

FRICION

CONFERENCE

GÖTTINGEN

TENSIONS,
AND
DISRUPTIONS
FROM
GENDER
PERSPECTIVES

DIVISIONS
PRODUCTIVE
FROM
PERSPECTIVES

19.06.25 - 21.06.25

Friction | Tensions, divisions and productive disruptions from gender perspectives

19th Workshop of the Commission for Gender Studies and Queer Anthropology of the German Society for Empirical Cultural Studies (DGEKW)

- 19-21 June 2025 at the Old State and University Library Goettingen
- Organized by the Institute for Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology and the Department for Gender Studies
- Venue: Alte Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Goettingen, Papendiek 14, 3037 Goettingen, Germany

Based on the fact that more-than-human coexistence is fundamentally friction-filled (Bonacker 2009, Mouffe 2014), the conference asks how some constellations of friction lead to conflict, violence and division, while other differences are endured, even considered desirable or allow something new to emerge in a productively disruptive way. From a cultural-anthropological and gender perspective, answers must be sought empirically and ethnographically, taking into account the categories of gender and sexuality.

Accordingly, the conference asks what meanings different actors ascribe to certain gender, sexual and other differences, what means and arenas are chosen for the staging of conflicts over, for example, gender equality and influence their course, as well as how larger social fault lines shape, restrict or enable everyday life and agency. With this focus, the conference aims to bring together current academic findings on frictional dynamics in the area of gender/sexuality from various fields of research. It aims to foster a better understanding of the polarising and divisive dynamics both globally and locally by means of an empirically grounded analysis.

Antonio Gramsci's term 'interregnum', coined in 1926, is currently being used again to describe political and cultural-ideological crises and the associated polarisation and inability to reach a consensus (Laufenberg 2022). Often, tensions crystallise around the topics of gender/sexuality and become negotiated in an irreconcilable friend-foe register (Wielowiejski 2024). Numerous studies have recently emerged that empirically analyse how global and social fault lines emerge along a multitude of 'trigger points' (Mau et al. 2023) that shape, limit or enable the lived realities and opportunities of different actors: for example, studies engage with the dispute about how to adequately react to sexualised violence (Künzel/Bolz 2024) and critically analyse the discourse portraying Muslim men as sexist and homophobic (Hark/Villa 2017), they study and intervene into the debate about reproductive rights (Fröhlich et al. 2022) and point to the fact that contemporary authoritarian divides are resulting in new fragilities, especially for groups exposed to multiple discrimination (Bayramoglu/Castro Varela 2021). In the course of the recent politico legal shifts towards authoritarianism, gender studies itself has become a source of friction and a target of attack (Näser-Lather 2023, Hark 2017).

Nevertheless, numerous social movements and activist projects have been founded to counter violent divisions and at the same time search for a new common ground beyond romanticized notions of identity, community and sameness (Hark 2021, Hark et al. 2015). Building upon cultural-anthropological movement studies, current research focuses on how feminist or queer movements perform disagreement with a status quo that is experienced as violent (Heywood 2018), how they are shaped by internal disputes over means and goals, and the handling of difference (Gutekunst 2021), how they form solidary and caring alliances (Zengin 2024, Seeck 2021) and at the same time create utopias for the future beyond narrow gender norms and regulations (Sistenich 2025, Faust 2019).

The aforementioned efforts to unify also raise questions about how to deal with gender ambiguity and non-normative bodies and lifestyles. While liberalisation in the late 20th century led to a multiplication of gendered and sexual lifestyles and relationships and enabled new freedoms and rights for marginalised groups (Laufenberg 2022), early queer studies investigated the productively disruptive potential of non-normative willful subjects, such as ‘female masculinity’ (Halberstam 1998) or the ‘gender trouble maker’ (Butler 1990). They showed how transgressive figures can have a political-transformative effect in the sense of interrupting and irritating dominant gender relations. These spaces of possibility are currently threatened by re-traditionalisation, right-wing authoritarianism and ‘raw bourgeoisie’ (germ. “raue Bürgerlichkeit”, Heitmeyer 2012). Therefore, the conference also aims at mapping the remaining spaces and exploring the conditions of belonging.

Finally, the conference focuses on our own working practice: ethnographic field research is characterised by intense interaction between researchers and research partners. It presents researchers with the challenge of navigating epistemological differences and interpersonal tensions and using them methodologically. Cultural anthropology has developed methodological tools to use ‘friction as potential’ (Faust et al. 2021), to analyse ‘epistemic disconcertment’ (Verran 2001) and to use antagonism strategically (Wielowiejski 2024). At the same time, critical approaches call for a response to, and an intervention into the gender-political conflicts that shape the lives of our research partners. The proposed methodologies include forms of engaged, activist and advocacy anthropology (Binder/Hess 2013) as well as multi-sited research strategies tracing conflict constellation through – even violent – sites and scales (Riedner 2018, Hess/Tsianos 2020). Accordingly, the conference explores possibilities for collaborative and caring research in polarised fields and tense research relationships.

Conference website: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/693555.html>

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Conference program

Thursday (June 19, 2025)

12 am | Check In

1 pm | Conference opening

1:30 pm

Keynote: In the shades of your eyes. Ein Denkstueck ueber Erinnerung, Verantwortung und das Wagnis des Zusammenlebens, Prof. Dr. Sabine_ Hark (Berlin)

German with English handout

Chair: Dr. Julia Grulich (Göttingen)

2:45 pm | coffee break

3 pm | Panel 1: Spannungsreiche Forschungsbeziehungen

Chair: Florian Grundmüller, M.A. (Göttingen)

- Care-Migration fürsorgend erforschen, Prof. Dr. Urmila Goel (Berlin)
- Kollaborative Allianzen als Reibungen: Potenzial, Herausforderung, Widerspruch Methodische und Methodologische Reflexionen im Feld der Sexarbeit, Sabrina Stranzl M.A. (Graz)
- „Getting a grip“ – Aus Reibungen Halt gewinnen, Isabella Hesse M.A. (Wien)

3 pm | Panel 2: Reibungsvolle Aushandlungen von Geschlecht

Chair: Dr. Julia Fleischhack (Göttingen)

- Jägerinnen im Spannungsfeld von Geschlecht und ökologischem Engagement: (Für)sorgepraktiken und Selbstermächtigung, Kyra Hardt M.A. (Cloppenburg)
- Feeling Friction. Reibungen, Geschlecht und Gefühl im Sport der 1920er-Jahre, Ass.-Prof. Dr. Helen Ahner (Wien)
- Warme Widerworte: Anreden gegen die Festigung gesellschaftlicher Zuschreibungen in der Öffentlichkeitsarbeit von sozialen Straßenmagazinen, Dr. Christine Hämmerling (Göttingen)

4:30 pm | coffee break

5 pm | Panel 4: ENGL. Conflicting regulations and tensious regimes

Chair: Dr. Reza Bayat (Göttingen)

- Navigating Intimate Bureaucracies: Differentiated Regulations on Türkiyeli Trans Migrants in Germany, R. Asli Koruyucu M.A. (Göttingen)
- Clowns, Friction, and Cuban Masculinities, Ass.-Prof. Dr. Cory Thorne Gutiérrez (Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada/Göttingen)
- Frictions in biographies of female refugees, Anna Louise Weßling M.A. (Friedland)

5 pm | Panel 3: Geschlechterwissen: epistemische Reibungen

Chair: Dr. Corinna Schmechel (Göttingen)

- Behandlung vs. Recht auf körperliche Integrität: Medizinische und menschenrechtliche Bewertungsfolien der Zurichtung von geschlechtsuneindeutigen Körpern, Dr. Alik Mazukatow (Lübeck)
- ‚I marinated the cells and then I put them in the oven‘ – Zur Aushandlung von Reibungen in transdisziplinärer kollaborativer Geschlechterforschung von Bio- und Sozialwissenschaften, Zelda Wenner M.A. (Lübeck)
- Trans* Lebenserzählungen als provinzialisierende Verw_ortung im Spannungsfeld dominanzgesellschaftlicher Geschlechterdiskurse, Marek Sancho Höhne M.A. (Berlin)

6:30 pm | End of official program

7 pm | annual meeting of the *Kommission für Geschlechterforschung und Queere Anthropologie der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Empirische Kulturwissenschaft* (DGEKW)

Friday (June 20, 2025)

8:45 am | Check In

9:15 am

Keynote: Violent Intimacies and the Frictional Queer World of the Trans Everyday, Ass. Prof. Dr. Asli Zengin (New Jersey, USA)

Chair: Dr. Reza Bayat, J-Prof. Dr. Friederike Faust (Göttingen)

10:45 am | coffee break

11 am | Panel 5: ENGL. Frictions of “Europeanness”: Contested Bodies and the Embodiment of Belonging in the East-West encounters (engl.)

Chair: Dr. Alina Jašina-Schäfer (Mainz)

- Embodying “Europeanness”: Beauty Practices and the Negotiation of Belonging., Dafina Gashi M.A. (Mainz)
- Sex, Work, and the Body: Negotiating "Eastern Europeanness" in Berlin, Dr. Ursula Probst (Berlin)
- Queer Literature in Poland: The Appeal of the West or Acute Nostalgia for the Socialist Past, Dr. Daria Khrushcheva (Bochum)
- Comment by Prof. Dr. Čarna Brković (Mainz)

11 am | Panel 6: Re-/Productive Frictions: Umkämpfte Politiken der Reproduktion

Chair: Dr. Miriam Gutekunst (München)

- Der parlamentarische Diskurs um ein Verbot der „Gehsteigbelästigung“, Lisa Brünig M.A. (Göttingen)
- Intersektionale Allianzen der Reproduktion gegen Antifeminismus und Antigenderismus, Susanne Weise M.A. (Witzenhausen)
- Fifty Shades of Hebammenmangel: Konturen mehrdimensionaler Problematisierungen, Marie Fröhlich M.A. (Göttingen)
- Reproduktive Gerechtigkeit und Soziale Arbeit – Spannungen und Anknüpfungspunkte, Jana Uhmeier M.A. (Göttingen)

1 pm | lunch break

1:30 pm | decolonial walk through the city of Göttingen (germ.)

2:30 pm | Roundtable: "Gleichstellungspolitik im akademischen Feld: Spannungen zwischen Wissenschaft und administrativer Praxis", Moderation: Prof. Dr. Viktoria Hegner (Jena)

3:30 pm | Panel 7: Follow the friction(s)? Reibungen historisch-kulturanthropologisch betrachtet

Chair: Leonie Müller M.A., J.-Prof. Dr. Simone Egger (Saarbrücken)

- Münchener Künstlerinnen um 1900: Herausforderungen, Spannungen und das Streben nach Selbstbestimmung, Elena Zandler M.A. (München)
- „Wenn ich jetzt sage, ich lass‘ mich scheiden, wer hätte denn da was davon?“ – biografische Narrationen über Krisen- und Trennungsphasen in heterosexuellen Partnerschaften (1945–1999), Alexandra Regiert M.A. (Regensburg)
- Before woke: Einige Beobachtungen zu kollektiven Produktionsprozessen bei der historischen Undergroundzeitung 'Ulcus Molle Info', Dr. Anja Schwanhäuser (Göttingen)
- Von Krisenfiguren, Krisenereignissen und Krisenräumen. Eine kulturanthropologische Spurensuche nach antagonistischen Konstellationen in der Vergnügungsgeschichte Hamburg St. Pauli nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg, Manuel Bolz M.A. (Göttingen)

3:30 pm | Panel 8: ENGL. Temporal Frictions and Nostalgic Intimacies

Chair: Prof. Dr. Silvy Chakkalakal (Zürich)

- Screening Feminist Pasts – Imagining Feminist Futures, Gina Dellagiacoma M.A. (Zürich)
- United in Nostalgia: An Elegy that Kills? Dr. Todd Sekuler (Zürich)
- Performing Memory – Queering Nostalgia? Lucia Dénes M.A. (Zürich)
- Architectures of Loss: Queer Memory and the Afterlives of New York's Piers, Dennis Ohm M.A. (Montreal)

7 pm | Film screening: Tarantism Revisited (2024, 105 min., ENGL.) & Q&A with the film maker
venue: Cinema Lumière, Geismar Landstrasse 19, 37083 Goettingen

Saturday (June 21, 2025)

9 am | Check In

9:30 am | Panel 9: ENGL. Frictions within social movements

Chair: Marie Fröhlich, M.A. (Göttingen)

- Moving Forward in Conflict? Cultures of Dispute in Feminist Movements, Dr. Miriam Gutekunst, Dr. Imke Schmincke (München)
- Queer activism as future practice: Productive frictions and transformative utopias in times of crisis, Sascha Sistenich M.A. (Bonn)
- Comradeship or Sorority? Gendered Frictions in Mexico City's Urban-Popular Movement (1975 - 1989), Prof. Dr. Anabel Yahuitl Garcia (Mexiko-City)
- The "hypothetical concert" and the infiltration of "gendered fights" into the ethnographic text, Dr. Reza Bayat (Göttingen)

9:30 am | Panel 10: Gesellschaftliche Verwerfungen entlang von Geschlecht und Sexualität

Chair: Prof. Dr. Regina Bendix (Göttingen)

- „Nicht mein Pluralismus!" Zur Vermittlung antagonistischer Erfahrung, Dr. Martina Röthl (Kiel)
- One spot stains the whole dress? Pädophilie als Selbstbegrenzung genderqueerer Theorie. Oder: Ein Aufruf zur Reibung, Dr. des. Folke Brodersen (Kiel)
- Geschlechterkonflikte in Messenger-Diensten: „Wir befinden uns in einem Prozess, in dem (noch) nicht alles reibungsfrei verläuft“, Sarah Sandelbaum, M.A. (Frankfurt am Main)

11:30 am | coffee break

11:45 am

Roundtable: "Attacks on Academic Freedom" with Ass.-Prof. Dr. Asli Zengin, Ass.-Prof. Dr. Cory Thorne Gutiérrez and Prof. Dr. Beate Binder (ENGL.)

Moderation: Prof. Dr. Sabine Hess (Göttingen)

1 pm

Conference Gleanings with Dr. Stefanie Mallon (Göttingen), Dr. Alik Mazukatow (Lübeck), Dr. Corinna Schmechel (Göttingen) and Ass.-Prof. Dr. Marion Näser-Lather (Innsbruck)

2 pm | End

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