

Call for Papers  
**International Workshop**

**Struggles over Europe: Post-colonial West/East dynamics of race, gender and sexuality**

Conveners:

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Although postcolonial perspectives have left the ‘Second World’ as the great blank space on the map (Moore 2001), the term postcolonialism enables us to problematize instances of ‘mind colonization’ also in non-Third world contexts, especially in the context of EU ‘transition’ and Europeanization. Emphasizing the postcolonial dimension of Europeanness, Dace Dzenovska (2018) describes it as an unstable and relational articulation of racialized identity markers, often distributed as a marker of civilization by those propelled to the position of proper Europeanness. Although proper Europeanness is associated with former colonial powers, whiteness as an identity marker and a defining feature of ‘Europe’ is eagerly reproduced by nationalist and right-wing populist movements also outside the European ‘core’, notably in the so-called Central and Eastern Europe. However, this self-whitening tendency is rarely seen as a result of persistent coloniality and hence eminently ‘European’. In scholarly as well as in public debates, white supremacy sentiments are entirely distanced from the Enlightenment ideas, and instead attributed to ‘backward’, racist ‘others’. This distortion of race and racism is compounded by the fact that some major works by post-socialist scholars retain some unproblematized Eurocentric presumptions. When Europeanness and Europeanization are considered in isolation from global postcolonial dynamics, the European idea and debates about Europeanization get distanced from a meaningful consideration of their racial underpinnings.

Against this backdrop, the workshop aims to show how it could prove fruitful to analyze various contemporary struggles over ‘Europe’ in post-socialist contexts from a post-colonial perspective. We welcome contributions that explore how intersecting categories of gender, sexuality, race and class underpin invocations of West/East divides – on different scales – in struggles over ‘Europe’ and formations of the ‘European body’.

The term Europe has of course different meanings depending on the geographical and cultural positioning of those applying it. Both in 'the East' and in 'the West' of the European Union (EU), we witness a tendency to target immigrant "others", alongside the production of anti-elitist discourses against 'leftist' elites who ostensibly impose 'Europeanized' unpatriotic and dangerous ideologies of tolerance and multiculturalism. Along the upsurge of racist discourses, we have also witnessed in the 'old' Europe stark debates about sexual rights and freedoms that serve to establish cultural hierarchies. Recent debates have revealed just how closely these issues are linked to the construction of a European identity and, in somewhat paradoxical ways, to national identities (Fassin 2010). The tendency to instrumentalize sexual rights to promote democratization-cum-civilization is particularly evident in the conditions for 'transition towards democracy' in processes of EU enlargement. From the 1990s and onwards, LGBTQ rights have functioned as a litmus test for a country's broader human rights record and has become increasingly conspicuous in the process of the fifth and sixth (Eastern) EU enlargements. Part of this picture are also the struggles around international sponsors of local NGOs, and the fact that the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary of gender and sexuality studies has been instrumental for the ways how gender/sexuality, including homophobia, are problematized.

As many critical scholars have argued, these 'progressive' attitudes towards non-normative sexualities are no less intermeshed with racist discourses than are right-wing populisms (Brown 2006, Butler 2009, Scott 2007, Puar 2007). The decisive difference between the two strands is of course that tolerance discourses equally target 'dangerous nationalism' or 'uncivilized bigotry' among so-called Eastern Europeans, including labour migrants living in 'the West'. The racialization of homophobia involves, according to Sara Ahmed (2011), a re-association or 'sticking' of homo-hatred onto racialized populations (within and outside the gay-friendly nation) as 'a cultural attribute'. The debates over Brexit in the UK illustrate quite well the different shades of whiteness (Dyer 1997) and civilization, measured by the capability to perform a particular set of values and sensibilities allegedly impossible to reach by some people from new member states of the EU (see e.g. Böröcz and Sarkar 2017; Lewicki 2017; Fox et al. 2014). Robert Kulpa and Joanna Mizielińska (2011) maintain that one of today's mechanisms of Othering of Central and Eastern Europe consists of rendering it permanently 'transitional', post-communist. The perpetual reproductions of post-colonial West/East divides – alongside the anti-Muslim sentiments – indicate that racism continues to fuel the idea of Europe, although in complex and often covert ways (Binnie and Klesse 2011, Böröcz and Sarkar 2017, Imre 2005, Melegh 2006, Weber 2016).

We invite contributions that highlight different cultural dynamics of intersecting categories race, class and gender that reproduce or challenge the division into "East" and "West" or highlight the overlapping and blurring dynamics of reproduction of such division. How do these categories work and intersect and contribute to different visions of "Europe"? What can postcolonial theory contribute to the discussion on these visions and on intersection of race class and gender in context of "Europe"?

Please send your abstract (300 words) and a short bio (200 words) until **September 15** to Pawel Lewicki at [lewicki@europa-uni.de](mailto:lewicki@europa-uni.de)

The workshop will take place in a usual workshop format (20 minutes presentations followed by 20 minutes of discussion) on November 14<sup>h</sup> and 15 in Collegium Polonicum in Słubice and at the Europa-Universität Viadrina in Frankfurt an der Oder. Accommodation is provided in Słubice. Travel costs of participants will be covered to a certain amount.