

The Greek Review of Social Research

Vol 140 (2013)

Special Issue 140-141, B-C: Migration, gender and precarious subjectivities in the era of crisis. Editors: Athina Athansiou, Giorgos Tsimouris



No woman is illegal: Re-introducing antiracism in feminism

Julia Edthofer, Assimina Gouma

doi: [10.12681/grsr.65](https://doi.org/10.12681/grsr.65)

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To cite this article:

Edthofer, J., & Gouma, A. (2013). No woman is illegal: Re-introducing antiracism in feminism. *The Greek Review of Social Research*, 140, 203–216. <https://doi.org/10.12681/grsr.65>

*Julia Edthofer**, *Assimina Gouma***

NO WOMAN IS ILLEGAL:
RE-INTRODUCING ANTIRACISM IN FEMINISM¹

ABSTRACT

This is an approach of the issue of anti-racism in relation to feminism taking as example the German speaking countries. We argue that the efforts of some representatives of “feminism” to legitimize structural racism in the name of women’s rights had great acceptance in the public sphere of several European countries. In some cases this situation even created alliances between the far right and feminists. On the other hand, anti-immigrant policies in the name of women’s liberation generated resistance in both social movements and theoretical approaches in the field of anti-racist feminism. Especially self-organizations of migrant women have played a leading role in the political movement against anti-immigrant measures as well in the theoretical approach to anti-racist feminism.

Keywords: Anti-racist feminism, migration, self-organization of migrant women, “white” feminism, women’s rights

The issue of antiracist feminism has been embraced by several migrant organizations and activists. The main question examined in this article is how antiracist feminism might be fruitfully conceptualized. Our paper discusses the concept of antiracist feminism using two interlinked approaches: the first is related to the struggles of migrant women for social and political rights; the second focuses on white mainstream feminism and the adoption of antiracist criticism. In our text, we reflect on two political per-

* Sociologist, Research Group “Critical Migration research” [KriMi].

** University of Vienna and Research group “Critical Migration research” [KriMi].

1. All citations from German texts have been translated into English by Julia Edthofer and Assimina Gouma.

spectives: on the one hand, a migrant feminist standpoint and, on the other, a mainstream feminist one seeking to de-centre itself.

In recent publications, the self-location of writers themselves along the axes of power is an issue of controversial discussions. Ruth de Souza, for example, refers to Stuart Hall (1996) in order to emphasize that “all writers speak from a particular place and so it is important that they locate their own experiences and culture in their writing” (de Souza, 2004: 464). Migrant feminists criticize though that the location of the self as writer, speaker or scientist can only make sense with the parallel struggle for structural and political changes. Otherwise, the endless reflection of one’s own “white” privileges in the field of critical whiteness could function merely as a “religious apology” without consequences (Arslanoğlu, 2010). Our decision for putting forward a twofold approach in this essay is therefore not accidental; it corresponds to our experiences and (dis)placements as migrant and non-migrant women, researchers and activists, who met in Austria and are both strongly influenced by (anti-)feminism and (anti-)racist encounters and struggles partly in the Greek- and partly in the Austrian societies. Our different social histories and cultures within which we move are not essentialized but are seen and lived as experiences that offer us the perspectives for conceptualizing our political thought and practice. Therefore, as our writing is situated between different positions, we become in turn outsiders and insider’s vis-à-vis various contexts (de Souza, 2004: 463f.).

1. NO WOMAN IS ILLEGAL

The campaign “Keen Munch its illegal” (“No one is illegal”) was first introduced in 1997 during the “Documental X” in Kassel, Germany.² Since then this message has been one of the most widespread political statements in the struggles against structural racism and anti-immigration laws in German-speaking countries. Several social movements have supported the campaign which positions the issue of human rights – which is broadly regarded as an achievement of the global north – against racist migration regimes of western societies.

By rephrasing the meaning of the campaign into “No woman is illegal”, we suggest to conceptualize a feminist perspective. What is the meaning

2. It has been the main message of the coordination meeting of 30 anti-racist groups consisting of migrants, church organizations, trade unions, civil society representatives etc.

of this rephrasing for the feminist praxis? What does such a viewpoint require from feminism? The struggle for women's rights has been central in the history and concept of feminism. However, in the capitalist societies of the global north, migration is challenging the content and strategies of liberal feminism focusing on women's rights. Migrant women introduced therefore the position "Migrant women's rights are women's rights" (Leo – Berating, 2010) in order to refer to an antiracist feminism. The formulation "migrant rights are women's rights" demands a feminism that is mainly against anti-immigration laws and not solely restricted in the struggle against patriarchal structures in the societies.

At the same time, we have to pay attention to the fact that feminist struggles framed by the politics of women's rights have little impact on the situation of undocumented migrant women with much less legal rights. Furthermore, we have to take into consideration that apart from undocumented women, such concerns apply also to western women living precarious lives: The mainstream discourse on women's rights reflects mostly the needs and claims of hegemonic feminist groups that have privileged access to media and the public sphere. In other words, several feminist projects – like campaigns against the "glass ceiling" for more women in management positions – refer primarily to the representatives of the privileged classes or articulate positions of the majority society. The efforts towards women's rights must be linked to subaltern feminist praxis and its strategies in order to combat racism without overlooking geopolitical power relations. Migrant and not-migrant women need alliances towards a socio-critical feminist position that takes into account the global relations of exploitation. Such a feminist viewpoint does not neglect but rather attempts to capture the intersections of racism, sexism and class differences.

Developing a critical position is all the more urgent, since political actors – from feminist thought otherwise "unsullied" – exploit the issue of women's rights against migrants. Bringing migration and feminism together is a project that questions the situated (feminist) knowledge of the majority society from several perspectives. "Migrant women's rights are women's rights" is therefore not a truth, but a demand and a challenge for feminist thought and praxis. It reclaims the critique of Black Feminism and Subaltern Studies against the idea of a "sisterhood without antagonisms" or a homogeneous "woman" category in contemporary social relations. Migrant women's rights and struggles challenge hegemonic Eurocentric positions. The focus of challenge thereby encompasses both, questions of solidarity and struggle as well as questions of being the political subject.

2. “MIGRANT WOMEN” AS A POLITICAL PROJECT

What does it mean to be a “migrant woman”? “Being migrant” can have an empirical or even a technical meaning in order to feed statistical data – many people are marked as migrants or people with “migrant background” in official statistics, although they would never refer to themselves as such. However, the experiences, structural conditions and biographies of migrants cannot be summarized in one single position or nomination. Similar to the objection that “woman” can be used as a universal category it is also not possible for someone to be *just* a “migrant woman”. As it is echoed in the critique of an undifferentiated categorization as “woman”, the category of “migrant woman” cannot represent the various concerns and requests conventionally associated with it. In order to illuminate some of the internal differences playing out in the category itself, let us consider the following: In Austrian society, being a “migrant woman” can mean to be deported after contacting the police (see detailed report in No Racism 2011) for being raped and exploited for several years.³ To be a migrant woman thus means to be forced to develop strategies in order to overcome restrictive laws and militarized borders. It also means to strengthen collective political action in order to struggle against racism without having a union – just as it happened during the Transnational Migrant Strikes at the first of March 2011 and 2012 (Initiative Transnationaler Migrant_innenstreik, 2011).⁴

3. A 27-year-old woman from Nigeria who was forced into involuntary sex work by human being traffickers has been deported from Austria in January 2011. She had dared, after years of exploitation and torture, in spite of all threats to turn for help to the police. The authorities reacted promptly – and pushed the woman off to Nigeria. A juridical claim for humanitarian residence rights by the responsible Municipal Department 35 is in the running. But the result will no longer be experienced by the woman; she might be already dead until then. The immigration police did not wait for the decision; the woman was forced to fly back to Nigeria in the night of the 20th January and faces an uncertain future fearing the worst case because of the statements made before the Austrian authorities. It is interesting in this context that the authorities officially pretend to take action against forced labor and assisting victims of human trafficking. This example shows once again that the political discourse about human and women trafficking is just a way for the further deprivation of rights of migrants.” (no racism 2011).

4. On 1st of March 2011 migrants in Austria and anti-racist supporters joined the protest against racism, exploitation and restrictive anti-immigration laws. The “Transnational Migrant_innenstreik” on 1st of March goes back to the protests in 2006 in the United States. A catalyst for the strike was “The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005”, also known as HR 4437. This law denounced 12 million undocumented migrants as well as their supporters as criminal people. In the following years a transnational action day

“Being a migrant woman” means always both opposing strategies of resistance and affirmation. Some women reject the term “migrant” in order to dissociate themselves from the stigma of being “dangerous classes”. Some might negate this position in order to protect themselves from discrimination and racism. Other women prefer or even insist to embody this identity in everyday life. Some women reject the designation of being a “migrant woman” as an authoritative construction and attribution imposed on them by the hegemonic groups and discourses: Although they have settled since many years in countries other than the countries of origin, they do not possess the same rights because they are still treated as “foreigners” and “strangers”. The relevant question here is: For how long is a woman a “migrant woman”? And who is entitled to define, and according to what criteria, the status of “being a migrant”?

Regarding the different practices towards the invocation as “migrant”, it remains in question if this category can still produce meaning or make sense. After disputes with activists of the left-wing women’s movement in Germany, participants of the 5th Congress of Black Women 1991, decided to develop their self-representation as “migrant women”. This was also a reaction to the ongoing legal restrictions against migrants and the German attitude that racism for a long time has been exclusively discussed in relation to anti-Semitism, whereas politics and actions against migrants have been denominated as just “discrimination” or – even worse – as “xenophobia”. Soon the project of “being migrant” became a core issue of further struggles: “During the last conference of Immigrant Women, Women in Exile, Jewish Women and Black Women in Bonn in March 1994 raised once again the question of a common political identity. Such a common identity should name our differences, but also identify our commons. During the discussion we soon realized that we could not find a definition that encompasses all our experiences and locations” (FeMigra, 1994). In their manifesto, “We, the rope dancers”, the Feminist Migrant Women Organisation (FeMigra) describes “being a migrant woman” as a process of shared, non-essentialist *political* identity and as an oppositional location against exclusion in European migration regimes.⁵ FeMigra was fighting against

(France, Greece, Italy, and Spain) took shape calling people with the same concerns the protests against exploitation and criminalization. The highlight of the first Transnational Migrant Strike in Austria in 2011 was the rally at Viktor-Adler-market in the 10th District of Vienna.

5. “The definition of our own political identity as migrant women has to be understood as a counterclaim, as the name of an oppositional place. We are aware of the tightrope on which we move, when we construct a strategically conceived identity, which may be for some women

racism and rejected the idea of global sisterhood or a universal category of being a “woman” but at the same time demanded the right to represent themselves as migrant women. Political self-organization became their focus in struggling against injustice and for social and political rights. Migrant feminists rejected the culturalization of social inequalities and spoke out against assimilation imperatives articulated by the hegemonic groups.

3. HERITAGES OF THE CRITICAL

Solidarity and resistance are core issues of the “Rope Dancers” political project. Their manifesto delivers political positions and arguments for the mobilization against state policy towards migrant women. At the same time, the activists insist on the need to produce feminist political knowledge that takes into consideration the antagonisms between women with different social positions. By doing so, the “Rope Dancers” speak for feminism without focusing solely on the struggle against patriarchy. They redefine feminist politics as the attempt to discern the complex production of power relations in the society (FeMigra, 1994). The political identity of migrant women is understood as an oppositional place where resistance emerges against neo-liberal conditions and the “normalization” of national and racist practices.

FeMigra’s political project resonates with the criticism and the political activism of Black feminists and feminists of colour in the US. Since the emergence of the feminist movement they formulate feminist criticism, which decentres and transcends white mainstream positions in pointing to the intersections of white supremacy or racism and patriarchy. Up to the 1970s, preclusions produced by white, bourgeois feminism, which are due to its racist underpinnings and its entanglement with racist structures, imperialism, neo-colonialism and global socio-economic inequalities were not accounted for in Western mainstream feminism. Women of Colour and Black feminists, who were affected by those power inequalities, were not included in feminist knowledge production, nor were they part of the formulation of “universal” feminist political demands and strategies. As a

exclusive and for some women in turn limiting. However, we regard this position important, in order to bring into the centre the immigration history and policy of this country. We want to question the dominant culturalization of social inequalities, which refers us to the position of the other and strangers. In attempting, however, to shape a migrant women policy, which is not located in national or cultural spaces, but in the possibilities of resistance within the social contradictions, we want to break the logic of separatism between the own people and the strangers (and vice versa) and to escape in this way from the signified position of the object.” (FeMigra, 1994).

consequence, and enhanced from the 1970s onwards, these activists and theorists started to intervene critically in activist and academic debates. Also in German-speaking contexts these interventions led to a self-reflection (or resistance to the criticism) within white feminism (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 1999). A starting point for this self-reflection has been the claim for a consequent standpoint-political perspective on movement politics, which renders visible racist structures, power inequalities and privileges and thus allows for subjecting them to political criticism and action.

From a “bio-austrian”⁶ feminist perspective, from which one of us is writing, anti-racist criticism of black feminists, feminists of colour and migrant feminists demanded and thus opened up the possibility for self-reflection. Bearing in mind the starting point of feminist political practice and theory, namely the criticism of power inequalities and interwoven violent relations, this process had to happen in order to stick to feminist political goals. Feminism as a political project is directed against such power relations and it strongly builds on the collectivization and politicization of individual experiences as tool for producing counter-hegemonic knowledge and for its translation into political action. Put in another way, the epistemological underpinnings of feminist knowledge production could be described as theory rooted in political practice. Political criticism formulated from migrant feminist⁷ standpoints is based on such a collectivization of experiences which, however, are not made by white feminists belonging to the so called “majority society”, simply because they are not affected by structural and post-colonial everyday-racism (Gümen, 1996; Oguntoye, 1986).

Consequently, an antiracist self-reflection requires the denomination and analysis of one’s own privileges, which of course can be an uncomfortable process with contentious potential. It is contentious, on the one hand, because it relates to questions of social materiality, namely to questions related to access to resources. As experience reports from migrant grassroots-organizations stress, feminist allies pertaining to the ‘majority soci-

6. “Bio-Austrian” is a term adopted from “Kanak Attak”, a German anti-racist migrant political self-organization, which uses the term “bio-german” to denominate German citizens belonging to the so called “mainstream society” – in other words: German citizens without a so called “migration background”.

7. We adopt the self-denomination “migrant feminists” from FeMigra, who use it in a two-fold way: First, it is applied as strategic identity for persons who do not belong to the majority society; second it is used as technical term for persons who do not hold the German Austrian citizenship. The activists are aware of the homogenizing effects of such identity-political self-denominations, but they opt for it in order to strengthen their political capability to act.

ety' can easily – and fast – turn into competitors and critics when it comes to the question of the distribution of infrastructure and funding. FeMigra, for example, points out that although “bio-german” feminists held structurally shaped advantages regarding access to resources, they soon turned into critics of “migrant particularism and separatism” in defending them against uncomfortable migrant neighbours (FeMigra, 1993: 10f.). On the other hand, such a process of self-reflection has contentious potential, because it questions and “decentres” the white feminist understanding of solidarity. Such processes of decentring are at stake, for instance, when the offered form of solidarity of hegemonic feminists is neither wanted nor needed. FeMigra explain their lack of interest in “friendly exchanging mutual stereotypes” with mainstream feminists by the fact that their main political interest has always been the fight for political and social rights for migrants. They felt quite isolated with their claims within mainstream white German Austrian feminist movement politics. Their struggle for equal rights was not supported; rather it was ignored or downplayed (ibid.). Such differences and ruptures, which are rooted in unequal positions along axes of difference, are to be politicized and rendered politically productive. What is at stake from a bio-Austrian perspective is thus the development of a “decentred solidarity”.

Decentred solidarity points to political self-reflection on two different levels. On the one hand, this solidarity requires “making room”. Making room, in this context, means, on the one hand, that white feminists should stop being suspicious of “migrant separatism”, or even refuse it as being particularistic and exclude it thus from “their” hard-owned infrastructure. Also, it implies accepting that migrant separatists do not wait for mainstream feminist support and gratuity for political self-organization and organize apart – not least to avoid the necessity of providing constant and exhausting “anti-racist counselling” for their white allies, as Arslanoğlu puts it ironically (Arslanoğlu, 2011: 3). On the other hand, making room is understood as the willingness and ability to react to the criticism formulated by black and migrant feminists as well as feminists of colour: it requires practices to actively support their claims for equal social and political rights such as the right to stay, the right to move, to vote, to work or not to work, etc. Such a decentred solidarity is a political strategy that uncovers, analyses and potentially transcends preclusions and paternalisms within white mainstream feminism.

Consequently, political criticism has to focus on social and political rights in the various migration regimes and thus poses the question: Are

migrants' rights women's rights? A state-centred (and thus ethnic-nationalistic) feminism (Eichhorn, 1992: 103f.), providing programs for the advancement of women and anti-discrimination legislation for a "national community", ignores migrants or non-citizens. Such women's rights are grounded in a societal system, which includes migrants as workforce, but deprives them of equal rights. The criticism of a white mainstream feminism that blinds out its geopolitical and social positionality, is thus still to be strengthened.

4. "BORDERS ARE TOO CLOSE FOR US": STRUGGLES AND SELF-ORGANIZATION OF MIGRANT WOMEN

Collective strategies and tactics of resistance are key elements of the struggles of migrants. In several cases such struggles have been constitutive for the self-organization of migrant women. On the one hand feminist migrants' organizations such as Lefö, maiz, Orient Express, Peregrina and many more in Austria, aim also at the practical support of migrants. On the other hand, self-organization is a political self-empowerment based on concrete – often precarious – life realities as well as on feminist, anti-heteronormative, anti-racist and post-colonial political standpoints. Migrant self-organizations thus continue the discussion on possible anti-racist feminist practices. In many cases their criticism against structural racism can be described as in-depth analyses of the "Politics of Location" (Yuval-Davis, 2006), as they defend a differentiated, self-determined public within the majority society in order to subvert hegemonic projects of belonging. Their aim is to deconstruct political conditions of inequality and to indicate collective (guerrilla) strategies: "Austria we love you! We will never leave you!" (maiz slogan). Such a collective self-understanding is developed within political projects, in which solidarity is neither exclusively bound to gender relations nor to ethnicisation/ethnicity. The first Transnational Migrants' Strike on the 1st of March 2011 thus sought to deconstruct the splitting in "We" and "You".⁸ But still, demarcation is – and

8. "We have come as workers, as students and professors, as refugees, relatives, physicians and sex workers, as undocumented migrants, as au pairs, professionals and care workers. We have been living here for years and sometimes for generations. We are here, in kindergartens, in schools, hospitals, and nursing homes, on construction and production sites, at universities, in private homes, in brothels, super markets and offices. We have all genders and sexual orientations, we believe in different religions and ideologies, we belong to different age groups and social strata. We have diverse backgrounds, sometimes we stick to our ethnic origin, sometimes

lasts – an important anti-racist political means. When the Black feminist political activist Araba Evelyn Johnston-Arthur rejected her nomination for the Austrian MiA-Award,⁹ a huge number of feminist migrant organizations publicly supported the political message of her open letter, which can be synthesised in the following statement: “On the one hand ‘successful migrant women’ are called before the curtain in a way that is well-covered by the media, on the other hand racist structures on the political and the societal level, such as the ‘new’ aliens legislation for instance, are not touched – but it is exactly such structures, which systematically put migrants in a worse position.”(Johnston-Arthur, 2009)

Another topic currently at stake in feminist antiracism regards the interweaving of gender-based violence and the hegemonic discourse on “foreigners”. In particular the anti-Muslim discourse links the issue of violence with anti-migrant politics and demands for deportation and strict laws against the “violent foreign man”. Thilo Sarazzin (2010) is one of the prominent proponents of such demands in Germany. For his argumentation he refers to the “authentic voices” of women like Serap Çileli (2008) and Necla Kelek (2005) which are also well-known in German-speaking publics. The two women have common biographies brought up in Germany in Muslim families with migrant experiences and demand in their texts to use anti-migrant laws in order to combat violence against women.¹⁰

Like Yasemin Shooman (2012) also the political economist Esra Erdem (2009) criticises the positions of Necla Kelek and emphasizes that proponents of the anti-violence movement would rather outsource gender-based violence to “brown men” than work on an adequate victim protection legislation and infrastructure. As a consequence, the judiciary would become part of the German migration regime directed towards migrant men who get con-

we renounce these forms of belonging. We are living here and there. We are not longing for an old or for a new homeland. Frontiers are too narrow for us. We do not fit into them, they don't fit our lives. «Transnational Migrant Strike on the 1st of March 2011, Online source: www.1maerz-streik.net (accessed in July 2011).

9. The Austrian Mia-Award has been introduced in 2008 according to an idea of the conservative politician Christina Marek. Women of “migrant background” are asked before the curtain and “honored for their achievements in and for Austria” (Mia-Award, 2012). The nominations are organised in categories such as sport, science, arts, civil rights, etc. The Mia-Award-Gala takes place every year at the 8th of March during Womens' Word Day.

10. Yasemin Shooman (2012) criticizes that Kelek and Çileli make the mistake to refer to their own violence experiences as a cultural phenomenon attached to migration and Islam. She describes their function in the German public as the one of “key witnesses of the prosecution” whose comments are instrumentalized by far-right politics.

structed as potential perpetrators. (ibid.: 189) Furthermore, Erdem stresses that such politics not only affects potentially violent migrant men but above all female migrants in precarious living conditions. In this context, it is also to be emphasized that a restrictive alien law, as it is inherently structurally racist, never improves the situation of migrant women. Like Johnston-Arthur in Austria, Erdem also points to the violent consequences induced by the racist German alien law that creates new dependencies for migrant women and thus facilitates their exploitation and oppression. In this context, she also points to deficits within white mainstream feminist politics: “It is about time that the German feminist movement starts to deal with the fact that it did not develop a progressive feminist vision for the German migration society. If this challenge can be met strongly depends on the question if the interconnectedness of migrants’ and feminist struggles” (ibid: 200).

5. CHALLENGING THE RE-DISCOVERY OF ENLIGHTENED EUROPEAN “PHILOGYNY”

The re-discovery¹¹ of gender equality as major political project of the enlightened Europe, which encompasses the whole political spectrum including even the extreme right, points to the aforementioned “blank spaces” within feminist knowledge production and politics. Mainstream media promote male and female protagonists fighting for women’s rights, in electoral campaigns “free women” are to be protected from the “constraint to veil” and the Austrian home secretary frames gender-based violence within migrant communities as a “cultural offence” caused by “traditional violence”. At the same time, the cultural and symbolic “victimization” of female migrants in public and media discourse advances. The picture of “needy” and “uninformed” migrant women is common sense within hegemonic discourse and justifies sanctions as well as constraints regarding educational – and above all – linguistic policies. Migrants are framed as people without knowledge, education and proper (German) language skills and “state pedagogy” is justified and even presented as the only solution – also in liberal feminist politics. The intersections of sexism and racism draw on old stereotypes with a new livery and migrant women are constructed as new “savages” who have to be civilized and enlightened.

11. The defense of women’s rights has been one of the pleaded “political projects” during colonialism and the exploitation of the colonies was morally justified by this ethically important project.

Neither historically nor in the current debates such inherently racist constructions and the interlinked power of definition do refer to an exclusively right-wing project – rather they are deeply embedded in the mainstream of society. Journalistic comments in the Austrian liberal quality press, such as *Die Presse* or *Der Standard*, relate to feminist politics when justifying structural racism: “The rhetoric of enlightenment renders a sort of anti-Muslim racism presentable, which so far has been propagated only by the extreme Right. In this context, (pseudo-)feminist argumentations always play a central role.” (Neuhold and Mendel, 2011: 10)

Such political configurations are also directed against the white feminist movement. In imagining a majority society, in which gender equality has been achieved (above all in comparison to the gender relations amongst the non-enlightened “Others”) feminist claims get devaluated and minimized. Rather than focusing on social change towards gender equality, neoliberal politics of individualising the (highly culturalised) social is taking over. Summing up the aforementioned, a radical criticism of racist and sexist intersections is thus at stake. Such a criticism focuses on the social and political realm and thereby seeks to combine a critique of symbolic violence with an analysis of material or structural inequalities.

As Maria do Mar Castro Varela and Nikita Dhawan (2003) point out, an exclusive focus on cultural criticism could turn into merely academic self-reflection. The authors illustrate this in pointing to the omissions of postcolonial theory, which tends to leave out material questions as well as materially grounded social positionalities of the postcolonial theorists themselves. The authors thus call for an enhanced socio-economic analysis of the “hegemonic reality” in order to complement the discourse-analytical criticism of unequal power relations on a symbolic level (Castro Varela and Dhawan, 2003: 275). Arslanoğlu also points to ambivalent effects of antiracist self-reflection in academia, which she criticises to be an exclusively academic, identity political and partly cultural-relativist political project. In her view, the hegemonic positionality (as being white, middle-class, heterosexual, etc.) would get “publicly confessed” without drawing the logical political consequences in fighting against - the very material - racist and classist structures that render academia still a “white” room, mainly set aside for members of the majority society. In Arslanoğlu’s words, such academic criticism could be denominated as fake antiracism, which patronises and excludes migrants’ positions and voices once more (Arslanoğlu, 2011: 4).

Following the political positions of feminist migrant self-organizations such as FeMigra, maiz and Lefö, which have developed their theoretical

standpoints and their criticism within and as outcome of their political practices, we would like to make a plea for a consequent de-culturalization and re-politicization of social and political issues. Such a political approach analyzes the functionality and mechanisms of the respective national and supranational migration regimes; it strengthens resistance to it and advances the struggle for social and political rights.

This discussion leads back to the importance of migrant feminist criticism regarding white mainstream feminism. Since the feminist political project is directed against *any* form of unequal power relations, such criticism needs to integrate the antiracist standpoint in its political agenda and to sharpen the political standpoint. If it rejects such a decentring and a consequent “course correction” (Knapp, 1998), it would abandon its most essential political claim. In summary, from a “hegemonic-theoretical perspective”, movement politics and academia are fields where counter-hegemonic knowledge is produced and strategies of resistance against hegemonic power structures are developed. What is at stake at the “hegemonic-political level” is thus the dissemination and “hegemonization” of such counter-discourses and counter-practices as formulated by black and migrant feminists and feminists of colour in building up alliances and in developing further a decentred feminist political project.

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