



Perspektiven auf globale Politik

AFK-EUPRA – 15: REFLECTING ‚THE WEST‘ – GLOBALISATION AND GENDER

12. März 2017 · von jungeafk · in AFK-EUPRA 2017 · [Hinterlasse einen Kommentar](#)

AFK-EuPRA – Panel 15: Reflecting ‚The West‘ – Globalisation and Gender

Chair: Stephanie Thiel (Justus-Liebig University of Gießen, Germany; EuPRA Board member)

Presenters:

Karim Maiche (University of Tampere, Finland): The Critical Contemplate of the “Historical West”

When dealing in social sciences world politics or other cultural, civilizational or ethnic entities, it is usual that we use concepts such as West, East, Arab world, Africa and so forth. However, we often link values and historical narrations to those concepts intentionally or unintentionally.

My aim is to approach critically to the concept of the West in order to show the distorted historical connotations and developments that we often attach to it. I argue that the concept of the West leads us into categorizations such as “us” and “them” and complicates our understanding of the current interpretations of the historical world and therefore the current development.



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The generalizations, such as the West, can be useful, but we should define what we mean when using them. West can be at some point politically useful but the historical base that it is contextualized is highly eurocentric and problematic.

Firstly, we often use West in order to strengthen certain narrations about "us" and "our" world history. We stress that the origins of the historical West lies in the Ancient Greek civilization, continues in the Imperium of Rome. The West develops through the Renaissance and the period of Enlightenment transforming into current Western world with its "modern" traditions and values. But how can we cut the historical Mediterranean sea into north and south according to our current political interests? How can we neglect the multilevel historical Mediterranean?

Secondly, we end up constructing the history and current world according to huntingtonian ways of seeing civilizations as something that are developed internally without any connection to other societies and perhaps cultures.

Thirdly, while we stress the positive developments of the so called West we end up neglecting the historical developments and achievements of other "cultures" or "civilizations" that leads to eurocentricism and understatement of "others".

We often express our concerns regarding the rise of xenophobia and racism. But how is it possible to respect others when we construct the world where it is "we" who have always invented everything, produced pure and positive values and human rights and developed democracy and latest scientific inventions?

West-centric and Eurocentric world views are strongly present in social sciences and academic thinking more broadly. It is necessary to link those connotations regarding peace and conflict studies in order to build more heterogeneous understanding of the world especially in the times when we are heading towards more multipolar world system.

Andreas Herberg-Rothe & Miriam Foerstle (University of Applied Sciences Fulda, Germany): Fluid Modernity, Identity, Violence and Conflict – Escalation of Violence, IS, Terrorism and the Uprooted, Redundant, and Excluded of Globalization

The resexualization of behavior in general and the escalation of war and violence in particular has been studied through the "New Wars" theories investigating, for instance, violence in sub-Saharan Africa. Nevertheless the attribution of these developments as new "new" and the reductionism of explaining these developments by economic "robber

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capitalism” proved inadequate. Alongside democratic protests during the Arab Spring, which long ago became an Islamist winter, we witnessed already the rape of women by groups at Tahrir Square. The Cologne incident in which gangs of African and Middle Eastern migrants sexually assaulted at least 118 women indicates a world-societal problem that reaches far beyond the German city. The inconceivable rape of women by groups of young men in India is an indication that one should not prematurely reach for cultural or religious explanations by putting the blame on specific ideologies.

What is a possible common denominator of these developments? The assumption that the uprooted, redundant, and excluded members of society would come to terms with their destiny on an individual level contains a fundamental flaw. To the contrary, throughout the world they are forming small groups of violent gangs. In many cases, they turned into child soldiers, IS supporters and fighters, terrorists, members of youth gangs that control the suburbs and slums from Paris to Rio, hooligans, members of mafias and drug cartels, and “railway-station kids.” In the field of socialization research, one can see a common consent that an insufficient formation and stabilization of identity leads to intolerance and violent behavior. Whether these young individuals become members of youth gangs, criminals or terrorists, depends on the context. The context may be decisive, but much more serious is the fact that the patriarchy has failed in countless parts of world society in the face of the pressure of social change through globalization. The “old” societies of the Islamic-Arabic world crumbled with the social change of “liquid” modernity. The speed of change in modernization makes it almost impossible to adapt in an adequate way, making the promises of modernity unrealistic and non-gainful. One alternative is their association with radical and fundamental mind-sets (Salafism, IS, other fundamentalist Islamic movements).

“Liquid modernity” in a globalized world is “freeing” young men from having an identity. The young men in the Islamic-Arabic world no longer have a place or space in this “brave new world”, they live in fragmented societies. How would it be if the rise of IS is not primarily attributable to “the” Islamic religion, but rather, quite the contrary, to the failure of Islam and patriarchy as political religions in countless societies of the world to withstand and cope with the pressure of modernization caused by globalization? Our paper explores the connection between the liquidity of the current phase of modernity (Bauman) with the escalation of violence throughout the world.

Seyit Ali Avcu (Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Ankara, Turkey): Ethnic-Religious Conflicts And Gender in Kyrgyzstan

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The subject of this research is to study the bloody conflicts that arise from the ethnic tensions between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks, which took place in the southern provinces of Kyrgyzstan in June 2010 and resulted hundreds of deaths, injuries, internal and external refugees and material costs. The conflicts between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities, which emerges at certain intervals, has affected the stability in the region.

There are two purpose of this study: First aim is to understand the nature and the causes of the conflict; factors and actors. Second aim is to identify the policies which can contribute to the solution of these tensions and what needs to be done so that the conflict will not be repeated. The aim is that how religion and gender played roles in the conflict; the conflict started with a azan (call for prayer) as jihad and later religious leaders played roles to stop it. Both communities have separate mosques and imams. Moreover, middle aged women in both sides encouraged men to inflict atrocities to opposite sites.

The first method of the study is interviews of the officials, representation of the ethnic groups, religious leaders, academics, students. The second is based on semi-structured group interview comparing .citizens of Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities who also represent various social strata.

The paper provides evidence for different but interrelated causal and catalyzing factors, discusses quantified and qualitative results, will pay attention to gender- and religion-related issues and address possible solutions how similar future conflicts may be avoided.

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