Your body is a battleground – ultra-conservative strategies to restore a “natural order”

September 18 – 19, 2021

Two-day forum at Frankfurter Kunstverein

Currently, human rights and especially women’s rights are under massive threat, with ultra-conservative networks contributing significantly to this. Their international networking, their financing and their goals - making these structures visible is an important concern for us. The Frankfurter Kunstverein has invited the research centre Normative Orders of the Goethe University Frankfurt to discuss these topics together with journalists, scientists and activists to make them accessible to a broad public.
Franziska Nori, Director Frankfurter Kunstverein

Just fifty years after the women’s movement, we are now seeing achievements we took for granted come under enormous attack. Around the world, political actors are on the rise who want to restore a supposedly “natural order”. Women and LGBTQI+ are acutely threatened by this. Among other things, the right to bodily self-determination / decide about your own body, the right to protection from domestic violence, access to safe abortions, and to modern reproductive technologies are being softened/weakened or abolished. There is also a lack of gender equality in the labor market, in politics and in culture, and in many places the representation of women is declining again.

Responsible for this global backlash are ultra-conservatives and right-wing extremists from all over the world: academics, religious groups, activists, aristocrats and oligarchs. They join together in transnational, cross-border, alliances. Politics concerning women and family also have a more general purpose: ultraconservatives expand their networks and their power worldwide along these themes. By changing terminology, language, images, and communicative and operational strategies, they succeed in presenting fundamentalist positions as normal and thus anchoring them in the mainstream. This shift of public debate to the right has serious implications for democratic, pluralistic societies and everyday coexistence. Values long thought to be outdated have been insidiously made acceptable again.
Journalists, activists and researchers from all over the world have been observing these ultra-conservative strategies and practices for years. Their findings and experiences will be made visible and debated for a broader public during the two-day forum *Your body is a battleground*. All interested people are welcome to attend free of charge and without pre-registration, on site or online. The event is funded by the Department of Culture and Science and the Department of Environment and Women of the City of Frankfurt.

**Curator:** Asia Leofreddi

**Program**
**Saturday, 18.09.2021**

11 am
**Opening speech:**
Dr. Ina Hartwig (Head of the Department for Culture and Science of the City of Frankfurt am Main)
Rosemarie Heilig (Head of the Department for Environment and Women of the City of Frankfurt am Main)
Prof. Franziska Nori (Director Frankfurter Kunstverein)

11.45 am
**Keynote:**
*Ultra-conservative strategies to restore a 'natural order': the 'Agenda Europe' networks*

In Conversation with: **Asia Leofreddi** (Curator of the Forum, journalist, sociologist and PhD student of the program Human Rights, Society and Multi-level Governance at the University of Padua)

1 - 1.45 pm Lunch break
1:45 pm

**What is radical conservatism and why is it so dangerous? The normative orders of radical conservatism**

*Prof. Dr. Thomas Biebricher* (Political Scientist, Copenhagen Business School, Normative Orders, Goethe University Frankfurt, author of *Geistig-moralische Wende: Die Erschöpfung des deutschen Konservatismus*, Berlin 2018)


*Prof. Dr. Sarah Speck* (Sociologist with a focus on women’s and gender studies, Goethe University Frankfurt)

Moderation: *Rebecca Schmidt* (Normative Orders, Goethe University Frankfurt)

3:15 pm

**The instrumentalization and undermining of human rights by ultra-conservative movements**

*Prof. Dr. Kristina Stoeckl* (Sociologist, Research Director ERC PostSEcularConflicts, University of Innsbruck)

*Prof. Dr. Susanna Mancini* (Lawyer, University of Bologna. In her work she deals with issues of law and religion, reproductive rights, the partnership of feminism and multiculturalism)

*Prof. Dr. Paul Blokker* (Sociologist, Associate Professor with research focus on populism and law in Central and Eastern Europe, University of Bologna)

Moderation: *Dr. Gesine Dornblueth* (Journalist)

4.30 - 4.45 pm Coffee break

4.45 pm

**Lecture by Prof. Dr. Nancy Fraser** (Livestream)

*Nancy Fraser* is Henry A. and Louise Loeb Professor at the New School for Social Research and a member of the editorial board of the *New Left Review*. A philosopher by training, she specializes in critical social theory and political philosophy. Her most recent books are *Cannibal Capitalism* (forthcoming from Verso in 2022) and *Feminism for the 99%: A Manifesto*, co-authored with Cinzia Arruzza and Tithi Bhattacharya (Verso, translated into 24 other languages in 2019).

Introduction by *Prof. Dr. Rainer Forst* (Political Philosopher, Normative Orders, Goethe University Frankfurt)
Sunday, 19.09.2021

11 am
The worldwide networks of ultraconservative movements
Dr. Massimo Prearo (Research Associate, Research Center Politics and Theory of Sexuality, University of Verona)
Dr. Katharina Hajek (Research Associate, Faculty of Cultural Studies, University of Koblenz-Landau)
Prof. Dr. Elżbieta Korolczuk (Associate Professor of Sociology at Södertörn University Stockholm and at the Center for American Studies, University of Warsaw. Her recent publications include the volume she co-edited, Women’s Rebellion. Black Protests and Women’s Strikes, 2019)
Moderated by Annalisa Camilli (Journalist, Internazionale)

12:30 pm
Causes and challenges of the crisis: what is the role of progressive / liberal movements?
Eszter Kováts (PhD candidate in political science at ELTE University of Budapest. From 2012 to 2019, she was responsible for the Foundation’s gender program for East Central Europe at the Hungarian office of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES))
Prof. Dr. Sara Farris (Associate Professor, sociologist and author, Goldsmith University of London. She is author of In the Name of Women’s Rights. The Rise of Femonationalism, 2017 and has published widely on gender, migration, theories of social reproduction)
Judith Goetz (Literary and political scientist, University of Vienna. She is a member of the research group Ideologies and Politics of Inequality and the research network Women and Right-Wing Extremism)
Prof. Dr. Ilse Lenz (Professor emer. of Sociology with a focus on gender and social structure research at the Ruhr-University-Bochum)
Moderation: Asia Leofreddi (Curator of the Forum, journalist, sociologist and PhD student of the program Human Rights, Society and Multi-level Governance at the University of Padua)

2:30 pm Estimated end