

Migration, Islam and Masculinities: Transforming Emigration and Immigration Societies

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Dr. Susanne Spindler

The counter-image of hegemonic masculinity – the relevance of racism and masculinity in the biographies of detained young migrants

In public discourse, young migrant men are seen as loaded with deficiencies and labelled as “violent machos”. Their problems in society are reasoned to be caused by a special cultural form of masculinity, which is described as patriarchal, traditional and violent.

In my lecture I analyse biographies of young migrant men who have been imprisoned, mainly for violent crimes. The intersectional analysis shows how constructions of masculinity and racism intensify each other toward the exclusion of the subject.

Establishing hegemony, gender and origin are important factors. To become hegemonic, concepts of masculinity need societal consent for their (re)production. In this formation, the subordinated masculinity is created as a counter-image. In their biographies the young migrants tell about searching and fighting for their positions within this counter-image. Gender remains as point of reference, they use it as an orientation while, at the same time, it turns into a trap.