

Openness, Tolerance and Sense of Community

Narratives and Realities of Contemporary Societies

Spring School, 28.3-1.4.2022

Agenda

There are many competing diagnoses and characterisations of contemporary societies: as capitalist, open, postmodern, transnational or polarised and divided. The Spring School aims to question such simplistic diagnoses and to analyse which, partly competing, partly complementary, ideas and hypotheses are hidden behind these labels. We want to understand which positionings and power relations are expressed in the various characterisations of contemporary societies and, based on this, question what is supposed to hold contemporary societies together - and whether it needs to be held together at all. In three panels we aim to investigate specifically how the humanistic ideals of public spirit and community, openness, and tolerance shape and are being shaped, striven for, as well as negotiated and contested by contemporary society. A special feature of this Spring School is the performative societal laboratory, where we aim to generate a different, embodied and performative type of knowledge about the themes discussed before in more traditional academic settings.



Organization

The interdisciplinary Spring School on Openness, Tolerance and Sense of Community invites applications from current and prospective PhD-students, who research interests or general motivation have some overlap to the conference theme. It offers the opportunity to discuss recent advances in related research areas with highly regarded scholars in and invites students to present their related research agenda or outputs in three different and topically structured panels. Also we invite all participants to participate in an artistic performance with the aim to facilitate and foster reflection through collective action.



**SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN
TRANSNATIONAL SOCIETIES**

**COSMOPOLITANISM AND THE
POST-DEVELOPMENTAL
CRITIQUE OF OPEN SOCIETIES**

**POLITICS OF IDENTITY AND
CULTURES OF
(IN-)TOLERANCE**

IN ACTU. A PERFORMATIVE-PARTICIPATORY LABORATORY

SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN TRANSNATIONAL SOCIETIES

Much like globalization and other supranational frameworks, the terms transnationality, transnationalisation, and transnationalism have served as descriptors to refer to a perceived increase in the flow of people, ideas, and goods across national borders in contemporary societies (especially involving non-governmental actors, "transnationality" and "transnationalisation"), but also as a scholarly lens or methodology to investigate such phenomena in both past and present contexts ("transnationalism"). Although the terms themselves continue to evoke and thus perpetuate the concept of the nation, transnational processes have also often been seen as detrimental to a (place-based) sense of identity and community. What are the contexts of these diametrically opposed conceptualizations of the relationship between transnationalism and community formation? What kinds of transnationalism are thought of as fostering or disrupting communities and what kinds of communities are thought of as supporting or rejecting transnationalism? What roles do physical cohabitation and media play in the development of a sense of community, of transnational processes, and transnational communities? And how have transnational communities themselves been mediatised? Finally, how have different disciplines integrated transnational perspectives?

Filippo Carlà-Uhink

University of Potsdam
Ancient History

Florian Freitag

University Duisburg-Essen
American Studies

Philipp Jugert

University Duisburg-Essen
Intercultural Psychology

Elisabeth Sommerlad

University of Mainz
Human Geography

COSMOPOLITANISM AND THE POST-DEVELOPMENTAL CRITIQUE OF OPEN SOCIETIES

The 'open society' is a philosophical concept emphasizing the importance of individual critical thinking and the freedom to do so, while being able to embrace social change and progress. Ideals of pluralism, liberalism and humanitarianism are considered essential facets of the open society and it is often conceived as constructive, rational or tolerant. Is this description accurate and can these ideals truly be transposed as archetypes for societal organization across the globe? Post-developmental theory, for instance, offers a more comprehensive critique of the normative and political premises underlying the concept of the open society. This criticism inspires further question on the viability of the idea of an open society in the 21st century: Should such criticism be justified empirically or conceptually? Are there aspects of the open society that consistently withstands this criticism? What are suitable alternatives to replace or complement key insights associated with open societies, like, for instance, the postulate to substitute argument for violence?

Carolina Alves

University of Cambridge
Economics

Karin Fischer

University of Linz
Sociology

Jakob Kapeller

University Duisburg-Essen
Socio-Economics

Paul Marx

University Duisburg-Essen
Political Science

POLITICS OF IDENTITY AND CULTURES OF (IN-)TOLERANCE

Historically, the practice of identity politics has emerged as an integral component of the social and political movements of the second half of the 20th century, among them the feminist, Black Civil Rights, LGBTQ, and indigenous liberation movement. Fighting against intolerance and injustice, oppression and discrimination, activists joined forces to claim recognition of their rights and senses of group and self-identity. The term and idea of identity politics made its first appearance in the field of cultural politics in the 1980s and 1990s, thereafter it gained increasing interest in the political and social sciences. In present society, the politics of identity has turned into a highly contested terrain. The psychologist Steven Pinker has condemned identity politics as an "enemy of reason and Enlightenment values". The philosopher Danny Frederick has expressed concerns that it fosters intolerance and irrationalism and thus poses a risk to open societies and their liberalism. Where (and by whom and why) is identity politics brought into social discourse and cultural practice as an accusation, where as an emancipatory project? When and where is identity politics becoming illiberal and authoritarian? On what programmatic and value basis can it contribute to liberalism and democracy? What constructions of identity underlie different understandings of identity politics?

Helen Baykara-Krumme

University Duisburg-Essen
Sociology

Sven Lütticken

Vrije Universiteit
Amsterdam
Art History

Birgit Mersmann

University Duisburg-Essen
Modern and
Contemporary Art History

IN ACTU. A PERFORMATIVE-PARTICIPATORY LABORATORY

Narratives/realities of contemporary societies are, inter alia, constructed and (re-)produced by performances. Seen through the lens of Performance Studies, performances can be described as 'doings', as (inter-)actions and behaviors that are learned, rehearsed, presented, revised, then presented time and again. Consequently, performances have the capacity to stabilize and equally destabilize and transform narratives/realities. In performances, narratives/realities of contemporary societies gain a certain materiality, that is, corporeality, spatiality and "tonality" (Fischer-Lichte). In three performative and participatory labs, we, hence, want to explore narratives/realities of contemporary societies in terms of their corporal, spatial and tonal realms.

In **LAB 1** we will look at corporal practices of everyday life as well as physical performances that are intended for reception by the public. We will, thus, set out to jointly work on a miniature 'performative glossary' (choreography) of physical performances that (re-)produce narratives/realities of contemporary societies.

In **LAB 2** we want to examine a small section of a contemporary narrative, that is, the "european constitution in verse" by Van Reybrouck and Vermeersch, a critical, poetic reformulation of a treaty intended to unite. We will set out to explore ways of finding plural, heterophonous (potentially dissonant) voices in the act of choral speaking (speaking in unison).

Participants in **LAB 3** are invited to reflect upon, conceptualize and draft (a model for) an area/surface to be installed or staged in public space for the public to shape it, to add visual qualities, to express certain narratives/realities of their lifeworld.

Each group will present the current status of their findings on the last day of the spring school.

Markus Kubesch
University of Duisburg-
Essen
Theatre Research

Thilo Ullrich
*Stage and Costume
Designer*

Dominic Zerhoch
Johannes Gutenberg
University Mainz
Theatre Research

Keynote Lectures

Ludger Pries (Sociology: University of Bochum)

Sense of community despite or because of transnationalisation?

Carolina Alves (Economics: University of Cambridge)

Economic science and development policy as colonial practices

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Arrival	Keynote	Keynote	Keynote	Laboratory
Opening	Panel	Panel	Panel	
Panel	Panel	Panel	Panel	
Panel	Panel	Panel	Panel	
Laboratory	Laboratory	Laboratory	Laboratory	Departure

Costs

400 € including tuition, accommodation and meals

Venue

The University of Duisburg-Essen is one of the largest universities in Germany offering a broad academic spectrum. Duisburg is located at the heart of the Ruhr industrial area and at the intersections of the Rhine and Ruhr rivers.

The Spring School will take place in the Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord <https://www.landschaftspark.de>

Accessibility

Please find more information about accessibility here

<https://www.landschaftspark.de/en/visitor-information/accessibility/>

If you have any questions or need assistance please contact us by email.

Child Care

If you need childcare for your children during the Spring School, please contact us by email. We have organised day care for your children.

Website with further information

https://www.uni-due.de/de/mercator-graduiertenkolleg-weltoffenheit/spring_school_en.php

Contact

Anja Gampe / Georg Hubmann
springschool22@uni-due.de



wikipedia.org



PARTICIPATE

We invite doctoral students of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities to participate in the Spring School. We assume your willingness to present part of your work. A selected presentation will be scheduled to take 25 minutes (10 minutes presentation + 15 minutes discussion). Please submit a brief CV (max. 1 page), an abstract on your doctoral research (max. 500 words), a motivation for your application (max. 250 words), an indication of preference of panel workshops (please indicate your priorities) and an indication of choice for the performative-participatory laboratory. **The deadline for submissions is 10 January 2022.** Notifications will be sent out by the end of January. Please apply at [udue.de/dCXOW](https://www.uni-due.de/dCXOW)

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