

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS SYMPOSIUM

KEYNOTE EVENT ON JUNE 30, 2021

ABSTRACTS

Risa Cromer and Lea Taragin-Zeller, "Reproductive Politics and the Rising Global Right: A Provocation"

The Reproductive Righteousness Project is a new initiative launched to explore the ways in which families, fertility, and reproduction have become increasingly important discursive moral devices through which right-wing populist leaders invoke the threat of national, social, and cultural decline. In our talk, we propose that reproductive politics are elemental to the mounting global ascension of illiberal movements, which are experiencing a distinct moment in the twenty-first century. From Trump's "America first" to Kaczyński's "there is only one Poland," expressions of ethno-nationalism, right-wing populism, and authoritarianism are taking nightmarish form through varying expressions of what we call "reproductive righteousness." While quasi-religious and religious idioms of reproduction are not new features of far-right expressions of state, racial, and religious power, analyzing how reproduction is systematically centered within recent expressions of them is a crucial task. Our approach incorporates intersectional feminist, queer, and reproductive justice perspectives, and questions normative assumptions about reproduction, gender, religion, race, and the state while showcasing progressive possibilities for feminist resistance.

Andrea Peto, "Attacks on Reproductive Rights 'Through the Looking Glass'"

In the past decade, political scientists have been discussing in great length a terminology that helps us to understand recent developments in different countries, like Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Brazil, US, and Turkey, calling them mafia state, hybrid state, autocratic legalism, constitutional authoritarianism etc. With Weronika Grzebalska we call these states illiberal polypore states based on their common modus operandi. Unlike political scientists who are admiring these states because of their effectiveness, we argue that polypore states do not have any original ideas, but just take ideas of others using them for their own purpose, which is self-maintenance. From the three characteristics of the polypore state: familialism, security discourse and paralleled institutionalization this paper looks at last one: how movements, strategies, institutions, values networks are mirrored "Through the Looking Glass" with the aim of setting the symbolic scores in the field of reproductive rights.

Sonia Correa, "Reproductive States' Righteousness: Chartering Temporalities, Commonalities, Heterogeneities"

In the last few years I have been closely investigating anti-gender ideology and politics in Latin America. This was done in close dialogue with European partners and also included some observations of the peculiar way in which these trends are manifested in the US. To better grasp and interpret these undercurrents I am now using the image of the hydra to describe these political ideological formations that, albeit gestated in a Catholic cradle, have taken highly heterogeneous and mobile contours, which more than often, obfuscate our reading of what they really are. The many heads of hydras resonate the multiplicity of actors and ideological streams that compose and fuel anti gender formations and the mobility of these creatures is akin to the metamorphic features of the politics they propel.

As underlined in the conceptual note that guides the workshop, anti-gender undercurrents constitute a non -circumventable feature of the landscapes where reproductive righteousness is taking form, even though they may not be at work everywhere. While the imagery of hydras is not very appropriate to describe the strictures of statecraft, it is certainly applicable to the complex gamut of forces that are leading towards state righteousness in so many places worldwide. In the same manner, their heterogeneities and mobile contours can perhaps be used as a reference to charter the variety of ways in which righteousness is materializing across so many different contexts. Last but not least, the longevity of the hydra also inspire us to not lose sight of very old specters haunting what appears to be entirely new or unexpected in present politics of gender, sexuality and reproduction.

Akanksha Mehta, "On 'Love Jihad' and Hindu Nationalist women - Tracing Gender, Sexuality, Race, and Caste in the violence of a Right-Wing Movement"

In this paper, I examine the role of Hindu nationalist women in perpetuating the violence of 'love jihad' - a discourse by which the Hindu nationalist movement claims that 'Muslim men' trap 'Hindu women' into love, marriage, pregnancy, and conversion through lies and force and one that warrants violent action towards Muslim men, 'rescue' missions of Hindu women, elaborate strategies of prevention and rehabilitation, legal changes and state interference. Looking specifically at the mobilisation of gender, sexuality, race, and caste in Hindu nationalist women's narratives and actions on 'love jihad', I think through reproductive politics, demographic anxieties, and women's politics in right-wing movements. The paper also briefly touches upon the limitations of liberal resistance to 'love jihad' and the transnational connections between Hindu nationalist and Zionist settler women.

THE REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS PROJECT

The Reproductive Righteousness Project is a new initiative launched to explore the ways in which families, fertility and reproduction have become increasingly important discursive moral devices through which right wing populist leaders invoke the threat of national, social and cultural decline. From Trump's "America first" to Kaczyński's "there is only one Poland," expressions of ethno-nationalism, right-wing populism, and authoritarianism are increasingly central to right-wing authoritarian regimes.

This project brings together feminist scholars with wide-ranging expertise to collaboratively theorize expressions of what we call "reproductive righteousness." The project is interdisciplinary, comparative, and global in scope. We take a critical approach that incorporates intersectional feminist, queer, and reproductive justice perspectives, and questions normative assumptions about reproduction, gender, religion, race and the state.

The Reproductive Righteousness Project is a collaborative research effort led by Risa Cromer (Purdue University), Sarah Franklin (University of Cambridge) and Lea Taragin-Zeller (Hebrew University and University of Cambridge).

Visit our website: www.reprosoc.sociology.cam.ac.uk/research/reproductive-righteousness-project



About our logo

Our logo was inspired by the artist and activist Ola Jasionowska. She initially designed the red lightning strike for the Black Protest in 2016, which has since become an international symbol of feminist resistance.

THE REPRODUCTIVE SOCIOLOGY RESEARCH GROUP (REPROSOC)

The Reproductive Sociology Research Group was established in October 2012 to develop and support funded research on the technological transformation of reproduction and related forms of social and cultural change.

Led by Sarah Franklin, ReproSoc is based in the Department of Sociology and has raised over £10m in funding since 2013 from the Wellcome Trust, British Academy, ESRC, ERC, Leverhulme Trust and other funding bodies. The group consists of 20-25 members who meet regularly throughout the year to share and develop research in progress. Post-docs, post grads, academic staff and affiliated researchers all participate in regular weekly events including readings groups, research workshops, films, skills training sessions, brown bag lunches, talks and small conferences.

ReproSoc hosts a Visiting Scholars programme and Affiliated Scholars from within and outside Cambridge. Our research covers a broad range of topics including the history of IVF, 'repronationalism', reproduction and the environment, reproductive justice, visual cultures of reproduction, non-heterosexual parenting aspirations, regenerative medicine, the IVF-stem cell interface, racialized reproduction, and reproductive inequality.

By developing new sociological approaches to the intersection of reproduction and technology, our aim is to develop more generalizable claims about, for example, changing definitions of nature and ethics, the biologization of technology, translational biomedicine, and the political economy of reproduction. Our work thus contributes to sociology and anthropology, science and technology studies, social and oral history, feminist and queer theory, and the social study of biomedicine, bioscience and biotechnology, as well as other fields.

We run a programme of visiting speakers, public lectures, workshops, conferences and other events that are open to the public and we welcome inquiries about our work via our webpage, which offers many resources related to the study of reproduction, technology and society. You can follow us on Twitter and Facebook, or join our mailing list for updates and announcements.

We are committed to making outreach not only part of what we do, but part of how we learn.

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