



**Ringvorlesung: Performative Körper: Medien – Geschlecht – Identität**

**Queering Nation, Queering Citizenship**

Lecture with Prof. Dr. Christine Quinan (Utrecht University)

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Sex is one of the few identity markers systematically registered by nation-states and non-state actors. While registration is almost always based on a binary system (male or female), both administrative registration practices and biological and legal understandings of sex as binary are currently subject to debate, forcing questions about what it means to be a “citizen” for those who do not fit into clear categories like “man” and “woman”. While no country has decided to abolish sex registration as such, many nation-states have introduced partial modifications, such as the possibility to change one’s legal sex without physical changes or without expert declarations. In some nations, the options ‘M’ and ‘F’ have recently been extended to include other possibilities on legal and travel documents, including ‘X’, ‘third gender’, and ‘non-specific’, structural changes that are often initiated with reference to human rights and freedoms. With a particular focus on the X in passports, I will explore how these sorts of changes may affect transgender and gender-nonconforming people, asking if these accommodations are “progressive” or if they are instead more insidious forms of state surveillance. While the mechanism at stake is crucially embedded within a Western-centric secular discourse, I will ask what possibilities exist for also seeing this as an affirmative appropriation – as a ‘queering’ – of the space between civil and human rights to which transgender and gender-nonconforming people might lay claim. In this respect, I will explore how human rights discourses inform the potentially violent politics of a sex registration scheme that actively shapes acceptable notions of citizenship, but will also ask if the deployment of other options (specifically the ‘X’) could potentially appeal to social justice concerns that may overrule the jurisdiction of the nation-state.