



International Workshop „The Making of Sexuality“

Sexual Nationalisms Old and New in the Age of Terror

Keynote Lecture with Eric Fassin (Paris)

Thursday, June 15 2017, 18:15–19:45

Rämistrasse 71, 8001 Zurich, Room G 217

While the conservative rhetoric of the “clash of civilizations” has prevailed since the end of the Cold War, at the turn of the new millennium, it became a “sexual” clash. From “femonationalism” to “homonationalism”, from the United States after September 11, 2001 to Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilder’s Netherlands or Nicolas Sarkozy and Manuel Valls’ France, gender and sexuality have drawn boundaries between “us” and “them” – between “sexual democracy” and its (presumed) enemies. This has replaced old nationalisms with new, modern ones that are ostensibly favorable to equality between the sexes and gay rights (and allegedly hostile to anti-Semitism). What happens in the 2010s with the return of sexual traditionalists (for example in France against “Marriage for all”, or in the U.S. in the age of Donald Trump)? The surge of terror can be understood as an effort to maintain or restore a simple, binary geopolitical opposition threatened by complexity and ambiguity: sexual terrorism (from Cologne to Orlando) aims at eliminating the sexual “grey zone”.

Éric Fassin is a professor of sociology at Paris-8 University (Vincennes – Saint-Denis), in the department of Political science and the department of Gender Studies that he co-chairs, affiliated with the Laboratoire d’études de genre et de sexualité (CNRS). His work focuses on sexual and racial politics, as well the politics of national identity and immigration. His books include *Le sexe politique* (2009), *Homme, femme: quelle différence?* (2011), a new edition of *Michel Foucault’s Herculine Barbin* (2014). Last publication: *Populisme: le grand ressentiment* (Textuel, 2017). Forthcoming: *Le genre français* (La Découverte).