Lisbon international conference on

feminist epistemology

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE

28-29 Oct 2024

CIÊNCIAS ULISBOA & ISCTE-IUL

BOOK OF ABTRACTS

Lisbon Conference on Feminist Epistemology: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue

Lisbon, 28-29 October 2024
Ciência ULisboa & ISCTE-IUL

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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Lisbon Conference on Feminist Epistemology: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue

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Feminist epistemology as a specific field of research and theorising was developed in the 1980s by Anglo-Saxon feminist philosophers and scientists, mainly from the US academia (e.g., Sandra Harding, Evelyn Fox Keller, Helen Longino, Donna Haraway). These scholars took as a starting point the observation, supported by many case studies, of the unquestioned presence of sexist and androcentric biases in science (in particular in the social and life sciences). Today the field of "Feminist epistemologies" hosts a vast array of authors, disciplines, languages, and practices. The *Lisbon Conference on Feminist Epistemology: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* brings together scholars from several disciplinary areas, including but not limited to philosophy, gender studies, feminist studies, anthropology, international studies, social sciences, and political science, to debate the scope of "feminist epistemologies" through a comparative theoretical debate, and the analysis of several case studies and field work. Our goal is to promote interdisciplinary dialogue and the cross-fertilization of ideas, which will enrich our theoretical reflection and mobilise change within the academic community and provide tools for social engagement.

The programme consists of invited talks, round tables and contributed talks and will be organised around the following topics:

Gender and identity
Intersectionality
Objectivity and values in science
Epistemic justice
Political and social aspects of science
Case studies and research practices.

We hope that this conference will provide the opportunity to create networks across disciplines and countries and that will be the first meeting of many.

We wish you all a very good and enriching conference!

The Organizing Committee

Organizing Committee

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Invited speakers

Sabiha Allouche – University of Exeter

Esa Díaz-León – LOGOS, University of Barcelona

Adriana Piscitelli – UNICAMP – Núcleo de estudos de Género PAGU, Campinas

Miguel Vale de Almeida – Iscte-iul /CRIA

ABSTRACTS - KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Sabiha Allouche
University of Exeter

The things we do for Palestine: The Magic of Palestine and Feminist Critical Fabulation

Esa Díaz-León
LOGOS, University of Barcelona

Epistemic Injustice and Social Construction

Miranda Fricker (2007) famously characterized the notion of hermeneutical injustice as follows: "the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to persistent and wide-ranging hermeneutical marginalization" (2007: 154). On Fricker's view, the primary harm of hermeneutical injustice consists in the fact that individuals who undergo it are not able to render intelligible nor to communicate the experiences that are in their interest to communicate. Furthermore, sometimes hermeneutical injustice has the consequence that the available conceptual resources have the power to construct a distorted sense of identity or a self, which is harmful. She argues that this is constitutive construction of the self that falls short of causal construction. But in contemporary social ontology, it is customary to claim that constitutive social construction typically entails causal social construction. In this paper, I develop an alternative account of the social ontology of this harm.

Adriana Piscitelli
UNICAMP, Núcleo de estudos de Género PAGU, Campinas

Thinking from the South: Feminist epistemologies, anthropological knowledge and decolonial approaches

By the end of the 1980's, Marilyn Strathern, a relevant European anthropologist unpacked the tensions between feminist and modernist anthropological practices of knowledge. Dialoguing with Euro-American feminist lines of thought the author referred herself to feminist scholarship as polyphonic, sustained by diverse viewpoints but sharing the perspective of challenging the patriarchy. Yet, in the 2020's black, indigenous and trans epistemologies, positioning themselves as part of the decolonial turn, create new tensions between feminist and anthropological practices of knowledge. In this presentation I address these tensions from the point of view of a Latin American anthropologist and feminist working for a long time in Brazil.

Miguel Vale de Almeida
Iscte-iul /CRIA
Wrap-up

ABSTRACTS - CONTRIBUTED TALKS

Maria Amiridi-Wiedenmayer
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of History and Philosophy of Science

The Reappropriation of the Witch Myth: An Alternative Epistemology

In this presentation, I will focus on the practice of feminist witchcraft from the 1970s onwards, which emerged as a reaction to patriarchal science. The central arguments of feminist scholars regarding the role played by the Scientific Revolution in shaping a patriarchal science and the exclusion of femininity from science through the witch hunts will be also examined (Keller 1996; Merchant 1980). Before the Scientific Revolution, the witch hunts, and the institutionalization of science, medicine—that is, the care of the body—was the domain of female healers. However, due to the repression of female bodies and knowledge during the witch hunts and the "transition to capitalism," the care of the body became medical science, a male-dominated profession (Federici 2011, 114–31; Kwaschik 2023, 178). The witch hunts can be viewed as an "epistemicide," as they involved the extermination of female, alternative knowledge (Kwaschik 2023, 179). The characteristics of this knowledge, such as its connection to nature, lived experience, tenderness, and empathy, contrast sharply with the hegemonic androcentric knowledge and practices found in Western medicine (Kwaschik 2023, 180). Feminist movements, aiming to integrate femininity into knowledge production, reclaim the myth of the witch to highlight their own sociopolitical role and to develop a new feminist epistemology (Kwaschik 2023, 172–76). The aim of this presentation is to trace the foundations of gender biases in science and to explore the epistemological status of feminist witchcraft. Kwaschik connects feminist witchcraft with standpoint theory (Kwaschik 2023, 179). In this speech, I will present the reasons why I believe that the association between feminist witchcraft and standpoint theory is only partially correct and attempt to link witchcraft with another feminist epistemology: difference feminism (Keller 1983).

Claudia Arnaldo López
Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Oops, I did it again: how to deal with the tradwife phenomenon without incurring in epistemic injustices

In recent years, "tradwives" have emerged as a controversial figure in feminist debates on social media. This phenomenon, which celebrates a return to traditional gender roles, has been strongly criticised by many feminists that see it as a manifestation of internalised patriarchal values. However, this contribution will argue that feminist critiques of tradwives often engage in a form of epistemic injustice, as defined by Miranda Fricker (2007). Specifically, it will be noted how the debate around tradwives usually comes from a place of assumption, where it is surmised that they lack or cannot make use of their epistemic agency, believing their every thought or decision to be completely subsumed by patriarchal structures.

The analysis will focus on two key aspects: on the one hand, the dangers inherent to the lifestyle promoted by tradwives, which can perpetuate oppressive and limiting norms for women. On the other hand, the problem of approaching this phenomenon from a feminist perspective is that it can inadvertently reinforce a form of epistemic silencing. Alternatives will be explored to approach the tradwife phenomenon from a perspective that recognises their agency while problematising the underlying power structures.

This reflection seeks to contribute to a more nuanced debate within feminist epistemologies, pointing to the importance of avoiding reductionisms that can lead to forms of epistemic injustice and advocating an approach that balances recognition of individual agency with structural critique.

Alejandra del Rocio Bello
Universidad de Antioquia

Tenderness: a category for epistemic justice in feminist political theory

The absence of tenderness from theories of power is not accidental. This word is associated with an intimate and feminized emotional practice, which sends it to the antipodes of what we usually understand as the exercise of power or politics. Nevertheless, North American lesbian and black feminisms, although they do not propose a conceptualization, have related it to the type of action that restores human character to bodies reified by racism and sexism (Lorde 2012; Rich 2019; hooks).

It is possible to care for someone for whom one feels deep contempt, and even to do so in a dignifying way. Caring is a job (Fraser, 2016; Federici, 2018) and an ethic (Gilligan, 2024; Tronto, 2018) that can be given even in the absence of affection. But to care for a body it is first necessary to have the capacity to make it legible as worthy of care. Latin American feminist and queer collectives, especially artistic ones, use the concept of radical tenderness to designate the process of dignifying through collective dynamics an existence excluded from social mourning (Dani & Daniel, 2015). Problematizing tenderness is about understanding the political process involved in making an existence intelligible as an object of care, or even worthy of care.

The presentation objective is to discuss the project "How to dignify life?" which revisits the theoretical scope of care and contrast it with tenderness by asking what implications the conceptualization of tenderness has for feminist political theory. Field of strategic and necessary dispute for feminist epistemic justice because it provides words to make political experience nameable or, on the contrary, unintelligible. Through theoretical research, the project proposes to provide a complementary or alternative theoretical framework of feminist analysis of the concept of care by taking into consideration tenderness, understood as a Latin-American queer collectivities category to name their current practices of dignifying life.

Ashley Dell'Orso
International Studies, CEI-Iscte

Undoing Colonial Feminisms: Routes to Transnational and Decolonial Feminist Solidarities for Global Justice and Liberation

Colonial feminisms, including imperialist-, Zionist-, liberal-, white-, and trans-exclusionary feminism, work against gender justice and liberation. Colonial feminisms reinforce existing power structures and harm already marginalized groups, particularly Black and Indigenous women, often through intersections with global capitalism and economic policies. Transnational feminist coalitions thrive by decolonizing feminist theory and practice which can foster global justice and liberation. This research aims to contribute to the understanding of the intersections between feminism, colonialism, and global justice. Decolonial studies and feminist studies will be explored to formulate the methodological and theoretical frameworks. I will take a qualitative research approach by analyzing different feminist movements particularly from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and surveying feminist activists and scholars. My main research questions are: 1) In what ways do colonial feminisms work against gender justice and liberation? and 2) How can a transnational and decolonial feminist solidarity develop into a global movement for justice and liberation? Accordingly, the main research objective is enhancing the vision for a global movement towards gender justice and liberation. Data from the review of feminist movements and surveys will be used to encourage feminist activists and scholars to engage in transnational and decolonial solidarity efforts.

Adam Ezinwanyi Edikanabasi
Babcock University

Of becoming a Nigerian girl - (Re)Examining Girlhood and Girling Experiences and Identity in Sub-Saharan Africa

I hereby propose to share my ongoing research on girlhood and girling experiences and issues in sub-Saharan Africa, in the proposed conference on Feminist Epistemology. In existing discussions on intersectionality, gender and identity or even female experiences, there is always the tendency to either overlook girls and girlhood experiences, issues as well as challenges or simply lump them together with those of adult females / women. From what is available in existing literature, there is so much more to be done or achieved than what has been said concerning the being and existence of girls as shaped by cultures, societies, family backgrounds, education, religions, and individual perceptions, to mention a few factors. Although my study is situated largely within the historical context, it adopts multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks and approaches to its critical analysis and interrogations of African girling identity, experiences and challenges. My findings indeed justify the approaches, and I would like to share some of them, and in turn, have scholars of like-minds and in related studies contribute their thoughts for more robust intellectual outputs.

Nathalie Grima
University of Malta

Low-income households: The intersection of resilience and social capital with gender and ethnicity

In this paper, I discuss how two theoretical frameworks consisting of the social resilience paradigm and the theory of social capital can be congruent with feminist epistemology in conducting research with local and migrant low-income households in Malta. Social relations intersect with gender within the family unit, the extended family, among friends and within bridging networks, leading to gendered agency. Studies show that social networks can be far more complex than the dialectical definitions of weak or strong, loose or tight, restrictive or open. I therefore argue that the feminist epistemology can give a more dynamic perspective to the stereotypical   view of low-income households as being culturally set in their ways. It gives priority to the research participants' own perception of risk, sense of positionality, and gendered power dynamics in a society where class, gender and ethnicity intersect where relative poverty is concerned. I conclude that feminist epistemology can be useful in studying poverty in terms of accessibility to equity in livelihoods and of gender and social justice.
Key words: Resilience, social capital, feminist epistemology, low-income households, gender and ethnicity.

Ephraim Ahamefula Ikegbu
University of Calabar

Power, Identity, and Knowledge: A Feminist Epistemological Analysis of Women's Political Exclusion in Nigeria

In this paper, I examine the intersections of power, identity, and knowledge in shaping women's experiences in Nigerian politics. I employ feminist epistemological perspectives to investigate how dominant epistemologies and power dynamics perpetuate gender-based exclusion thereby marginalizing women's voices and agency. I argue that the attitudes of female gender in socio-political issues reveal their marginalization, oppression and domination by the male gender at both micro and macro levels of the society. This perceived evidence of non-inclusion wrongfully diminishes women's credibility as knowers and makes them feel inferior and unimportant. Through a critical analysis of policy documents, and political discourses, this study uncovers the complex mechanisms that undermine women's political participation and empowerment in Nigeria. My focus is on the ways in which socio-cultural and political structures reinforce gendered power relations, limiting women's access to political spaces and decision-making processes. By centering the voices and perspectives of women in politics, I will demonstrate the ways in which dominant knowledge systems and power dynamics shape their experiences and agency. My aim is to contribute to the development of feminist epistemological frameworks that can inform inclusive political practices and challenge dominant power structures. In the final analysis, I will show how my approach in this paper promotes a deeper understanding of the complex web of factors that influence women's political empowerment in Nigeria and identifies potential pathways for transformative change.

Eszter Kováts

Institute of Political Science, University of Vienna

The possibility of a partially shared reality – Current challenges to feminist epistemology and politics

In her seminal text about feminist epistemology Donna Haraway (1988) took a stance not only against the male bias in mainstream sciences but also against what she called the „very strong constructivist arguments". She formulates this double challenge for those „who would still like to talk about reality" (577) with these words: „[M]y problem, and "our "problem, is how to have simultaneously an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own "semiotic technologies" for making meanings, and a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a "real" world, one that can be partially shared." (579)

Haraway's other important point is, that while an epistemology that centers the perspective of the subjugated, offers a better understanding, yet, their position cannot be taken for granted either: „The positionings of the subjugated are not exempt from critical re-examination, decoding, deconstruction, and interpretation (…). The standpoints of the subjugated are not "innocent" positions." (584). In a similar vein, German sociologist Sarah Speck formulates with reference to W.E.B. Du Bois, Harding and Hill-Collins, "Knowledge about power relations does not simply come to the oppressed" (Speck/Villa 2020: 18).

However, in current discussions both in academia and in politics, both phenomena seem to be present: 1. a very strong constructivist argument that denies any possibility to access to reality; positing that we cannot have any shared reality, and there is no such thing as truth, there are only truth claims and a hegemonic fight to get our position through, and 2) the absolutization of the perspective of the (presumed) subjugated.

The paper explores these current challenges following the footsteps of feminist theoreticians committed to critical theory who invite us to stick to structural analyses of the contexts in which interpretations and choices are made (Budgeon 2015, Budgeon 2021, Čakardić 2017).

Marilou Niedda
Utrecht University

Feminist epistemology of science and AI: how to rethink algorithmic calculations through lived experiences in datafication

This paper presentation seeks to understand how it is possible to conceptualise the incorporation of qualitative, individual as well as collectives, experiences into AI, through feminist epistemology of science. As a matter of fact, artificial intelligences replay humans' structural injustices and norms, by incorporating their harmful biases towards minorities. Because of this, many AI projects are looking to be more "inclusive" or "fair"; I argue that this would not be conceptually viable, nor empirically achievable, if AI conceptualisation remains only quantitively oriented and normative; minorities' lived experiences must be taken into account (D'Ignazio, Klein, 2020). In this paper, I am concerned with feminist epistemology of

science core critiques' extension to the AI field, and more particularly in data-driven projects. For Alison Adam (2000), a tension arises at the level of AI systems' logical reasoning and semantics; feminist epistemology points out inequalities within science-making, but cannot reconceptualise symbolical writing within AI. How can indeed algorithmic calculations be qualitatively driven, in order to be less harmful? Drawing from standpoint epistemologists such as Sandra Harding (1986), or Linda Alcoff (2014) on the concept of experience, I interrogate how rules-based, classificatory AI systems could include more data complexity within symbolical language. This implies repurposing AI's ontology, less centred on its predictive, universal, efficient traits. Therefore, I argue that feminist epistemology of science has a pivotal conceptual role to play in AI as it (i) sheds light on value-leadenness in science-making and the importance of positionality (Haraway, 1989), and also (ii) reorient foundational research questions by taking into account lived experiences within algorithmic calculations, and datafication.

Elena Popa
Jagiellonian University, Krakow

Epistemic Trust Injustice and Epistemic Disadvantage in Standpoint Epistemology

In current work, standpoint epistemology is defined through a situated knowledge thesis and an epistemic advantage thesis (Wylie 2012, Intemann 2010). The former holds that knowledge is shaped by the socio-historical positions different knowers have. The latter highlights the ability of those occupying lower positions in social hierarchies to grasp both the perspective of those at the top and of those at the bottom of such hierarchies, thus having a better understanding of oppression. At the same time, this does not rule out epistemic disadvantages, such as lack of access to formal education, which may hinder knowers experiencing oppression from achieving a complete picture oppressive social structures. This paper will further investigate epistemic disadvantage, exploring how it is exacerbated by a particular type of epistemic injustice. Epistemic trust injustice, which obtains in circumstances where 'due to the forces of oppression, the conditions required to ground one's trust in experts cannot be met for members of particular subordinated groups' (Grasswick 2017: 319). To put it another way, if members of oppressed groups have witnessed the complicity of science in past injustices, they will be justified in distrusting it. Consequences of this include rejecting scientific reasoning and results even in cases where these processes where not connected to the past shortcomings (Scheman 2001). I will further argue that higher degrees of epistemic trust injustice generate wider tensions between the epistemic advantage of those experiencing oppression and the kind of knowledge accepted as scientific. Justified distrust works like a barrier, separating the two kinds of knowledge, undermining integration. This, in turn, poses a problem for accounts arguing that standpoint epistemology can be used in science to reduce bias or enable contributions that help oppressed groups. Thus, ameliorating epistemic trust injustice is necessary for the successful deployment of standpoint epistemology.

Billie Rae
Independent scholar

Can Epistemology Be Feminist?: Historical Materialism, Standpoint Theory, and the Gendered (Re)Production of Knowledge

While feminist theory has a history of critiquing epistemic androcentricity, this critique has centred on sexist power imbalances in individual disciplines and institutions. Meanwhile, philosophical genealogies of epistemology often neglect how gender factors into its history. This paper uses poststructuralist and Marxist feminist theories to evaluate the possibility of a truly feminist epistemology in a cultural landscape shaped by patriarchy, and to examine how gender and knowledge structure each other in this landscape.

Through a critique of Gurukkal's History and Theory of Knowledge Production (2019), the paper explores the role played by successive epistemological histories in informing how knowledge is defined and categorised in the future. Gurukkal's historical materialist scholarship treats knowledge as an a priori concept concealed by capitalistic and/or patriarchal hegemony, and the masculinist biases in his scholarship demonstrate the problems with using such an approach in a feminist context. If, in the Western world, knowledge is defined by its own history, then the patriarchal aspects of this history will be imprinted onto its future.

The paper then examines how 20th-century feminist epistemologists have addressed the epistemic injustice of patriarchy, namely Hartsock's proposition of a 'feminist standpoint' that uncovers the truths obscured by androcentric systems of knowledge production. I argue that there is no non-patriarchal 'knowledge' or 'science' existing a priori to the conditions that created its current androcentricity, because these concepts are definitionally tied to patriarchal structures. Drawing from Butlerian and Bourdieusian theories of social reproduction, I conclude that knowledge and gender are continually reproduce each other as regulatory structures, and that knowledge production cannot be made non-patriarchal simply by centering women's perspectives. This highlights a need for interdisciplinary dialogue that reconciles the theory and practice of feminist knowledge production, and for an epistemological approach that re-thinks the impulse to produce 'more' or 'better' knowledge.

Anna Rafecas Sogas
Universitat de Barcelona

A Non-Empiricist Defence of Epistemic Privilege

Contemporary standpoint theorists have recently been working on a consistent interpretation of some of its main theses, particularly, that of epistemic privilege (Toole 2021, 2023). This thesis argues that being socially disadvantaged often comes with some epistemic advantages. A key concern has been to distinguish epistemic privilege from a related, but inverted thesis, which argues that being socially dominant imposes strong limits to what one can know about oppression (Tilton, forthcoming; Tilton and Toole, forthcoming). The latter thesis, it has been argued, risks making room for practices that epistemically exploit the oppressed and relieve the non-oppressed of blameworthiness for their ignorance (Dror 2022; Táíwò 2022, 2023). To avoid conflating both theses, these interventions argue that the

non-oppressed can also achieve an epistemically privileged standpoint. I argue against this relativization or denial of an epistemic privilege of the oppressed and claim that a defence of epistemic privilege is crucial to the project of standpoint theory. I suggest that the risk of conflating both theses does not so much derive from the thesis of epistemic privilege itself, but from a particular, empiricist interpretation of that thesis historically held by feminist standpoint epistemology (Stahl 2023). I revisit Lukács' original, non-empiricist argument for an epistemic privilege of the proletariat (Lukács [1923] 1972) and Hartsock's empiricist, feminist reinterpretation of it (Hartsock [1983] 2004). Finally, I provide some Lukácsian, non-empiricist arguments in favour of epistemic privilege. I argue that while experiences of oppression are a necessary starting point for the development of the standpoint, immediate experience may also be ideologically distorted, even for the oppressed (Elling 2021). Thus, a standpoint must go beyond immediate experience.

Miriam Ronzoni
University of Manchester

Epistemic Privilege and Hermeneutical Injustice: Not Necessarily Incompatible

Standpoint epistemology comes in many forms, but is commonly seen to be committed to the "epistemic advantage thesis" (Dular 2023). The thesis holds that individuals from marginalised groups have an epistemic advantage due to their social condition of marginalisation.
Against this background, the present paper makes three points. First, there can be a meaningful commitment to standpoint epistemology without an *ontological* commitment to the view that the marginalised *necessarily* have epistemic advantage. Our commitment can be purely methodological, yet significant: experience has proven that the marginalised *often indeed* have unique insights, and that much (epistemological and material) harm is done by ignoring them. We do not need to claim that their epistemic privilege is ontologically necessary in order to claim that the prudent, methodologically soundest thing to do is to have a *presumption in favour* of the possibility that the marginalised might have epistemic advantage. This alone requires significant changes in our practices of knowledge production. The second point illustrates how such a methodological interpretation can have far reaching consequences. Our "presumption in favour" should remain even when the marginalised initially struggle to express their insights in a way that is fully clear and coherent to them, and/or communicatively effective to the mainstream – in other words, when they are victims of what Mirand Fricker (2007) calls "hermeneutical injustice." A standpoint of uncertainty and confusion is not necessarily one of ignorance: it can indeed be the starting point of productive epistemic innovations. Indeed, paradigmatic cases of hermeneutical injustice confirm that: the working women who struggled to make sense of their experience of unwelcome sexual flirtation in the workplace are the very same women who went on and developed a new concept for it – workplace sexual harassment. Finally, the paper concludes by applying this approach to the debate on gender identity.

Eleonora Severini
University of Pavia

Standpoint Epistemology as a Moral Epistemology

One of the main claims of standpoint epistemology is the epistemic advantage thesis (Tanesini 2020), according to which the oppressed have an epistemic advantage due to their condition of oppression. The epistemic advantage thesis has been defended in relation to various forms of oppression, e.g., sexism and racism, and in various fields of knowledge, e.g., sociology and the psychological sciences. On the contrary, this thesis has not been analyzed with respect to ethics. This is peculiar given that the systems of oppression considered by standpoint epistemology are morally problematic; consequently, to claim that the oppressed have an epistemic advantage on the nature of their oppression is to acknowledge that such people have an epistemic advantage on a bunch of morally significant issues. This paper aims to develop a "standpoint moral epistemology", i.e., a theoretical framework that makes it possible to argue that the oppressed have an epistemic advantage on issues concerning the system of oppression of which they are victims and that this advantage can be translated in the moral domain. If the epistemic advantage of the oppressed may be articulated in terms of a greater amount of "moral knowledge" over the non-oppressed, we intend to present an alternative view. It will be argued that it is more appropriate to articulate the idea of "epistemic advantage" of the oppressed through the concept of "moral understanding" (Hills 2016). Rethinking the epistemic advantage of the oppressed over the non-oppressed in terms of a greater amount of moral understanding, we argue, entails some important theoretical gains. For instance, an understanding-based account of the epistemic advantage thesis allows us to account for the specificity of the epistemic condition of the oppressed as well as for the difficulties which arise whenever the non-oppressed try to "understand" oppression.

Ellena Thibaud-Latour
Université de Montréal

Undone science and women's health: Ignorance in medical research as a structural injustice

Although ignorance has consistently manifested in various forms and has had tangible impacts on numerous aspects of our lives, both individually and socially, it has only recently begun to receive due attention in epistemological theories.This study focuses on a particular subset of ignorance, deeply embedded in social and political contexts, that significantly contributes to specific forms of social injustice. Such ignorance can be generated and sustained by detrimental forces, including cognitive biases, prejudices, and stereotypes, leading to harm against individuals or groups based on their social identity. Often, this harmful ignorance operates insidiously, infiltrating our belief systems and values, frequently without our conscious awareness.
This project seeks to critically explore the role of ignorance in sustaining structural injustices by analyzing a specific case. Focusing on women's health, we examine the notion of "undone science" within the medical field, using vulvodynia as a case study. Positioned at

the intersection of sexuality and women's health, vulvodynia exemplifies how harmful ignorance can endure, remaining largely unnoticed by both individuals and the medical community. This, in turn, uncovers the intricate dynamics of power and knowledge that contribute to the persistence of this form of ignorance.

We will begin by introducing our case study, vulvodynia. Through an examination of the diagnostic processes, treatment options, medical knowledge, and psychosocial dimensions related to vulvodynia, we will uncover how this condition is understood and perceived by both healthcare providers and patients. Following this, we will analyze vulvodynia through the framework of ignorance politics and undone science, suggesting that this condition provides a critical lens to explore the dynamics between power and knowledge, which contribute to the ongoing perpetuation of ignorance concerning women's bodies and health. Drawing on these insights, we will ultimately argue that this form of ignorance has consequences that extend beyond the medical realm, playing a significant role in sustaining and reinforcing certain structural injustices.

Ayse Seda Umul
Bilkent University

Structural Gaslighting in Patriarchal Societies: The Marginalisation of Queer Identities in Turkey

In this paper, I examine the role of structural gaslighting within patriarchal societies, using Turkey as a case study, to illustrate how this mechanism systematically marginalises queer identities and perpetuates epistemic injustice. Structural gaslighting, a form of epistemic abuse, perpetuates and obscures structural violence, making it difficult for both targets and bystanders to recognise and resist oppression (Berenstain, Forthcoming). Patriarchy is an inherently oppressive system that enforces rigid gender norms and suppresses those who deviate from them, especially women and queer individuals (Manne, 2018). Given its foundation in oppression, structural gaslighting is crucial in patriarchal societies for marginalising and discrediting queer identities. In Turkey, a patriarchal society, queer identities are particularly vulnerable to structural gaslighting due to their perceived threat to traditional gender norms, and structural gaslighting manifests through legal discrimination, social stigma, and cultural narratives that pathologise or delegitimise queer experiences. This gaslighting invalidates the lived experiences of queer people, leading to their marginalisation. As a result, queer individuals are not only socially and politically oppressed but are also subject to epistemic injustice, as their knowledge, testimonies, and lived experiences are systematically discredited and silenced. Drawing on the works of Berenstain (2020; Forthcoming) and Manne (2018), I argue that the marginalisation of queer identities through structural gaslighting is crucial in upholding patriarchal power structures. This analysis contributes to the discourse on epistemic injustice by demonstrating how these issues manifest in Turkish contexts and highlighting the compounded nature of oppression at the intersection of queer identity and patriarchy. Addressing this issue requires amplifying queer voices, critically examining patriarchal narratives, and challenging the epistemic foundations that sustain these oppressive systems. By localising the discussion to Turkey, this paper further expands the existing debate on structural gaslighting.

Gina Wirz-Suárez
Geneva Graduate Institute

Women* on the move: Feminist Epistemological and Methodological approaches to the activisms of Exiled and Migrant Women from the Global South

This paper presents a feminist pedagogical and methodological framework carried out at the workshop Women* on the move: Gender, Forced Migration, and Peacebuilding (Barcelona, April 10-11, 2024). The workshop foregrounded the activism of exiled, migrant, and refugee women from the Global South, emphasizing their critical role in local and international peacebuilding processes.

Grounded in feminist theory (Bello Ramirez, 2022; brown, 2017; flores, 2021), peace education (Freire, 2021; Cascón, 2011; Lederach, 2007), and neuropedagogy (Goleman, 2009; Mora, 2006), we propose two epistemological turns. First, the term "Women* on the move" challenges the invisibility often imposed on migrant and exiled women within international political discourse (Ball, 2021; Curiel, 2007). By centering their political subjectivities and agency, we engage with mobile and transnational feminist epistemologies (Anzaldúa, 2012; Davis, 2017; Lorde, 1984) to highlight how diasporic feminist contributions reframe political identities and action at the global level (Bauböck & Faist, 2010).

Second, drawing on the political-pedagogical insights of bell hooks (2021, 2022), we emphasize a methodological turn that prioritizes emotions, affect, and the body, recognizing that academic and activist roles are interconnected rather than separate. This approach departs from rigid, objectivist frameworks and fosters trust-building within academic discourse.

To do so, we employed during the workshop social cartographies to weave together situated knowledge on peacebuilding dynamics in local and transnational levels. Through these approaches, we aim to contribute to feminist scholarship and advocacy, strengthen the social fabric of migrant communities in Catalonia, and enhance collective feminist geopolitical action from exile.

Lisbon, 28-29 October 2024

28 October
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29 October
ISCTE-IUL, Iscte Conhecimento e Inovação, Building 4 - Clube Iscte, Floor 3, Room 332
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https://cfcul.ciencias.ulisboa.pt/reunioes/lisbon-conference-on-feminist-epistemology-an-interdisciplinary-dialogue