Abstracts

Volker Woltersdorff
New Potentials for Alliances and New Vagueness
On the Notion of the Precariousness of Gender, Labour and Life

The notion of "precariousness" has been embraced for a political critique of the strategic production of vulnerability from various perspectives, ranging from anti-neoliberalism to anti-militarism and queer feminism. Yet, can these different usages be brought in line without causing major difficulties? This article analyses the problems that are contained in each of the notion’s employment and discusses the obstacles on the way to form a political coalition on the common ground of "precariousness". The author suggests a governmental approach, which takes into account how subjectivities are produced by and participate in the precarity of gender, labour and life. This is finally illustrated by the example of a political icon taken from the EuroMayDay movement.

Keywords: precariousness, coalition-building, EuroMayDay movement

Magdalena Freudenschuß
Handling Vulnerabilities in Public Discourses on Precarity

The article proposes a critical reading of discursive strategies of handling vulnerabilities in the context of precarity. The paper compares material from the German-speaking media discourse and from activist discourses on precarity. Against this background, this feminist analysis of discourses explores whose vulnerability in this precarious world of labour is made perceptible and whose vulnerabilities remain unheard. While activist media deal with a wider range of vulnerabilities including migrant positions, German-speaking media discourse largely ignores vulnerabilities beyond the national context, especially in their gendered and racialized form. Finally, the paper proposes some reflections on the implications of such discursive logics of inclusion and exclusion.

Keywords: precarity, vulnerability, discourse analysis, media, activism

Sylvia Pritsch
Digital Vulnerability – the rhetorics of sexism and trolling

The article describes the ambiguous intersections of sexism and trolling drawing on the example of trolling incidents, and corresponding feminist reactions during the blogger-fair "Re:publica" in Berlin 2010. The article discusses various forms of vulnerability, focusing on socio-linguistic and philosophical approaches. Finally, the article suggests that trolling shows how the processes of addressing in the net produce a specific form of linguistic violence.

Keywords: Sexism, world wide web, vulnerability
Kathrin Zehnder
„They have damaged me so much“
On different interpretations of vulnerability and harm exemplified by medical intervention in intersexed bodies.

While medical professionals interpret the management of intersexual children (e.g. gender and sex assignment, surgeries, hormone substitution etc.) as an inevitable act of healing, many people born with ambiguous genitalia survive these treatments as traumatic violation and mutilation. The author shows that doctors see the unclear sex or ambiguous body as the reason for vulnerability which must – in the best interest of the child – be corrected. The ethical principle of ‘nil nocere’ is astonishingly not examined in detail. In contrast, some intersexual people see those ‘corrections’ as the harm itself and claim for a non-treatment-option to avoid psychological and physical injury.

Keywords: Intersex, vulnerability, harm, ethics, ambiguous body, sex and gender in medicine

Margrit Brückner
Doing Care and the Risks of Vulnerability: Reconstructing the actor-perspective within a network of care involving a mentally ill woman

The paper’s aim is to analyze the specific precariousness of care receivers and care givers in long lasting care processes in order to understand ways of coping of care actors in the context of welfare regimes. This analysis is based theoretically on the international care debate – especially the concept of human interdependency and the concept of ‘care rationality’ – and empirically on a study looking into care networks of individual grown-up care receivers living at home and receiving informal and formal care, specified by the example of a psychiatric ill woman. It can be shown how dependency is dealt with by the actors and how important space for and acceptance of obstinacy can be.

Keywords: Care networks, (feminist) care debate, Vulnerability, care rationality

Bettina Fritzsche
The role of gender in regulations of vulnerability at schools

The paper focuses the handling of vulnerability within schools. A theoretical perspective is introduced, which, following Judith Butler, emphasises that vulnerability is regulated by norms of recognition. By reference to this concept, an empirical example is analysed: The discussion about the „malpractice“ of a pupil during the class council in a primary school is interpreted as to how the involved persons address each other, how they are subjected and which norms of recognition are of relevance in constituting vulnerability. Finally conclusions concerning the role of gender in regulations of vulnerability at schools are discussed.

Keywords: recognition, subjection, school

Merve Winter und Brigitte Boothe
Vulnerable female donors? Gender imbalance in living organ donation – A critical assessment

Recently so-called „gender imbalance“ in living organ donation has been more widely discussed. The article first of all explains this phenomenon according to which women donate living organs more frequently than men. The thesis that voluntary and compulsory donation are closely intertwined, creating a (moral) imperative to donate, is then illustrated with the
help of a case study. The specific susceptibilities and vulnerabilities of organ donors as well as certain identity positions (for instance as a wife or a mother) expected by society in the context of organ donation also become apparent.

Keywords: living organ donation, gender imbalance, qualitative interview-study, vulnerability, (moral) imperative to donate particularly Muslims’ integration with a „political-economic“ perspective. Indeciding, I hope to open a discussion about a dimension, i.e. the political-economic one, which has been either overlooked or insufficiently analysed.

Keywords: Femonationalism, islamophobia, political economy, migrant women, reserve army of labour

Sara R. Farris
The Political Economy of Femonationalism

In recent years nationalist-xenophobic parties but also neo-liberal governments across Europe have increasingly deployed notions related to gender equality in order to depict male Muslim citizens – and male non-Western migrants more in general – as unable to respect women’s rights. Recent discourses about multiculturalism and integration have correspondingly been strongly marked by demands for migrants to adapt to Western culture and values; one of the essential items in such a list of values being gender equality. The mobilization and instrumentalization of the notion of gender and women’s emancipation, thus, constitutes one of the most important aspects that characterize the current political conjuncture. Furthermore, this mobilization has divided feminist intellectuals and activists in particular, leading to a strong dichotomization. In order to address the „discursive formation“ that brings together the heterogeneous anti-Islam and anti-(male) immigrant concerns of nationalist parties, some feminists and of neo-liberal governments under the idea of gender equality, I propose to employ the term „Femonationalism“. Furthermore, the aim of this article is to account for the various attempts to employ „gender“ in contemporary discussions of migrants’ and

Rita Schäfer
The importance of UN resolutions for the prevention of sexualised violence – Possibilities and problems with reference to Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo

On the one hand the UN Resolution 1325 „Women Peace and Security“ will provide protection from violence for women. On the other hand it promotes women’s participation in peace and democratization processes. The tension between governmental duties to protect and the political participation of women is not solved by the UN. Women’s organisations in post-conflict societies are confronted with this dilemma. In addition, they have to cope with serious problems to enforce the resolution, as the case studies of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia reveal. Though the Liberian government works on women politics there is no guarantee to realize the resolution. There is a big gap between legal reforms and the violent living conditions of women and girls especially in rural areas.

Keywords: UN-Resolutions, sexualized violence during wars, post-conflict societies, women’s organisations.