

# *Post-Secular Society as a Transatlantic Model?*

## Migration, Religion and Class in Comparative Perspective

University of Toronto in Berlin and Berlin Graduate School of Social Sciences

with

ZEIT-Bucerius-Stiftung \* \* Heinrich Böll-Stiftung

June 24 – 25, 2010

In Europe over the past years and especially after 9/11, the notion of multiculturalism has turned into a societal model of dubious reputation. What is being ignored, however, is the fact that it is by no means a unitary model; indeed, the multicultural policies in the Netherlands or Denmark are quite distinct from those of Germany, the UK or elsewhere in Western Europe. In Canada, moreover, where the idea first originated, multiculturalism is a constitutive element of the state and its societies in Quebec and Anglophone Canada. Indeed, against its critics and detractors, Canada has been pointed to as a successful model to be emulated.

Partly as an outcome of these debates, it has been argued that Canada (and the US) are models of religious and ethno-communal pluralism within the framework of a “post-secular society” (Habermas). These societies are bringing about newly intensified plural religious adherences--a phenomenon which in Europe, more slowly, is gaining ground as well. European societies, after all, did not define themselves as countries of immigration and have had far greater difficulty accommodating its immigrants.

In the conference we want to go a step further and ask whether the notion of (ethno-) religious pluralism and as a consequence, a post secular society, sufficiently explains what is going on in our societies and especially our urban environments today. Just looking at religion per se, especially in ghettoized neighbourhoods in Cologne and Berlin and their Islamic communities may obscure the fact that we see not only how new diasporic religious communities have been evolving, but also, and possibly to a greater extent, that lower class immigrant milieus have evolved where migrants of different backgrounds inter-mingle, in part even with lower/lower middle class non-migrant German populations. We would need to speak here of “post-secular secularising milieus.” We mean by that milieus where ethno-religious backgrounds retreat into the background, in favour of a common de-ethnicised sphere accessible to the various immigrants. The question is therefore whether, when we speak of a post-secular, religiously pluralist society, we ignore the new cultural functions of social inequality in our societies.

We have called this conference not in the least because we wanted to bring together some outstanding scholars from abroad who are at present in Germany and who are working broadly in this field with colleagues from Berlin. We expect this to be the starting point for a sustained conversation in the next few years.

**June 24**

**Location: University of Toronto in Berlin, Markgrafenstr. 37, 10117 Berlin**

16:00 – 16:30 Registration and Coffee

16:30 – 16:45 Welcome and Opening Remarks

16:45 – 18:45

**Panel 1: *Politics Through Culture***

Chair: Y. Michal Bodemann (University of Toronto in Berlin)

Kira Kosnick (Goethe-University Frankfurt): *'To Whom Honour is Due': Mediated Crime-Scenes and Minority Stigmatization in a Transnational Context*

Onur Suzan Kömürcü (University of London): *Negotiating Cultural Diversity in the Arts: The Ballhaus Naunynstrasse in Berlin in the Context of German Cultural Policies*

Riem Spielhaus (Copenhagen University) *Media Making Muslims: The Construction of a Muslim Community in Germany through Media Debate*

Discussant: Erol Boran (University of Toronto)

18:45 – 19:00 **Coffee Break**

19:00 – 20:00 **Keynote Address:**

Floya Anthias (Roehampton University): *Mobilities, Work and Social Bonds: Configurations of Gender, Ethnicity and Class in a Transnational World*

20:00 - **Reception**

**June 25**

**Location: Heinrich Böll-Stiftung, Schumannstr. 8, 10117 Berlin**

10:00 – 12:30

**Panel 2: *Post-Race, Post-Secularism and Class***

Chair: Gero Lenhardt (Max Planck Institute emeritus)

Alana Lentin (University of Sussex): *Post-Race, Post Politics: The Paradoxical Rise of Culture After Multiculturalism*

Lena Inowlocki (University of Applied Sciences Frankfurt) *Turning to Religion as Corrective Action: Case Studies of Migration, Gender, Family History, and Biography*

Holger Kolb (Sachverständigenrat Migration und Integration) *The Economy of Migration in Europe* \*

Hilary Silver (Brown University) *The Meaning of Integration for Immigrants to East and West Berlin*

Discussant: Ina Kerner (Humboldt University)

**12:30– 13:30 Lunch Break**

13:30 – 15:30

**Panel 3: *Migrants' Participation in Society and Politics***

Chair: Gökce Yurdakul (BGSS, Humboldt University)

Naime Cakir (Kompetenzzentrum Muslimischer Frauen) *A Practitioner's Perspective on the Work of Migrant Organizations and their Influence*

Naika Foroutan (Humboldt University) *Growing Participation and Selective Perceptions of Muslim Migrants in Germany*

Ronit Lentin (Trinity College Dublin): *Integration from below? Migrant-led Activism, Participation and the Irish Immigration Regime*

Discussant: Silvia von Steinsdorff (Humboldt University)

**15:30 End of Conference**

If you would like to register for this event,  
or have any questions regarding the programme or conference locations,  
please contact [Tim.Kremser@utoronto-berlin.org](mailto:Tim.Kremser@utoronto-berlin.org)