

Final Conference: November 1/2, 2018

Multiple pasts, which futures? Re-assembling genealogies of political struggle and contestation

Over the last decades, social theory has attended to a multiplicity of political contestations, from labour and higher-education strikes, tenants' protests and what were once called the 'new social movements' to the anti-globalization movement, indigenous activism or Occupy, and Black Lives Matter. Increasingly, scholars and activists have also attended to a variety of genealogies in which political discourses and struggles have been situated, including Marxist, anarchist, feminist or queer approaches, anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles, migrant experiences and indigenous forms of knowledge and practice. Attending to this multiplicity of political genealogies, and the power relations that undergird them has helped decentring prevalent conceptions of political contestation framed around white, European, cis-male subjectivity, and the liberal-democratic state. Thus, reinvigorating other pasts has also conjured new ways in which the futures of collective lives and the world have been imagined – critically and prefiguratively.

In this workshop, we invite scholars and activists to reflect on the genealogies of political struggles and how these impact on visions for the future. We are particularly interested here in approaches that decentre hegemonic conceptions of political subjectivity and practice. Further, we would like to discuss both tensions and convergences that have arisen from among heterogeneous struggles and political projects. Where have critical analyses of the social and the political been productively inspired by other approaches where have they been suppressed, co-opted and tamed? Which forms of intersectionality and

transversality of struggles have emerged? And finally, to what extent has it been difficult or possible to assemble common visions of the future? To address (some of) these or related questions, we invite participants to prepare short inputs related to their research and/or political practice of around 15 minutes. These inputs could have a theoretical, empirical or political focus, and they could be framed around genealogical lineages or contemporary issues. Inputs could also focus on conundrums and paradoxes, they could present material that is puzzling, provocative or difficult to locate, and formulate questions to be discussed.

Additional sessions: Discussion rounds in small circles

Philip Smith (New Haven; tbc): Culture, action and meaning (August);

Jan Nederveen Pieterse (Santa Barbara): Globalization in a multi-polar world (September)

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www.bayreuth-academy.uni-bayreuth.de/en/index.php



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Genealogies of social differentiation and political contestation

Working Group of the Bayreuth Academy Summer/Winter Term 2018



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Working Group of the Bayreuth Academy /
Summer/Winter Term 2018

Organized by Antje Daniel (Development Sociology), Thomas Dörfler (Social and Human Geography), Jan Hutta (Social and Cultural Geography), and Florian Stoll (Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies & Development Sociology)

Political protests and struggles respond to processes of social differentiation and stratification in various ways. Protest is not a necessary outcome of certain living conditions, political situations or economic relations. Rather, protest – and other forms of political contestation – are bound to the perception of inequality and injustice in particular settings. Central to the articulation of dissent are meaning structures that are mobilized in the context of wider discourses and political conjunctures. Social differences that have been naturalized through hegemonic discourses can, for instance, start to be challenged and scandalized in the wake of economic and political crises, catastrophic events, or the emergence of social movements elsewhere. Crucially, the ability of voicing dissent is also contingent upon how the differences addressed pertain to capitalism and class, ethnicity and racism, or sexuality and gender. Depending on the patterns of social differentiation that characterize a particular context and the ways in which they have been problematized before (or not), contestations can rapidly gain traction and foster political coalitions, or they can encounter fierce resistance and be stifled. Likewise, the societal conditions for contestations in urban settings differ greatly from those in rural settings.

Engaging with such interconnected genealogies of social differentiation and political contestation, the Working Group examines the following questions in selected African settings as well as other parts of the Global South and North:

- What are the conditions in which protest and political contestation arises?
- How are contestations related to class, socioeconomic inequality, sociocultural elements (e.g. values and lifestyle, ethnicity and the fight for civil rights)?
- Which kinds of genealogy can we fathom with regard to political contestation, social differentiation and their mutual articulation?
- How do contestations take shape differently in urban and rural settings?
- Are there particularities of contestations in Africa and how can we study them?

SCHEDULE

Warm up: March 27, 2018:

Graziella Moraes da Silva (Geneva/Rio de Janeiro):

"Re-making class, race and nation: black middle class and new elites in Brazil and South Africa"

Opening Event: April 26/27, 2018 Annual conference of the section Development Sociology/Social Anthropology (in the German Sociological Association) „**Widerstand und Utopie – alternative Zukunftsvorstellungen und Entwicklungsentwürfe**“

All Sessions are on Thursday, 4 pm at the Bayreuth Academy, Hugo Rüdel Straße 10

Session 1: June 7, 2018, 4-6 pm

Helmuth Berking (Berlin): Postsecular Urbanity? Religion, Politics and the City

Session 2: July 5, 2018, 4-6 pm

Gunter Weidenhaus & Claudia Mock (Berlin): Biographical Spaces – An Intergenerational Outlook of Middle Classes in Kenya and Germany

Session 3: July 12, 2018, 4-7 pm

Thomas Dörfler, Eberhard Rothfuß & Rogers Hansine (all Bayreuth)

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