Politics of "Alterisation": manufacturing and governing Otherness.
Comparative perspectives from European and African contexts.

International Workshop, 9-10 May 2022, Maison Française d'Oxford

Call for Papers

Supported by the Maison Française d'Oxford (MFO), the Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH), and the OxPo programme (a partnership between the University of Oxford and *Sciences Po*), this research workshop explores the notion of alterisation, and how "Otherness" is produced by state institutions.

The workshop is co-organised by early career researchers from the University of Oxford and *Sciences Po*, and is funded by the 2022 Paris-Oxford Partnership (POP) grant and the MFO.

It will be held at the Maison Française d'Oxford on 9th and 10th May 2022.

Paper proposals are specifically sought for presentations on subjects related to the workshop's themes **for the panel 1 (Ideologies and alterisation) or the panel 3 (Public welfare administration and the politics of rejection).** Proposals relating to the themes covered in the other panels will not be selected.

<u>Guidelines for the proposals</u>

Paper proposals should clearly present the theoretical, methodological, and empirical approaches adopted to tackle the research undertaken. Any empirical case studies under discussion should focus at least partly on European and/or African contexts.

Proposals should not exceed **800 words** and are to be sent by **March 10, 2022** in PDF format to the following addresses: jeanne.bouyat@sciencespo.fr, eve.gianoncelli@wolfson.ox.ac.uk and viviane.spitzhofer@sciencespo.fr

Participants should then submit a short paper (not exceeding 20.000 signs) by April 17, 2022 which will be used as a basis for presentation and discussion.

Accommodation, travel, and catering costs will be covered for participants based in the UK; and other participants will be able to present remotely.

Scientific description of the workshop

A central aim of the workshop is to explore the notion of alterisation and how Otherness is produced by state institutions.
Alterisation is understood here as a process of (re)definition of categories as well as group assignments and affiliations of populations considered or constituted as "Other" (Mudimbe, 1988). More specifically, this workshop examines the role played by public authorities and state institutions in the genealogy and amplification of alterisation processes both as sites of policy-making, and of elaboration and circulation of ideologies. In brief, this workshop aims at exploring the "politics of alterisation".
To grasp contemporary forms of the politics of alterisation, this workshop adopts a broad conceptualisation of Otherness, drawing on comparative and interdisciplinary approaches. It seeks to understand how Otherness is manufactured by considering current research chiefly (but not exclusively) focused on African and European contexts, while combining insights from various subfields in political science (comparative political sociology, sociology of public administrations, sociology of international relations, political theory) and transdisciplinary fields (African studies, education studies, migration studies, postcolonial studies, urban studies). In particular the workshop hopes to bring together contributions that highlight ways in which the State and public action more broadly produce "categories of thought" which frame public intervention targeted at "Others" (Bourdieu, 2012).
State institutions are not, however, considered in isolation. Rather, this workshop is interested in exploring how state institutions are conceived as sites for the elaboration of "techniques of government" among others - primordial indeed, but not exclusive - generating processes of subjectivation which constitute the "Others", while bearing cognitive, ideological, and material effects (Foucault, 2004; Gordon, 1991).
Through considering the multiplication of criteria of definition of "Others" (based on ethnicity, race, nationality, language, social class, gender, sexual orientation, etc) and their intersectionality (Crenshaw, 2017; Yval-Davis, 2011), this workshop explores both similarities and singularities (Bayart, 2008) which characterise processes of essentialisation and differentiation constituting of the politics of alterisation. It aims to share common conceptual, methodological and empirical questions associated with the study of the politics of alterisation. In bringing together research from African and European contexts, it seeks to highlight the contemporary political connections between the two continents - partially linked to postcolonial circulations, but not exclusively (Basch and al., 1994 ; Grégoire and Mazzocchetti, 2013) – and to explore the global dimensions of these dynamics.

The workshop focuses on four aspects of the politics of alterisation:
      (1) the reactionary ideologies underpinning alterisation;
      (2) the processes of criminalisation they engender;
      (3) the politics of rejection in the public welfare administration;
      (4) the politics of recognition of groups constituted as "Other".

Panel 1) Ideologies and alterisation

The first panel compares how contemporary reactionary ideologies in selected African and European contexts frame and mobilise particular forms of alterisation.

This panel examines how ideologies are mobilised, how they are conceptually and rhetorically constituted and labelled, and the ways in which they vary in the contexts under study, by focusing on the ways in which they link gender, race, class and sexuality to nation, religion and culture. It explores whether certain types of Othering are made central to certain ideologies. For example, in Europe and the United States studies have highlighted the ways in which an a priori counter-intuitive alliance between conservatives, neoliberals, feminists and progressives has been shaping "sexual democracy" (Fassin 2010), "femonationalism"(Farris 2017), and "sexual politics"(Jakobsen 2021) which commonly result in the strategic use of gender and sexuality to exclude Muslims from national communities. What entanglement between power relations may the politics of sex highlight in African settings?

The panel also intends to examine what it means to speak of conservative and/or reactionary ideologies in different contexts. In Europe, fluctuating conservative positions can be observed, depending on the values and issues related to social power relations to which they react. For example, feminism may be rejected when pertaining to gender equality but adopted as a specific cultural trait and a way of celebrating sexual differences when Islam is targeted. The panel will analyse the extent to which differing discourses can be deployed from the same conservative standpoint, depending on various forms of Othering in specific contexts.

In addition, the panel connects these theoretical concerns to general ideological propositions and specific policy proposals. It will identify the ways in which ideas pertaining to alterisation may "travel" (Said, 1983) within and between Europe and Africa, identifying the spaces of circulation from both national and transnational point of views and in particular the places and forms of exchange between intellectuals as well as with politics. It will question the extent to which ideologies succeed in taking governments as strategic channels and if they are deployed by particular political parties.

Panel 2) Criminalisation and the social production of the Other

The second panel explores both top-down processes of the criminalisation of designated "Others", and the ambivalent engagement of reputed "Others" in the social production of "legality" and "illegality". The designation of the Other, the "boundary work" (Lamont, 2002) between a valued "us" and a repelling "they" – is a process which often involves criminalisation. Norbert Elias and John Scotson (1994) highlighted how the characterization of outsiders is intrinsic to the assertion of rules; the distinction between those believed to comply, and those suspected to violate them. Designations of an anomic Other and the reverse claim of a respectable Self are, in other words, two sides of the same coin. They entail a social promotion of norms which partly rely on, and partly exceed the perimeters of the law (Elias et Scotson, 1994 : 104). In the context of migration, Nicholas de Genova (2002) for instance shows how "illegality" is never a self-evident category despite a growing rhetoric positing the essential category of "illegal migrants". The category of "illegal migrants" is in fact forged by states and by public policies which have their own history and context of existence (Spire, 2009), a process facilitated by the orientation of the dominant public discourse. In the case of the European Union, the role of the Schengen area in the conceptualisation of migration as a matter of security has repeatedly been highlighted (e.g. Huysmans, 2000).

"Others" – these individuals considered to be at odds with the dominant set of norms – are not, however, passive agents in this process of criminalisation. They engage in the grand divide between the "legal" and the "illegal", and the normative division between the "good" and the "evil". This is evident when criminalised groups formulate rival norms in the development of "subcultures" often emphasized by the sociology of deviance (Becker, 1997). Yet, most of the time the persons deemed to be criminogenic do not dispute the merit of the norms by which they are judged. Loïc Wacquant highlighted in his study of the American ghettos and the French "banlieues" that many of them claim their compliance with mainstream norms and finger their peers or neighbours as those responsible for social disorder, through a process of "lateral denigration" (Wacquant, 2006 : 248). These and other related processes will form part of the material explored through this panel.

Panel 3) Public welfare administration and the politics of rejection

The third panel explores the ways in which public institutions participate in the production, amplification, and normalisation of the rejection of "Others".

This panel examines the inner workings of supranational, national, or subnational institutions in charge of welfare services (i.e. education, healthcare and social assistance). Considering these institutions complements analyses centred on the ways in which state policing or immigration control discriminate against "Others", and leads us to uncover the more subtle ways through which "Others" are rejected or excluded by state institutions. These include the erection of barriers to access public goods and services targeted at certain groups or their lesser quality, delayed or segregated allocation; the marginalisation of certain categories of staff; or the tacit endorsement of racist, sexist, or other discriminatory behaviours perpetrated by its employees.

In this panel, we aim in particular to explore three aspects of this politics of rejection. First, we tackle debates associated with conceptualising the politics of rejection. Building on insights brought by theories on individual prejudice (Dovidio and al, 2010), systematic racism (Feagin, 2006), critical race theory (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017), and everyday racism (Essed, 1991) applied to the inner workings of public institutions, the panel will expand on discussions of "institutional racism" (Carmichael and Hamilton, 1967), "state racism" (Dhume and al, 2020), "institutional xenophobia" (Valluy, 2009), and "institutional discrimination" (McCrudden, 1982). We may explore how these terms are differently politicised in African and European contexts, and nuances between "institutional", "institutionalised" or "institutionalisation" processes.

Secondly, the panel deals with the methodological challenges which come with researching the politics of rejection. As public institutions may be approached through various avenues (legal or professional norms, material devices, agents' subjectivities, etc), different methods may be employed: socio historical analyses, analyses of political discourses, ethnographic observations, in-depth interviews with agents or publics, quantitative estimations of exclusions or differential treatment, amongst others. These methods may be combined to grasp the multiple forms of the politics of rejection. Methodological debates also concern the relevance and feasibility of researching these processes from within and outside institutions, and how to articulate these views to explore interactions between state officials, elected representatives, and pressure groups.

Lastly, the panel explores the ways in which public institutions in charge of the administration or delivering of welfare policies respond when they are being called out for taking part in this politics of rejection. In light of the multiplication of internal surveys and evaluations commissioned by national Departments, local governments or learning institutions on the ways in which they produce or aggravate discrimination targeted at "Others", it is important to explore the definitions of Otherness that are being retained and why. We consider the factors that prompt such initiatives (social mobilisations, funding incentives, legal obligations…) and how these shape their forms and effects (in terms of, institutional change, activism, de-politicisation, etc). Such initiatives also participate in the framing of policy imperatives.

Panel 4) Politics of recognition and alterisation

The fourth panel explores the nexus between the language and politics of recognition and forms of Othering.

These forms of Othering not only necessitate the former, but may also be reified by them. The politics of recognition will be explored both as practiced by the state institutions and its agents (policies of recognition), as well as by those who employ it to resist their own exclusion (the broader politics of recognition).

Amid a context of continued tensions around migration and security issues, a paradoxical phenomenon may also be highlighted: the parallel use of a positive and proactive vocabulary centred on the

application of rights (Weber, 2014) to put forward certain policies termed as "hosting", "recognising" or more broadly "inclusive" towards the "Others". This panel explores the theoretical and practical issues associated with these policies which rely on the initial institutional construction of a public as "excluded" and "Other" - given that their aim is precisely to "include". It notably looks at the symbolic, legal, memorial, educational, and restitutive dimensions of these policies; while placing the focus on European and Southern African contexts. Going beyond the literature analysing these policies of recognition solely as instrumental to nationalist projects (Puar 2007, Bracke 2012, Farris 2017), this panel seeks to highlight the internal contradictions that characterise recognition policies, which recycle categories and tools that have been - and are still - used for exclusion (Artous 2005, Fraisse 2008).

Looking beyond state institutions, this panel then also explores the politics of recognition as practiced by a wide array of non-state actors, including associations, lawyers, or activists, who use this same language to make claims upon state institutions on behalf of, or as members of, excluded groups constituted as "Other". More specifically, the we ask whether alterisation can enable the constitution of a cause and be mobilised as a strategic support for the recognition of citizenship. We explore how different types of recognition may be associated with the use of essentialist or homogenising rhetoric, in particular when it comes to the protection of rights, the introduction of compensation mechanisms, or the rewriting of History. They may also be associated with differing perceptions of space and enmity. Finally, we examine how these various causes articulate, both in highlighting competition, ranking, or invisibilisation (Crenshaw 1989, Verloo 2006), but also forms of coalition, widening, and politicisation (McAdam and Rucht 1993, Béland and Cox 2016).

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