

Silence about race/reconfigurations of racism

Organised within the TOLERACE research project

The semantics of tolerance and (anti-racism) in Europe

While current debates about multiculturalism in Europe are often polyvocal, they also display shared features. One of them is the large consensus that racism can be dispensed with when trying to understand the current condition of Europe. It is this marginalisation of racism in public imaginaries and the related fundamental „silence about race“ in Europe (Lentin) which we wish to explore in this seminar.

This silence is understood here not only as the result of limitations placed upon the use of the terms race and racism, but as being produced through a variety of discursive practices which render the use of concepts of racism unnecessary, misplaced or difficult and which restrict both the applicability and the effectivity of these terms. The reasons why racism is difficult to name extend beyond the contested ontological status of ‚race‘. As both historical and contemporary studies have shown, the variety of discourses which today thematize the social, cultural or other deficits of groups who are potential victims of racism, de facto contribute to rationalize racism as something else. Discourses about integration and cohesion notably can exemplify this process in the current context. These discourses function in relation to a temporal framework which is directly deduced from the history of post-World War II immigration and from the outset disables post(colonial) perspectives thus further threatening the plausibility of concepts of racism.

Racial semantics are shifting, race is coded in multiple ways and the defense of racial privilege is today regularly argued so as to preempt accusations of racism. Many understandings of racism are destabilized by these factors. While more common-sensical notions (i.e. racism as belief, prejudiced attitudes) are not negatively affected, the possibility to address racism as particular kinds of power formations has become complicated.

This seminar centers around the question how ‚race‘ relates to the operations of social power in particular contexts and what the critical purchase and effectivity of analytical concepts of racism can be. It provides a forum for debates which will combine conceptual reflections with case studies exploring the diverse conjunctures of talking about racism in European countries.

Sunday at 19:30 : Dinner at the Oderturm Restaurant

Monday, January 7

09:30 – 11:30

Silvia Rodriguez Maeso (Coimbra): “Evidence-based' policies and the depoliticisation of (anti-) racism in Europe“

Alana Lentin (Sydney): “Race and the Crises of Multiculturalism”

Coffee break

11:45 – 12:45

Werner Schiffauer (Frankfurt-Oder): “Governmental Racism and Islam in Germany”

Lunch at 13:00

14:30 - 16:30

Samia Bano (Reading): “Racism and the Law”

Encarnacion Gutierrez-Rodriguez (Manchester) : “Intersectionality and Racism”

Coffee break

17:00 – 18:00

Ina Kerner (Berlin) : “Racism, Antiracism and the Role of ‚Race‘: Theoretical Reflections”

Dinner at 19:00 (Restaurant Odra)

Tuesday, January 8

09:00 – 11:00

Marta Araujo (Coimbra): “From segregation to integration? The failure of contemporary academic and political framings to tackle racism in Europe”

Marie-France Malonga (Paris): “Media and racism : the case of visible minorities on French TV”

Coffee break

11:30 – 13:30

David Tyrer (Liverpool) “Islamophobia as Control Racism”

Elena Arigita (Granada) “Introducing Islamophobia into Spanish institutional agendas”

Lunch at 13:30

14:30 - 16:30

Vassilis Tsianos (Hamburg) “Postliberal Racism: Reversible Citizenship and Urban Panics in Postnational Societies”

Frank Peter (Bern) “Anti-racism and the concept of Islamophobia: Debates in France”

Information & registration: please contact Christoph Burmeister (christoph-timo.berlin@web.de)