narrating and understanding race, class, gender and labor after 2015 where different genealogies of conflict, violent regimes and dubious international politics can be juxtaposed, compared and contrasted laying the groundwork for new cosmopolitanisms and new solidarities.

To answer the question of "what is going on", it is necessary to consolidate and rework the present methodological tools offered by Marxism, decolonial and postcolonial, and feminist theory because different territorial and political demarcation processes of nation-state borders but also of social, cultural and temporal demarcations are taking place. "If yesterday's drama of the subject was exploitation by capital," says Mbembe, "the tragedy of the multitude today is that they are unable to be exploited at all. They are abandoned subjects, relegated to the role of a 'superfluous humanity (Mbembe 2017: 3).' Issues of securitization and humanitarianization (Koddenbrock 2013; Fassin 2009, 2010; Langenohl 2019; Mlinarević

and Ahmetašević 2019), gender (Majstorović 2009; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010) and labor (Mezzadra and Nielson 2013; de Genova et al. 2015), which are always racially embedded, from the study of how migration “is done” (Amelina 2017) producing complex entanglements in the periphery. The simultaneously postcolonial and postsocialist and often abjected “peripheral selves” on the margin of Europe, despite dealing with different histories, contested ethnic/religious capitalism, patriarchal residues etc., are now in “this together” and together should carve out a space for a dynamic emancipatory politics, preferably of integration, that will seek to decolonize this space as a new “European heart of darkness” by creating more social justice, less misery, and better lives for all. Decolonial methodologies may tell us what “this” in being “in it together” means.

The workshop is envisaged to have 5 clusters:

1. Theoretical, epistemological and methodological contact zones between post-/decolonial, post-socialist, and peripheralist perspectives
2. Decolonial methods for studying migration from the discursive to the affective: oral histories, biographies and in-depth interviews
3. Methodological aspects of migration and labor: Marxist, decolonial and feminist trajectories
4. Researching migration/asylum nexus and the racialization logic of the EU border regimes
5. What can social science tell us about migration, securitization and humanitarianism?