

30254 Colloquium Sociology and Gender Studies

January 23, 2023 | 4 – 6 pm | Altensteinstr. 48 | seminar room

INVITATION

We are pleased to invite you to the talk by

Dr. Laura Eigenmann

“This is a Union of Values”:
The Rise of the LGBTI Rights Norm as part of
the EU’s Identity Construction”

All guests are cordially invited to drinks and snacks afterwards.

Hosted by Prof. Kathrin Zippel, Ph.D. Einstein Professor

Abstract

Since the early 1990s, the EU has increasingly institutionalized LGBTI rights and, more recently, started to use them as a symbol for its self-proclaimed liberal and progressive identity. Therefore, LGBTI rights seem to have reached a “tipping point” as a norm for the EU in the past few years. However, while LGBTI rights are, in certain areas, used to demonstrate modernity, exceptionalism and, therefore, the superiority of the EU in relation to its “others”, the internal debate shows a less consistent picture: Several policy pieces concerning member states or EU institutions were adopted surprisingly late or are still blocked, and in the European Parliament, anti-LGBTI and anti-gender rhetoric are on the rise again.

This presentation sheds light on this development, combining a genealogical analysis with the analysis of current discursive struggles around LGBTI rights within and across EU institutions. It argues that the rise of LGBTI rights has been closely intertwined with the search for a common European identity, shared values, and attempts to strengthen solidarity in time – which has become even more salient today, as right-wing, nationalist, and Euro-sceptic movements increasingly challenge the EU’s legitimacy.

Dr. Laura Eigenmann is a postdoctoral researcher at Freie Universität Berlin, Institute of Sociology, in the Research Unit Gender Studies led by Einstein Professor Kathrin Zippel, Ph.D. Dr Eigenmann holds a Ph.D. in Gender Studies from the University of Basel, Switzerland. Before joining FU, she was a lecturer and coordinator for the Gender Studies program in Basel and was a visiting researcher at King’s College London, the School for Advanced Legal Studies in London, and at Temple University in Philadelphia. Her research interests include critical policy analysis, national and EU identity discourses, LGBTI activism, homonationalism, and queer history. In her PhD project, she investigated the EU’s LGBTI policy development, asking why and how LGBTI rights came to be seen as a “core value” of the EU and a symbol for its self-proclaimed liberal and progressive identity.



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Eigenmann, L. (2022) “‘This Is a Union of Values’: The Rise of the LGBTI Rights Norm as Part of the EU’s Identity Construction”, *Social Politics*, 29(1), pp. 95–117.

Eigenmann, L. (2021) “‘United in diversity’: resonances of the ‘global gay’ in EU identity discourses”, in Zhou, R. Y., Sinding, C., and Goellnicht, D. (eds.) *Sexualities, Transnationalism and Globalization. New Perspectives*. New York, London: Routledge, pp. 123–136.

Eigenmann, L. (2016) “Zur Kritik der Homonationalismus-Kritik”, in Leicht, I., Löw, C., Meisterhans, N., and Volk, K. (eds.) *Feministische Kritiken und Menschenrechte. Reflexionen auf ein produktives Spannungsverhältnis*. Opladen: Barbara Budrich (Politik und Geschlecht), pp. 75–94.