

## WORKSHOP 12

### 12. Governing Religious Differences at the Intersection of Gender and Ethnicity

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In the last decade religious, ethnic and cultural differences have become highly contested issues in many European countries. Particularly, the presence of Islam as a “migrating” religion has been on the political and academic agenda for some time now. Conflicts have evolved around issues such as wearing Muslim headscarves in public institutions, and so called traditional violence against women, as for example female circumcision and arranged or forced marriage. Some of these conflicting issues did not only trigger heated debates but also have been leading to a wide range of policy action across European countries as for instance bans of headscarves in public institutions, changes of laws for abroad marriage, and amendments of penal laws to punish genital cutting.

The contested issues reveal that public discussions and political responds to religious and ethnic differences and to the “crisis of multi-culturalism” are deeply entangled with gender relations. Moreover, gender equality is often used as an argument against “other” cultures and ethnicities in order to show their lack of modernity.

The workshop wants to shift existing debates on multiculturalism, feminism and gender equality and give them a new spin by focusing on the *governing* of religious difference at the intersection of gender and ethnicity. Research questions will be: How is intersectionality constructed in policy debates? Which are the main factors that might explain differences and similarities in governing religious differences in European countries? Which democratic procedures have been developed to address the above mentioned issues?