

Max Weber Programme Multidisciplinary Research Workshop

## The 'Peripheries' of Gender and Sexuality: Beyond European Borders

16 May 2022 | Emeroteca (Badia Fiesolana) and Online (Zoom)

**Organisers:** Anna Dobrowolska (MWF-HEC), Gözde Kılıç (MWF-HEC), Revital Madar (MWF-LAW), Zala Pavšič (MWF-HEC) and Edit Frenyo (MWF-LAW).

Co-organized with the [Queer and Feminist Studies Interdisciplinary Working Group](#)

### Abstract

This workshop brings together researchers working on topics related to sexuality and gender in places often defined as the 'peripheries', both in Europe and beyond. While acknowledging the problematic character of this category, the workshop aims to inquire into the ways in which decentralizing and dewesternizing our study of sexuality can offer fruitful avenues for interdisciplinary research as well as broaden our understanding of how sexual and gender identities can be performed, narrated, and contested. By doing so, the workshop intends to question binary categories such as 'backwardness' and 'progress', 'liberation' and 'repression' 'East' and 'West', 'centre' and 'periphery'.

### Format and Housekeeping:

- Sessions will have 20 minutes for each presentation and 15 minutes for questions and discussion at the end.
- We strongly encourage everyone to keep their video on for a feeling of community engagement over the virtual platform. However, everyone except the presenter should mute their microphones unless they are called upon by the chair to participate in the Q&A at the end of a presentation.
- Participants can write their question in the chat during or after the presentation, and the chair will ask them to unmute their microphone and speak up.

### Programme

10:00-10:30 [Welcome and Coffee Break](#)

10:30-12:30 [Panel 1](#)

Chair: **Revital Madar** (EUI)

- **Gozde Kilic** (EUI), *Lifting the Veil of Silence: Sexological Discourses in Late Ottoman Early Republican Turkey*
- **Alessio Ponzì** (University of Saskatchewan), *Italy and the 'Homophile International.' A Transnational Story in 1950s Europe*
- **Moisés Fernández Cano** (EUI), *Unveiling the City: Possibilities of Queer Intimacies in Francoist Madrid*

12:30-13:30 [Lunch Break](#)

13:30-15:30 [Panel 2](#)

Chair: **Zala Pavšic** (EUI)

- **Marta Chmielewska** (EUI), *The Rise of the ‘Girldress’: Female Entrepreneurship in 1990s Poland*
- **Kamil Karczewski** (EUI), *Jekyll and Hyde? The Double Life of Polish Nationalism from homoerots to Kaczyński*
- **Anna Dobrowolska** (EUI), *In Hopeless Search of the Polish Stonewall? Remembering State-Socialist Sexualities in Contemporary Poland*

15:30-16:00 [Break](#)

16:00-18:00 [Keynote Lecture](#) by **Łukasz Szulc** (University of Sheffield)

### **Between East and West and Digital Elsewhere: Queer Migrants Making Sense of Brexit**

Where is Central Eastern Europe (CEE) and what is it like? Of course, I do not naively search for a precise geographical location of CEE, nor do I try to determine CEE’s ‘true’ essence. Instead, I am interested in geopolitical imaginations; CEE—but also other geopolitical entities such as Poland or Europe—as a social construct, an image in people’s heads that guides perceptions, wins loyalties and delivers judgments. Turning to the queer, the migrant and the digital is useful as it enables asking existential questions about CEE: What is CEE like for queers when it is presented as a stronghold of anti-LGBTQ discrimination? What is it like for migrants who routinely cruise between east and west? And where is CEE on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter? In this talk, I will shed light on these questions focusing on Polish LGBTQs in the UK who got caught up in a specific moment of history. In 2016, the UK decided to leave the European Union in the Brexit referendum. While becoming less welcome in the UK because of their CEE roots, Polish LGBTQs could not feel much appreciated in their home country as that was also the time of intensified anti-LGBTQ discrimination in Poland, after the Law and Justice Party secured the majority in the 2015 parliamentary elections. Brexit, therefore, constitutes a key moment of geopolitical reckoning for queer migrants to the UK. Drawing on 767 survey responses and 30 in-depth interviews with a diverse group of Polish LGBTQs in the UK, I will discuss how this group was making sense of Brexit and what the role of social media was in that process. I will also show how Brexit influenced this group’s geopolitical loyalties at multiple scales, including the national and the regional.

**Łukasz Szulc** is a Lecturer in Digital Media and Society in the Department of Sociological Studies at The University of Sheffield, United Kingdom. He specializes in critical and cultural studies of digital media at the intersections of gender, sexuality and transnationalism with a focus on Central and Eastern Europe. He recently published the book *Transnational Homosexuals in Communist Poland: Cross-Border Flows in Gay and Lesbian Magazines* (2018) and the report *Queer #PolesinUK: Identity, migration and social media* (2019). He tweets from @LukaszSzulc.

18:00-19:00 [Cocktail](#)