

*Gender and Empire. Exploring Comparative Perspectives and Intersectional Approaches.* Ulrike Lindner / Dörte Lerp, University of Cologne, 23.09.2015–26.09.2015.

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Since the works of Ann Laura Stoler and Lora Wildenthal see for example: Ann L. Stoler, *Race and Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham, NC 1995. Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884–1945*. Durham 2001. gender and Empire are hardly new fields of research. Although these fields often remained institutionally underrepresented, they proved to be highly dynamic. Therefore, as the opening remarks by the organizers ULRIKE LINDNER (Cologne) and DÖRTE LERP (Cologne) made clear, the conference included important developments in recent research, like masculinity studies, a focus on international organizations, or the consideration of continental Empires, in order to explore how Empires on all levels were fundamentally gendered projects.

In her keynote “Locating Agency: Feminism, Religion and Empire after the Transnational Turn” CLARE MIDGLEY (Sheffield) focused on the connection between the British, American and Indian feminist reform movements. Based on various examples like Mary Carpenter and the Brahmo Samaj movement she explored the networks situated in between imperialistic and feminist ideas and concluded that a new reading of the letters and journals should highlight the agency of Indian reformists operating independent but connected to other western reformist movements.

The first panel tackled a popular trend already evident in the keynote: *Biographies and Relationships*. BETTINA BROCKMEYER (Bielefeld) started with a presentation on “Love Affair? State's Affair? The Interpretations of a Hanging in German East Africa or Questions of Gender and Race in Colonial Historiography”. By analysing the German colonial figure Magdalena Prince and her alleged love affair with Mpangire from three different perspectives – contemporary European sources; family memories; current research – Brockmeyer explored how the German Empire was defined by sexual borders. MARIANNE BECHHAUS-GERST's (Cologne) paper “Men and Women on the Edge of Time – When the Colonial Order falls Apart” analysed the lives of Gottfried and Frieda Schmidt who while trying to launch a colonial career got caught up in the First World War, which turned their ideas of a colonial order upside down and challenged concepts of masculinity and race. Frieda had to fight the growing insubordination of indigenous workers and Gottfried's military service was coined by boredom and inactivity, ending up in an Indian prisoner of war camp. Both presentations stressed why a biographical approach can serve as a valuable perspective to portray changes of social and racial hierarchies and that a careful approach is necessary because private sources are often overshadowed by personal memories, genre conventions and contemporary postcolonial discourses.

(Interracial) relationships were taken to another level by institutionalisation in the next panel on *Regulating Marriages*. JULIA MALITSKA (Stockholm) explored in her presentation “Colonizing Marriage: Legal Restrictions on Marriage of the German Colonists in the Black Sea Steppe in the First Half of the 19th Century” how the Russian government tried to contain German colonists in certain areas by applying legal and economic pressure through marriage laws. However, the laws had to be seen in connection with the problematic implementation in villages where various groups like the clergy shaped the measures. ALEXIS RAPPAS’s (Istanbul) paper “Desperate Colonial Wives: Mixed Marriages and the Boundaries of Imperial Sovereignty in the Aegean Sea” identified mixed marriages as important moments where civil rights, economic assets and especially the elusive category race were at stake. Hereby, the liminal status of the Aegean islands in between a colony and independent western nation served as a background for negotiations over the future of the Italian race. In the end marriage laws in the Russian and Italian Empire showed both, the power and limits of control by the colonial government over frontier populations and the central position of mixed marriages for the formation of the colonial and bureaucratic order.

In the next panel on *Masculinity, Femininity and Sexuality* the fragility of the colonial order became visible again. The paper “Male Same-Sex Desire and Masculinity in Colonial German Southwest Africa by JAN SEVERIN (Berlin) analysed court records of trials against male same sex offenders. Here, the amount of violence or the victims – usually indigenous men – didn’t play a significant role. Instead the degrading acts of white offenders stood out and had to be punished immediately, often by deportation, because they constituted a vital danger to white supremacy and colonial rule. STEFAN HÜBNER’s (Munich) presentation “Muscular Christianity and the Emergence of a “Modern Asia”: The YMCA, the YWCA, and the Far Eastern Championship Games (c. 1913-1934)”

focused on cartoons and how the representations of these games were used to construct a new „modern“ masculinity. He argued that the YMCA was successful in using sport events as tools for modern nation building, their own fundraising and the de-orientalization of Asian men. OFRI ILANI (Berlin) concluded the panel with a paper on “An Oriental Vice: Representations of Sodomy in Early Zionist Discourse“. He argued that homosexuality played an important part in discriminating the Arab population and became synonym with political treason when an Arab-Israeli relationship was involved, thereby effectively serving as a tool of Israeli nation building. Overall, the session showed the deep implications masculinity and homosexuality had on the political imperial sphere.

The next panel built on this impression by taking a closer look at *Masculinity in Imperial Wars*. Photo Albums as a medium that allowed to connect imperial experiences to everyday-life and American homes were the focus of SILVAN NIEDERMEYER’s (Erfurt) presentation “Imperial Self-Fashioning: Approaching Gender and Empire through the Lens of Private Photo Albums of the Philippine American War (1899–1902)”. Following narratives of travel reports the albums exemplified how representations in female and male photo albums emphasized different perspectives of the colonial (war) while both were integral for the imperial project. SANDRA MAß (Bielefeld) started her presentation on “War, Women and White Men: Self-descriptions and Masculinity of Colonial Soldiers in the First World War” with an appeal to focus more on the global experience of colonial soldiers serving all over the Empire. She analysed the war experience of colonial soldiers – in particular the various relationships to white women – in letters, concluding that the experience served as a laboratory of equality for the “colonised” soldiers. The panel emphasized how new perspectives and tackling difficult sources can prove to be

a fruitful endeavour for the research on gender, Empire and violence.

The panel *Civilizing Missions and Imperial Feminism* shifted the focus to Empires in Eastern Europe, an area getting more and more popular in recent imperial histories. BRIGITTE FUCHS (Vienna) outlined in her presentation “Austria-Hungary’s Civilising Mission in Bosnia and its Positive Effects on Domestic Feminists’ Demands 1890–1918” how female health officers recruited by the imperial government served as agents of modernization. These women were brought in because of the demands for proper health personal for the female Muslim population and in turn opened up new opportunities for women in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. VALENTINA SMIRNOVA (St Petersburg) presented a paper “Gender, Orientalism, and Decolonization in North Asia: Female Toilers of the Orient in Bolshevik Discourse of the 1920s–1930s” written in collaboration with IVAN SABLIN (Heidelberg) which analysed a series of brochures “The Female Toilers”. The brochures, loosely organized on different areas and ethnic groups, are differing from western ideas by underlining the potential of oriental women to achieve total emancipation through labour. The panel offered interesting insights into the question how different economic backgrounds (Soviet Union) and imperial settings (continental Empire of Austria-Hungary) could influence approaches to gender and Empire.

Bringing *Female Suffrage and Female Writing* together, the next session combined the global and national level. SUMITA MUKHERJEE (Oxford) argued in her paper “The Global and Imperial Connections of Indian Campaigners for Female Suffrage in the Interwar Period” that Indian women were able, through their participation and integration in international Suffrage organisations, to speak for other colonised women. This problematic position led to rise of their own status in the respective organisations. KAITLIN STAUDT (Oxford) explored in her presentation “Generic

Modernism: Popular Literature Modernity and Gender in Britain and Turkey” the political agenda in popular literature by focusing on Rebecca West’s “Harriet Hume” and Nezihe Muhiddin’s “Güzellik Kraliçesi”. Both stories exemplified the differences between imperial settings in the construction of race, gender and modernity. Nevertheless, the common condition to take part in the suffrage movement or to produce feministic books became clear: class.

*Education and Schooling* were defining moments of class formation and the focus of the next panel. JANA TSCHURENEV (Göttingen) compared in her presentation “Empire, Patriarchy, and Struggles for Empowerment: Women and Education in Colonial India (1820s–1880s)” two points in time, the 1820s in Bengal and 1880s in Bombay, in order to find out how female education functions as a tool. In the 1820s, female missionaries used the education of indigenous girls and women as a chance for their own empowerment. The 1880s on the other hand were characterized by American professionalism and scientific colonialism. The paper ““Saving our Sisters: Female Education and the London Missionary Society in Nineteenth Century South India” by DIVGA KANNAN (New Delhi) explored how British missionaries tried to gain an understanding of the caste system in order to use it for their advantage in missionary schools by addressing especially the poor classes. In conclusion, the panel established a vivid picture of an imperial caring power Annemieke van Drenth und Francisca de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power: Elizabeth Fry and Josephine Butler in Britain and the Netherlands*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam 1999. situated in the nexus between gender and political power.

The following panel *Development and social care in Colonial Settings* stayed in the field of education, also focusing on a later time period. In her paper “Caring for Empire: Colonial Nursing in Hong Kong and Cape Town (1880–1914)” ANG-HARAD FLETCHER (Hong Kong/ London) show-

cased the multiple resources for research on colonial nurses and their careers. For these European nurses who embarked on the imperial project to achieve professional promotions, the colonial experience consisted of individual hardship and a constant endangerment of their honour – central not only to their social position as a women but to their careers – by the work along indigenous populations. CHARLOTTE RILEY's (York) paper "To educate a girl is to educate a Family: Gender and Early British Development Practice in the Inter-war Period" emphasised the question how the labour party campaigned for and thought about the education of girls. She showed that education and healthcare were often thought together.

The panel *Indigenous Servants and Colonial Homes* brought three Anglo-American settler colonies together. In the presentation "Being at Home: Settler Colonial Biopower and the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender in Colonial Australia" EVA BISCHOFF (Trier) analysed the settler home as a multidimensional space where aspects of convictism, warfare and labour shaped ideas of gender and Empire. The home of Quaker George and Sarah Walker in Tasmania showcased how gardens could serve as killing fields in a guerrilla warfare against Aboriginal people, how the family welcomed convict labour and how the house became a site of cultural genocide through the employment of Aboriginal girls as domestic servants. ELIZABETH DILLENBURG (Minneapolis) compared in her paper "The 'Pride of Race': Domestic Service Debates in New Zealand and South Africa, c. 1890–1914" two settler colonial settings that reacted differently to Anna Stout who promoted the integration of Indigenous people as domestic servants as a solution for the shortage of labour. South Africans were frightened that black domestic labour would destroy the ideal of a white home and in New Zealand Maori resisted the plans by arguing that their own racial superiority would make them unfit for the labour. By focusing on the settler home both presentations re-

vealed the messy practices on the ground driving ideas of gender and Empire.

Overall, the focus of the conference on the period between 1880 and 1945 led to a pronunciation of political topics like feminism, suffrage or decolonization that rightly are prominently reflected in the history of gender and Empire. Remarkably, economic aspects played a minor role in the papers, even so the period was coined by both, the civilizing mission and the economic efficient administration of colonies. However, since historians often times rely on sources mainly written by elites, where economic assets usually present a given, an economic point of view can easily be lost. On the other hand, the focus on elites allowed for a thoroughly analysis of inter-imperial connections and some presentations were able to expand their perspective by including innovative sources like photographs. The conference showed that gender played an important role in the different discourses and practices of Empire and became itself a defining aspect of (anti-)imperialism.

#### **Conference Overview:**

Introduction: Ulrike Lindner / Dörte Lerp (Cologne)

#### **Opening Lecture**

Clare Midgley (Sheffield): Locating agency: Feminism, religion and empire after the transnational turn

#### **Panel 1: Biographies and Relationships**

Chair: Larissa Förster (Cologne)

Bettina Brockmeyer (Bielefeld): Love affair? State's affair? The interpretations of a hanging in German East Africa or questions of gender and race in colonial historiography

Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst (Cologne): Men and Women on the Edge of Time – When the colonial order falls apart

#### **Panel 2: Regulating Marriages**

Chair: Béatrice Hendrich (Cologne)

Julia Malitska (Stockholm): Colonizing Marriage: Legal Restrictions on Marriage of the German colonists in the Black Sea Steppe in the first half of the 19th century

Alexis Rappas (Istanbul): Desperate Colonial Wives: Mixed Marriages and the Boundaries of Imperial Sovereignty in the Aegean Sea

*Panel 3: Masculinity, Femininity and Sexuality*

Chair: Oliver Tappe (Cologne)

Jan Severin (Berlin): Male Same-Sex Desire and Masculinity in Colonial German Southwest Africa

Stefan Hübner (Munich): Muscular Christianity and the Emergence of a „Modern Asia“: The YMCA, the YWCA, and the Far Eastern Championship Games (c. 1913–1934)

Ofri Ilani (Berlin): An Oriental Vice: Representations of Sodomy in Early Zionist Discourse

*Panel 4: Masculinity in Imperial Wars*

Chair: Jens Ruppenthal (Cologne)

Silvan Niedermeier (Erfurt): Imperial Self-Fashioning: Approaching Gender and Empire through the lens of private photo albums of the Philippine American War (1899–1902)

Sandra Maß (Bielefeld): War, Women and White Men: Self-descriptions and Masculinity of Colonial Soldiers in the First World War

*Panel 5: Civilising Missions and Imperial Feminism*

Chair: Ulrike Lindner (Cologne)

Brigitte Fuchs (Vienna): Austria-Hungary's Civilising Mission in Bosnia and its Positive Effects on Domestic Feminists' Demands 1890–1918

Ivan Sablin/Valentina Smirnova (Heidelberg/St Petersburg): Gender, Orientalism, and Decolonization in North Asia: Female Toilers of the Orient in Bolshevik Discourse of the 1920s–1930s

*Panel 6: Female Suffrage and Female Writing*

Chair: Jens Jäger (Cologne)

Sumita Mukherjee (Oxford): The Global and Imperial Connections of Indian Campaigners for Female Suffrage in the Interwar Period

Kaitlin Staudt (Oxford): Generic Modernism: Popular Literature Modernity and Gender in Britain and Turkey

*Panel 7: Education and Schooling*

Chair: Barbara Lüthi (Cologne)

Jana Tschurennev (Göttingen): Between patriarchy, imperialism, and women's empowerment: Women and education in colonial India (1820s–1880s)

Divya Kannan (New Delhi): „Saving Our Sisters“: Female education and the London Missionary Society in Nineteenth Century South India

*Panel 8: Development and Social Care in Colonial Settings*

Chair: Esther Helena Arens (Cologne)

Angharad Fletcher (Hong Kong / London): Caring for Empire: Colonial Nursing in Hong Kong and Cape Town (1880–1914)

Charlotte Riley (York): To Educate a Girl is to Educate a Family: Gender and Early British Development Practice in the Interwar Period

*Panel 9: Indigenous Servants and Colonial Homes*

Chair: Ulrike Schaper (Berlin)

Eva Bischoff (Trier): Being at Home: Settler Colonial Biopower and the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender in Colonial Australia

Elizabeth Dillenburg (Minneapolis): The „Pride of Race“: Domestic Service Debates in New Zealand and South Africa, c. 1890–1914

*Final discussion*

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