



SCHEDULE

HOW MUCH RACISM IS THERE IN MAX WEBER AND WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH IT?

November 3, 2022
5-8pm CET

**5.00 – 5.15: Welcome Address by Hartmut Rosa and
Introduction by Workshop Organizers Urs Lindner and Amelie Stuart**

5.15 – 6.15: Presentations

ANGELA ZIMMERMAN (WASHINGTON DC)
Reading Weber's Racism

MANUELA BOATCĂ (FREIBURG)
Building Heroic Europe: Racializing Labor East and South

KARL-SIEGBERT REHBERG (DRESDEN)
Max Weber's "Strong Words" in a Climate of Nationalistic Racial Pride
and Racial Contempt

ANDREA ESSER (JENA)
How to Deal with Racism, Sexism and Antisemitism in the So-Called Classics
of the German Philosophical Tradition?

6.15 – 6.30: Short Break

6.30 – 8.00: Common Discussion

Workshop languages are English and German. There will be a simultaneous translation.



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DES EIGENTUMS

Gefördert durch die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)–SFB TRR 294/1–424638267

In November 1896, German liberals of the Naumann tendency convened in Erfurt's Kaisersaal in order to establish a new party. On this occasion, Max Weber also delivered a speech. He complained bitterly about liberal softness ("miserabilism") with regard to what was then called the "Polish question": "There has been talk about reducing the Poles to second-class citizens of Germany. The opposite is true: we were the first to turn the Poles into humans." Weber closed his speech by proclaiming: "Here, in this Thuringian city, I would like to call the old Thuringian saying out to you: >Duke, become tough< [*Landgraf werde hart*]." One year earlier, in his inaugural address at the University of Freiburg, Weber had used the example of West Prussia and Posen, where there was a Polish majority population, to "illustrate the role played by physical and psychological racial differences between nationalities in the economic struggle for existence." For the purpose of protecting "Germanness", the national state should close the Eastern border and engage in a process of inner colonization by exclusively redistributing land to German peasants. The state has, as Weber claimed, an "interest in stemming the tide of Slavs". "We do not have peace and human happiness to hand down to our descendants, but rather the *eternal struggle* to preserve and raise the quality of our national species."

Anti-Slavic racism is so obvious in these pieces from the young Max Weber that they may be seen as a textbook case of this particular form of (colonial) racism. But what about the rest of his work? Should Weber, as postcolonial critics have argued, also be considered a founder of "culturalist racism", using, in his civilization theory, religion as an essentializing proxy for race? Are there further ramifications of racism in his writings? How should the "mature" Weber's self-proclaimed "value neutrality" be assessed against the background of the value judgements in his early writings? A learning success or an immunization strategy? On the other hand: Is Weber's engagement in spreading the work of W.E.B. Du Bois in Germany something to record in his favor? How much importance should we give to his dispute with Alfred Ploetz at the first German sociology congress in 1910, where Weber insisted against Ploetz's eugenics that biological race is not (yet) a scientific concept?

The first aim of this workshop is to provide a critical inventory of racism in Weber's writings. The second is to start a conversation about how to adequately deal with his racism. Do institutions that bear the name of Weber have an obligation to critically engage with this dimension of his work? What could this mean in concrete and practical terms? What does decolonization of the sociological canon imply with respect to Weber? Should we read him primarily as a symptomatic source material and no longer an ever-lasting "classic"? Is "contextualization" the answer? By which means? Last but not least, what can we learn from projects coming to terms with the racism of other "great German thinkers" like Kant and Hegel?

