

# DESIRING JUST ECONOMIES

A co-operation between Frankfurt Research Center  
for Postcolonial Studies  
(Goethe Universität Frankfurt/Main),  
Institute for Queer Theory (Hamburg/Berlin),  
ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry and  
SFB "Kulturen des Performativen"  
(Freie Universität Berlin).

**QUEER**  
institute for queer theory

 FRANKFURT RESEARCH CENTER  
for POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES

**ici** KULTURLABOR  
BERLIN INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL INQUIRY

 **SFB**  
KULTUREN  
des performativen

Location:

ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry  
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[www.ici-berlin.org](http://www.ici-berlin.org)  
U-Bhf. Senefelder Platz (U2)

International Conference,  
Berlin, June 24-26

JUST ECONOMIES OF  
**DESIRE**

[www.desiring-just-economies.de](http://www.desiring-just-economies.de)

THURSDAY, 24 JUNE 2010

FRIDAY, 25 JUNE 2010

14:00  
Opening

14:30  
Lisa Duggan: Feeling Neoliberalism

15:15  
Break

15:30  
Panels

#### BRINGING DESIRE INTO ECONOMY

Facilitator: Randi Gressgård

Gundula Ludwig:  
Desiring ambivalences of desires

Evangeline Heiliger:  
When "The Economy" Isn't Enough:  
A Feminist Desire for Economic Bodies

Oishik Sircar:  
Two Histories Of Desire:  
Who Speaks for 'Indian' Sexualities?

#### CIRCULATING DESIRES

Facilitator: María do Mar Castro Varela

Irene Peano:  
The Prostitute's Desire:  
Nigerian Sex Workers' Life Trajectories beyond Need,  
Coercion and Calculation

Bobby Benedicto:  
Bright Lights, Fast Bodies:  
Mobility, Complicity, Gay Manila

Ghassan Moussawi:  
Queering the Paris of the Middle East,  
or the Promise of a Queer Beirut

17:15  
Break

17:45  
What's the Role of Desire in Economy?  
(Common Discussion, facilitated by Christoph Holzhey)

19:30  
Irene León: Resignification of Diversities  
in 21st Century Societal Changes

20:30  
Reception

21:30  
Film Screening (optional)

10:00  
Panels

#### GLOBAL ECONOMIES OF DESIRE

Facilitator: Christina Schramm

Laurie Marhoefer:  
The Queer Empire: Nineteenth Century  
Legacies for Twenty-First Century Economies

Aeyal Gross:  
Thinking Is in the Grey Area:  
Family, Home, Gender and Diaspora  
in the Paper Dolls

Maja Horn:  
The Currencies of Queer in  
the Dominican Republic

#### NEOLIBERAL LOGICS - EFFECTS AND AFFECTS

Facilitator: Franziska Bergmann

Julie Passanante Elman/Robert McRuer:  
Interdependency, Rehabilitation, and Necropolitics:  
Dis/ability and Desire in the Emergent  
Global Order

Serena Guarracino:  
Serena Justify My Love:  
Theorizing a Musical Economy of Desire

Kim Surkan:  
Queer Babymaking and the Economy of  
New Reproductive Technologies

11:45  
Break

12:15  
Is there Anything Queer about Globalized Neoliberal Economies?  
(Common Discussion, facilitated by Volker Woltersdorff)

13:45  
Lunch Break

FRIDAY, 25 JUNE 2010

15:00

Panels

DEVELOPING IN/JUST ECONOMIES

Facilitator: Nina Schulz

Akhil Katyal:

Just Asking for Love: Indian Men on Planet Romeo

Kate Bedford:

Bingo Capitalism: Gender, Sexuality, and Gambling  
in Efforts to Regenerate Local Economies

Susie Jolly:

Not a luxury: Sexuality in Development

DEREGULATING HETERNORMATIVITY?

Facilitator: Eva von Redecker

Christine Decker:

Queering the Welfare State?! How the Nursing  
Care Insurance Reform in Germany in 2008 is  
Complicit with and Resistant to Neoliberal  
Welfare State Restructuring

Matteo Pasquinelli:

The Just Masochism of the Imaginary:  
The Bicephalous Economy of Desire between  
Mass Media and Internet Pornography

Margot Weiss:

Unpacking the Toy Bag:  
Commodity and Power Exchange in BDSM Communities

16:45

Break

17:00

Ratna Kapur: Out of the Colonial Closet and  
Stuck Inside the Liberal Box:

The Market and the Legal Regulation of Sexual Subjectivity in Postcolonial  
India

17:45

Amalia Fischer-Pfaeffle: Notes about Paradoxes, Complexity,  
Philanthropy for Social Justice and Autonomy for LGBT Movements

18:30

Break

19:00

How Do Sexual Justice and Economic Justice Intersect?

(Common Discussion, facilitated by Nikita Dhawan and Shalini Randeria)

SATURDAY, 26 JUNE 2010

10:00

Coffee & Croissant

10:45

Desiree Lewis: Global Politics and Same-Sex in Southern Africa

11:30

Break

11:45

Panels

DESIRES EXCEEDING COMMODIFICATION

Facilitator: Katharina Pühl

Sonja Mönkedieck / Rhoda Tretow:

Neo-Liberal Deregulation of the Separation  
of Economies and Desires - Monkeydick-Productions  
Performing Praxeological and Discursive Scales  
of (In-)Justices.

Renate Lorenz:

Normal Love: The Sexual Household

DIVERSE ECONOMIES OF DESIRE?

Facilitator: Elahe Haschemi Yekani

Paul Bonin-Rodriguez:

Staging Queer Economies:  
Desire and the Performance Space

Kathrin Ganz/Do. Gerbig:

Deconstructing Capitalism with Passion

Jamila M. H. Mascot:

Can the Subaltern Desire? The Erotic as a Power  
and the Disempowerment of the Erotic

13:30

Lunch Break

15:00

Kevin Floyd: Neoliberalism and the Queer Persistence of Utopia

15:45

How Do Queer Politics Matter? How To Queer Global Economy?  
(Concluding Discussion, facilitated by Antke Engel)

17:15

Break

17:30

Short Film Programme, curated by Jess Dorrance

19:00

Break

19:30

Anne McClintock: Skin Hunger: A Chronicle of Sex, Desire, and Money

The conference “Desiring Just Economies / Just Economies of Desire” seeks to explore how desire not only sustains current economies, but also carries the potential for inciting new forms of understanding and doing economy. We propose to focus on the notion of desire as a tool to explore economy’s sexual dimension as much as the economic dimension of sexuality. Presuming that desire can be envisioned beyond heteronormative restrictions, the question arises whether the pursuit of economic and sexual justice can be made to coincide when economy is queered by desire. Rather than a realisable universal norm, the term justice is employed as a contestable term, offering possibility for debate and political practice. The conference’s twin interest lies in unpacking how sexuality is implicit in economic processes and in unfolding how economy is linked to sexuality. How do current global economic processes of exchange constitute specific sexual identities and practices that collaborate in relations of exploitation, domination, and subjectivation? Conversely, how do ways of organizing sexuality influence economic processes?

In addition to exploring the reciprocal relation between sexuality and economy, the conference inquires into how a queer reconceptualization of desire may emerge as a destabilizing and transformative force in economic relations. One of the aims of the conference is to fashion space for imagining “other” economies or imagining economy “otherwise”, as well as for the deployment of the concept of desire in ways that allow for a reworking of social relationships and economic practices. The presumption here is that global capitalism is not a monolith; rather, there exist diverse capitalisms and diverse economies.

#### Organizers:

Nikita Dhawan

(Frankfurt Research Center for Postcolonial Studies,  
Excellence Cluster “Formation of Normative Orders”,  
Goethe Universität Frankfurt/Main)

Antke Engel

(Institute for Queer Theory,  
Berlin/Hamburg)

Christoph Holzhey

(ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry)

Volker Woltersdorff

(Project B4 “Precarisation of Sexual and Gendered Identities”  
at SFB “Kulturen des Performativen”,  
Freie Universität Berlin)

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For instance, economic practices in the fields of migration and diasporas, subcultural economies, gift and barter economies and cooperative economies do not all conform to the capitalist logics.

Within the large field of exploring other economies and their potential to unsettle global capitalism, one focus of the conference is on the connection between heteronormativity and neoliberal capitalism. How does neoliberalism mobilise desire in order to obtain compliance from individuals? What is the role of the increasing socio-cultural integration of diversified genders and sexualities? What role does homo- and trans-phobia play in contemporary economic developments? In how far do the notions of heteronormativity and capitalism have to be problematized as eurocentric or occidentalist? In order to tackle these questions, it is necessary to engage critically with the transnational mechanisms of sexual and economic exclusion, exploitation and superexploitation. To what extent do political struggles for sexual justice in the global North inadvertently reinforce sexual injustice in the South? How is sexual injustice in the global South instrumentalised to enable the self-constitution of the West as “progressive” and thereby consolidate its hegemonic position?

While desire for economic justice tends to accept and perpetuate the principle of reducing all value to its pecuniary equivalent, desiring other economies can also take the form of envisaging alternate modes of recognizing value beside financial compensation. The prevalent view understands desire as being ultimately grounded in a fundamental lack, incited by a longing for recognition. According to this framework, the quest for capital, property and consumption beyond what is defined as “basic need” appears as but a particular avenue of being re-assured of one’s value and as an ultimately futile attempt to cover up lack. This raises questions like: To what extent do existing and imagined alternative economies challenge this false promise? How far do they replicate scarcity in a symbolic register and use symbolic recognition as a cheap, exploitative substitute for financial compensation?

Substituting the concept of “desire as productivity and becoming” for the model of “desire as lack” does not provide an exit from capitalist economy either. While such a concept of plenitude and excess renounces normative restrictions and disciplinary arrangements of desire, it nonetheless risks appropriating difference to capitalist economy, celebrating it as the principle of capitalist renewal. Thus, it seems essential to ask critically how specific economies deploy desire, and which concepts of desire allow for what kind of economic thinking. Moreover, the main concern of the conference is to reflect upon and, perhaps, invent queer conceptions of desire beyond the logics of both lack and of excess, in order to ask what they offer in view of just economies of desire, of a desire for economic and sexual justice.

Nikita Dhawan, Antke Engel, Christoph Holzhey, Volker Woltersdorff