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Editorial

Gendered Fortress Europe

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In this special issue of Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies we examine the gendered implications of 'Fortress Europe', a metaphor for the closing of Europe's borders in the context of European unification. The consequences of 'Fortress Europe' are not limited to those outside its borders who wish to enter Europe. Rather, the EU's migration regime encompasses multiple forms of differential treatment, which produces and affects particular racialised and gendered subjects inside Europe's boundaries. In 1985 and 1990, the European Union (EU) adopted two agreements in which it combined a reduction in internal frontiers with increased border control. Perhaps contrary to the public association with 'Schengen', the 1990 Agreement included only four Articles on freedom of movement; the other 138 articles of the Schengen document dealt with the control of external borders, the harmonisation of asylum law, exchange of information, and increased police cooperation (Stern 2010). While the terms 'harmonisation', 'exchange' and 'cooperation' have a pleasant ring to them, in this context they function to mask the political charge of these developments, such as integrated systems of surveillance, intensified information exchange, for example through a finger print database, and exchange of 'best' practices for border control.

It is therefore not that surprising that we stumbled upon our own Call for Articles on Gendered Fortress Europe on the German language website Netzpolitik.org, which is a platform for digital civil rights. The post highlighted the section of the Call about the relation between (digital) control mechanisms and the stigmatisation of particular bodies as in need of protection, as criminal or as deviant along gendered and racialised lines. Strikingly, some of the blog's readers, characterised by another commentator in the ensuing fierce discussion as 'Techno-Macho-Trolls', threatened to unsubscribe now gender had entered *even* this website. When some came

to defend the posting of the Call, one blog reader responded agitatedly: 'Fortress Europe is a male privilege? Are there no women living there?'

Revisiting Gendered Fortress Europe

Of course, women do live inside 'Fortress Europe' and as early as the 1990s, feminist scholars Mirjana Morokvasic (1991), Helma Lutz (1997), and Eleonore Kofman and Rosemary Sales (1992) documented the implications of Fortress Europe for the lives of women. In their respective articles 'Fortress Europe and Migrant Women', 'The Limits of European-Ness: immigrant women in Fortress Europe' and 'Towards Fortress Europe?', they called attention to the ways in which European configurations played out for migrant women in relation to regulations, legal status, the labour market, access to welfare, cultural practices, and representation. In her 1997 article Lutz writes that the feminisation of migration has finally been recognised, and is increasingly being documented. This is on the one hand due to a real growth in the 'female labour market', and on the other hand an effect of researchers' lenses focusing on undocumented migrants and revealing that women can have autonomous motivations for migration not restricted to family reunification (Lutz 1997).

The Europe(an Union) of today, which has recently faced both a legitimacy and a financial crisis, is not the same as it was in the 1990s. Since the publication of the aforementioned articles EU legislation, policies and strategies have developed, moving on from the 1991 Maastricht Treaty to, for example, the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. New EU agencies have entered the scene, such as border management agency FRONTEX (Stern 2010). The last two decades also saw EU expansion: Croatia entered in 2013 as the 28th Member State and Europe's frontiers have shifted to include the new accession countries. Formalised relations with countries bordering the EU have been extended in the form of so-called Mobility Partnerships (MP) to mutually 'manage' migration, with Tunisia and the EU establishing the latest MP in 2014, adding to earlier agreements with Moldova (2008), Cape Verde (2008), Georgia (2009), Armenia (2011), Morocco (2013) and Azerbaijan (2013).

With these new developments in mind, this special issue revisits the gendered implications of 'Fortress Europe' and the twin effects of inclusion/exclusion, privilege/marginalisation and unification/differentiation. It attempts to combine this attention to more recent developments with recognition of the important historical continuities that can be identified in European border drawing. For example, its links to the colonial era,

which 'sustain the political fortification of Europe as a hegemonic white space' (Linke 2010, p. 103; cf. Ponzanesi and Blaagaard, 2011). These (dis)continuities become, for example, visible in Philomena Essed's distinction between Eurocentrism and, what she calls, 'Europism', a phenomenon that she finds expressed in 'Fortress Europe's' bureaucracy and ideology (Essed, 1996, p. 137). She contrasts the 'extroverted mode of European assertion' of Eurocentrism rooted in colonialism and the civilising mission with the introverted development of Europism (Essed, 1996, p. 138). According to Essed, instead of Europe's outward movement of expansion across borders during colonialism, Europe is now looking inward. Its relation to 'Others' has shifted from absorbing them under colonial rule to increasingly closing off its borders in order to keep 'Others' out (Essed, 1996).

Beyond Borders as Walls

The imagery of a fortress with high outside walls to keep people out, while rhetorically effective, might not be the most appropriate metaphor to capture the new stratifications that have emerged (cf. Buckel and Wissel, 2010). The figure of a fortress might also mask the fact that the continued crossing of migrants is testimony to the 'porosity and failure of [the] self-proclaimed omnipotent "fortress"' (Tsianos and Karakayali, 2010). Etienne Balibar's much quoted work in this context, 'Europe as Borderland' (2009), can help to complicate the idea of boundaries and frontiers beyond guarded outside borders. It therefore deserves some attention here despite his failure to engage with the 'genderedness' of borders. As he claimed in an earlier speech on 'At the Borders of Europe' (2004), 'we must privilege the issue of the border when discussing the questions of the European people and of the state in Europe because it crystallizes the stakes of politico-economic power and the symbolic stakes at work in the collective imagination'.

Balibar distinguishes between four different representations of European borders linked to four imaginary patterns of 'political spaces' (2009, p. 201). First, the dominant 'clash-of civilizations pattern' (à la Samuel Huntington), second, the 'global network pattern' (à la Manuel Castells and Saskia Sassen), third, the 'center-periphery pattern' (à la Immanuel Wallerstein), and fourthly the 'crossover pattern' or 'Europe as borderland' (2009, p. 194 and p. 210). He suggests that each of these patterns of representation draw on different maps and imaginations of borders. In his words, every pattern involves 'a different way to understand what a "border" exactly means, how it works, and how it is reproduced' (Balibar, 2009, p. 201). The center-

periphery model, for example, is expressed by European politicians who present Europe as comprising of three concentric circles: the first circle (core) being the Euro currency countries, the second, the other European countries, and the third (the periphery) these countries that do not belong to 'Europe', but where associations must be established on economic and security grounds (Balibar, 2009, p.199). This representation of Europe's borders is based on presuppositions that relate to processes of inclusion/exclusion, privilege/marginalisation and unification/differentiation, such as that those countries from the periphery by virtue of being further removed from core 'Euroland', are to present 'problems' of unequal economic development and cultural heterogeneity. The discussion about Turkey's possible accession is a case in point (Balibar, 2009, p. 199).

Balibar's argument that borders have become 'dislocated' or even that they have become 'ubiquitous' can help to understand the way borders cut through Europe rather than being external to it (2009, p. 203). Borders or border controls are both *moved inside* European territory, for example in police operations against undocumented migrants, and *pushed out*, as expressed in the aforementioned Mobility Partnerships. These require non-European states to commit to 'improving' their border control and allow re-admission of migrants in exchange for financial (development) aid. Another way in which the presence of 'Fortress Europe's' dividing lines inside Europe become comprehensible is through Balibar's suggestion that institutional border drawing increasingly 'produces' the stranger rather than merely recording an a priori status. One result is that both the 'foreigner' and the 'national' become multiply split (2009, p. 204). This can be seen in the differentiation between so-called qualified and unqualified migrants or restrictions for EU migrants from new accession countries.

Drawing on Balibar's work, Sandra Ponzanesi and Bolette Blaagaard further illustrate in a recent special issue of Social Identities 'Postcolonial Europe' that the idea of borders needs to be complicated, even if one does not subscribe to the step-by-step developmental line they sketch or the juxtaposition of the physical and the material. They argue that 'borders are [...] moving from physical (the gate to European territories [...]) and symbolic (the myth of Europe and its idea of superiority) to material borders (the marked body of foreigners, immigrants and asylums [sic] seekers) which become "border" figuration (construction of otherness, foreignness, alienness)' (Ponzanesi and Blaagaard, 2011, p. 3).

Fortress Europe's Borders and Gender Boundaries

Whereas Etienne Balibar does not elaborate on the *relation* between borders and gender, others have identified gender as 'central to the boundary formation which characterises ethnic, national and state formation and transformation' (Anthias 2006, p. 22, cf. Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1993). Marianne Marchand (2009) refers to the 'clash-of-civilisation' paradigm, which Balibar also mentions, to explain how gender (norms) feature(s) as the point of demarcation in the construction of radical differences between communities. Or, in Anne-Marie Fortier's words, 'sex/gender systems act as barometers of cultural difference' (2011, p. 323). The notion of gender as a boundary marker has resonances with the ways in which Ponzanesi and Blaagaard (2011) describe how material borders, embodied in the marked bodies of immigrants, become *border figurations*. Thinking gender and European boundaries together allows us to see how gender also undercuts the tension in the earlier mentioned Europism, Europe's defensive and introvert attitude, which Essed and Trienekens for example locate in 'the perceived threat of super sexist men from "other cultures" taken as an invasion' (Essed and Trienekens, 2008, p. 55). Gender boundaries and European borders also combine in the anxiety around the protection of a 'white Europe', which is expressed in gendered terms in its focus on the dropping birth rates of 'white' women and the relatively high birth rates associated with the 'black female body' (Linke, 2010, p. 108). Or, as Morokvasic (2008) describes in her more recent work, the entanglement between gender and borders is articulated by the gendered expectations related to border crossings as women are traditionally being associated with immobility.

When taking these considerations on board, the *interplay* and *interconnectedness* between 'Fortress Europe's' borders and gender boundaries moves beyond what Helma Lutz (2010, p. 1649) has called the 'compensatory' and 'contributory' approaches in the early stages of women and migration research. These aimed at respectively making women visible in migration flows and studying their particular roles and experiences. Rather, such analyses, which we want to offer in this special issue, benefit from approaches that she associates with later stages in women and migration research. First, the introduction of intersectional approaches and, secondly, the shifting focus from women to gender, as something produced by and productive of the social order (Lutz, 2010). According to Lutz, in this most recent stage, masculinity studies – and we would add queer studies – have provided further useful insights for the exploration of migration, or in this context, of 'Fortress Europe's' borders. The understanding of gender as a so-

cially constructed relational category and the contributions of masculinity studies address some of the assumptions that are present in the Netzpolitik. org discussion (and beyond): that some theoretical fields would be immune to a gender critique and that gender studies is only about women. One of the commentators asked: 'But why should this be a "feminist" theme? At the end of the day it is not only women who stand at the borders and want to migrate!', while another wrote: 'Is it the male Africans, that drown in the Mediterranean sea, that are privileged in relation to the female ones?'. Indeed, the gendered implications of 'Fortress Europe' and the (other) differentiation and marginalisation effects animated by it, can as much be found in the detained 'young black men' in European border camps and police stations (Linke, 2010, p. 112), as in the heteronormative assumptions inscribed in family reunification laws, and in the pejorative term 'Euro-orphan' used in Polish media to describe the children of labour migrants (Lutz, 2010). Hence, this special issue aims to reinvigorate the debate around 'Fortress Europe' within Gender Studies, as well as beyond.

Readdressing the 'Gendered Fortress'

The responses on Netzpolitik.org by itself would not necessarily have merited further attention had they not fallen in line with common assumptions about Fortress Europe that the editors of this special issue aimed to question from the outset. They entail a number of often-heard misconceptions about gender studies and feminist research that the authors of the articles in this issue tackle in thoughtful and innovative ways.

To the assumption that a gendered perspective on Fortress Europe would entail only considering male Others negotiating the borders of the Fortress through a lens of male privilege, Anya Gass provides a compelling counterpoint. In her article 'Becoming the "Refugee": Creation of a Gendered Subjectivity Among Male Asylum Seekers in Switzerland" Gass argues that the subjectivity 'refugeeness' may be best understood as a negotiation with those elements of asylum policy that 'emasculate' men. Her extensive research engagement with four male asylum seekers shows how they have had to redefine what it means to be a man when aspects of hegemonic masculinity – such as the ability to work, study, and make independent decisions – are being withheld. Paying attention to the gendered aspects of Fortress Europe thus neither entails paying attention to women exclusively, nor necessarily thinking about its Others as empirically, institutionally, or symbolically female or feminised, but rather to take to task the gender

dynamics of the legal and administrative systems within which refugees must reshape their gendered subjectivity.

The question why Fortress Europe would be a feminist theme is addressed by Tine Brouckaert. Her article shows the enduring relevance of feminist intersectional perspectives on the multiple aspects of identity that shape the experiences of people attempting to gain entry to the Fortress while being inside Europe's borders. Brouckaert presents a critical reading of the regularisation criterion of 'sustainable local anchoring' by highlighting the importance of feminist local networks of solidarity. Her research on undocumented mothers simultaneously highlights the way in which not only gender, but also its intersections with citizenship status, religion, 'race', and class shape a complex latticework of material, social and symbolic boundaries around and within the Fortress. To suggest that the Fortress is gendered is thus not to resort to dogmatic dichotomisations, but rather to draw upon the long, complex and often painful dialogues that feminism has (literally) engendered. More concretely, Brouckaert demonstrates the continued relevance of feminist interventions in negotiations around care(work), the artificial separation between the public and private sphere, and the patriarchal bias in the definitions of citizenship, participation, and integration. From this perspective, Fortress Europe not only is, but also should be a feminist topic.

The article by Karin Borevi and Suruchi Thapar-Björkert further highlights the importance of recognising that Fortress Europe is not a 'gender-free zone', whether in law and policy, rhetoric or media representation. The maintenance of Fortress Europe is, as they show, dependent on re-creating gender divisions along the lines, in this case, of the traditional values of marriage and the family on the one hand, and the idea that non-western women have to be saved from oppression by non-western men on the other. Their comparative policy and discourse analysis of marriage migration legislation in the UK and Sweden starts from an investigation of the debate on multiculturalism in feminism. The argument that multiculturalism may be bad for women, as famously articulated by Susan Moller Okin (1999), is shown to have spurned a number of arguments that conveniently serve as gatekeepers for European family migration, despite the fact that it remains to be demonstrated whether policies that curtail the possibilities for family migration have a positive effect on gender emancipation either within or beyond the borders of Fortress Europe. Their article illustrates that while multiculturalism may not by itself or unconditionally be good for women, Eurocentric values of emancipation and equality – especially when they imply 'sameness' and present the (as of yet unfinished) European project of

gender emancipation as a touchstone – produces another set of boundaries along gender lines (and its intersections).

Rasa Navickaite's article adds to this series of feminist interventions in the debate on Fortress Europe by highlighting how not only the significant legal and political boundaries that define the outside borders of the Fortress define 'who's in and who's out'. Navickaite argues from a postcolonial, queer perspective that the discursive framework of East and West also presents boundaries between post-communist Europe and the 'Western' side of the Fortress. Navickaite's critique of the western progress narrative illustrates that attempts to decenter the 'western' discourse on sexual politics may inadvertently reaffirm the east-west divide it aims to deconstruct. Here, as in Borevi and Thapart-Björkert's article, feminist – and additionally postcolonial and queer – thought is itself confronted with its lingering tendencies to think of Europe – particularly western Europe – and its politics and culture as more advanced, something that the Others both outside of and within are expected to 'catch up with'. Similar to Brouckaert who considers gender together with citizenship status, 'race' and religion, Navickaite investigates the intersection between gender and sexuality and, like Gass, she insists on the inclusion of diverse gendered identities within this consideration. Together, the articles demonstrate new insights that masculinity studies (Gass) and queer studies (Navickaite) contribute to the analysis of 'Fortress Europe'.

The contributors to this special issue on Gendered Fortress Europe succeed to at once show the enduring contributions feminist perspectives offer in thinking about the politics and practices of inclusion and exclusion of Fortress Europe, whilst engaging critically with the question of whether particular feminist concepts and gender emancipation discourses may be in need of a reconsideration or reinvigoration. That they are participating in an on-going debate on gender in/and Europe is further illustrated by the two book reviews included in this issue that critically engage with recently published volumes on this topic. In fact, we received so many interesting and innovative submissions that the next issue of Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies will be entitled 'Crossing Gendered Boundaries', and will be dedicated entirely on further developing the discussions raised in this issue. Clearly, no matter what the 'Techno-Macho-Trolls' may think, Fortress Europe remains a fundamentally gendered construction that produces its in- and outsiders and defines their experiences in ways that gender-blind, universalist, or unsituated perspectives would struggle to grasp.

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