



Beyond National Character? Identity Formation in the Context of Postwar Reeducation

Virtual Workshop of the Research Project “Reeducation Revisited: Transnational and Comparative Perspectives on the Post-World War II Period in the US, Japan, and Germany”
(funded by the German Research Foundation/DFG)

Notions of identity and national character have been key to the theoretical foundations of US-American reeducation efforts in the postwar years – from Erik Erikson’s early work on identity to Richard Brickner’s diagnosis of a severe collective paranoia that had affected the Germans to Ruth Benedict’s classic work on the Japanese character. African American soldiers, for example, who served in a segregated military and became highly visible agents of liberation and reeducation in Germany exposed the double standard of US democracy. Considering the transpacific sphere, notions of Afro-Asian solidarity had to be negotiated anew vis-à-vis Japanese imperialism and Japan’s role in World War II. And, in both, Germany and Japan, relations with the Allied Forces were conceived of in gendered terms which – albeit in slightly different registers – tended to masculinize the US and its allies and feminized their former enemies. The workshop sets out to examine identity formations in the context of reeducation with an eye to their subnational, and transnational dimensions and with a focus on the intersections of nationality, race/ethnicity, class, and gender.

November 5-6, 2020

Venue: Zoom

November 5, Thursday

Part I

12:30 PM-1:30 PM (Germany)

11:30 AM-12:30 PM (UK)

3:30 AM-4:30 AM (USA West Coast)

8:30 PM-9:30 PM (Japan)

Discussion of Pre-circulated Lecture

Annmaria Shimabuku (NYU): Alegal: Biopolitics and the Unintelligibility of Okinawan Life

Part II

5:00 PM-9:00 PM (Germany)

4:00 PM-8:00 PM (UK)

8:00 AM-12:00 PM (USA West Coast)

1:00 AM-5:00 AM (Japan)

Workshop Opening by Katharina Gerund and Akino Oshiro

Discussion of Pre-circulated Papers/Lectures (45 minutes for each discussion)

Wendy Matsumura (UC San Diego): Okinawa after Area (Studies), or Writing Okinawa from the Neoliberal University

Akino Oshiro (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg): From Farm to Base: The Culture, Politics, and Identity of Okinawan Workers from 1945 - 1972

Birgit Bauridl (Universität Regensburg): Re-Use as Re-Education: Trans/national Memory between Concentration Camp and Military Training Site

Fabian Schäfer (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg): Quizzes and Questionnaires: Playing Democracy under US-Occupation in Japan and Germany

November 6, Friday

Part III

5:00 PM-9:00 PM (Germany)

4:00 PM-8:00 PM (UK)

8:00 AM-12:00 PM (USA West Coast)

1:00 AM-5:00 AM (Japan)

Discussion of Pre-circulated Papers/Lectures (45 minutes for each discussion)

Deokhyo Choi (University of Sheffield): Containing Korean Diasporic Nationalism: The Cold War and Transnational Racial Politics in US-Occupied Japan

Katharina Gerund (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg): Reeducation and the Construction of Whiteness: Race in the Postwar World

Nadja Klopprogge (Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen): The Nazi-Belle and the Fräulein - The Historical Constellation of the Inbetween

Concluding Remarks