



International Workshop on Gender and Reproduction

Programme

Individual and social reproduction have always been two sides of the same coin and intrinsically tied together. With the advent of the modern state these private and societal questions became politicized. According to the ideas of the developing discipline of political economy, a growing and healthy population was the target of state policy. Later on, reduction of fertility or highly problematic concepts, such as eugenics, appeared as objectives of demographic policy. In the second half of the twentieth century, Neo-Malthusian ideas had a broad influence on UN Conferences on Population and Development.

The size of a population in relation to its economic environment matters. Adding persons to a population or taking persons away from it has a deep impact on questions of distributional justice within that population, between populations or between generations. However, efforts to balance population and development should not violate fundamental human rights and liberties. So at the Conference in Cairo 1994 the concept of “Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights” (SRHR) was added to the agenda of development. All persons should get the means to decide freely whether and when to have children and how many children, to have and to delay and prevent pregnancy, raise healthy children and manage problems of infertility, and enjoy a healthy, safe and satisfying sexual relationship. Within and around the UN, these questions received new momentum in the post-2015 development agenda. It appears that the concept of SRHR has changed significantly over the last twenty years.

In 1994 black women at a pro-choice conference in Chicago coined the term “reproductive justice”, both for scholarly and activist purposes. Explicitly highlighting intersectionality as a central problem, the concept interrogates, in the understanding of its framers, ongoing biological and non-biological power relationships between disadvantaged groups, social elites and the state. The approach from its very beginning included a much broader range of topics than SRHR. From that perspective “nearly every field of human endeavor affects and is affected by reproductive politics.” So for example, the gender-based division of labor concerning bringing up children and other reproductive work appears as a profound issue of distributive justice. From such a perspective, there is a circular relationship between culture and reproduction: via enculturation and socialization, bringing up children and other reproductive work informs culture, and is also informed by culture.

Due to developments in reproductive medicine within the last four decades, the very notion of ‘natural’ birth has undergone profound changes and subsequently the possibilities that assisted reproductive technologies (ART) provide have altered notions of the right to raise

healthy children. ART brings to the reach of infertile couples, homosexual couples or even single persons, their ‘own’ biological child by in vitro fertilization and/or surrogacy. Pre-implantation diagnostics has turned risks of ‘natural’ birth into a task of making a justifiable decision, thus spurring ethical discussions about reproductive freedom. As a corollary to these new freedoms, responsibilities concerning the balance between risk and harm is distributed among involved actors in a new way.

These possibilities have generated a highly contested debate spanning positions from technological optimism by LGBTIQ groups combined with pro-choice arguments, to feminist critique of marketization and medicalization of biological reproduction to conservative and religious critiques of the use of ART.

In all fields of policy concerning social reproduction now, there is a remarkable absence of consensus regarding policy, norms and values. In the face of this challenge, and given the increasing importance of changing forms of social reproduction, there is an urgency to stimulate more public debate, and seek for ways to balance substantive and procedural values.

Friday 13th November	12:00 CET / 16:30 IST – 14:00 CET/ 18:30 IST
Welcome	12:00 CET / 16:30 IST
Keynote by Mohan Rao Killing Conscience with Arithmetic: Reproduction and Gender in Neo-Liberal Times	12:30 CET / 17:00 IST – 13:30 CET / 18:00 IST
	break 10 min
Introduction to thematic panels of day 2	13:40. CET / 18:10 IST - 13:55. CET / 18:25 IST
Saturday 14th November	09:30 CET / 14:00 IST – 12:45 CET / 17:15 IST
Panel 1: Framing and Perceiving Possibilities of Choice	
Chandni Bhambhani: Family & Marriage beyond Parenthood: A Narrative Inquiry of the Decision-making Process of Childfree Couples	
Arosmita Sahoo: A Network Analysis of ‘Reproductive Choice’ in the Practice of In-Vitro-Fertilization (IVF) Technology	09:30 CET / 14:00 IST – 11:15 CET / 15:45 IST

Anindita Chatterjee: Reproducing Sons: An Analysis of Embodied Gender Inequality and Motherhood among Migrant Domestic Workers	
	break 20 min
Panel 2: Generation of Expectation and Demand	
Anindita Majumdar: Miracle Babies: The Quest for Children amongst the Post-Menopausal in India	11:35 CET / 16:05 IST – 12:45 CET / 17:15 IST
Sreya Majumdar: Birthing the Natural Way, not the Normal Way: Exploring Public Discourses on Women’s Experiences of Birth in India	
Friday 20th November	09:30 CET / 14:00 IST – 12:30 CET / 17:00 IST
Introduction to day 3	
Panel 3: Recognition, Valuation, Reward	
Shirin Rai: Depletion: the Human Costs of Care	09:40 CET / 14:10 IST – 10:40 CET / 15:10 IST
Rukmini Sen: Understanding Motherhood: Transformations in the Legislation on Maternity ‘Benefit’ in India	
	break 20 min
Panel 4: “In the Name of ... Bringing up Children as an Instrument	
Susanne Schulz: The Anthropocene and the Demographic Dividend: Two Dimensions of the Neo-Malthusianist Revival	11:00 CET / 15:30 IST – 12:00 CET / 16:30 IST
Bijoya Roy: Reproductive Governance and Contraceptives in Neoliberal India	
Concluding remarks /farewell	End: 12:30 CET / 17:00 IST