

# The im/possibilities of border-crossing solidarities

Workshop with Janet Conway

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## Organized by:

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The notion of cross-border solidarity still plays a key role in current political mobilizations and social movements for gender justice, for indigenous, women\*’s and LGBTIQ\* rights as well as for transnational and translocal struggles against neoliberal precarization and economic deprivation. Nonetheless, solidarity still remains undertheorized and polysemic within social sciences and transnational gender studies, cultural and postcolonial studies. The possibility and feasibility of border-crossing forms of solidarity within the limitations of existing global asymmetries remain contested, particularly from a feminist, queer, postcolonial, decolonial, indigenous and race-critical perspective. But not only national, but also cultural, political, and ontological borders shape how activists – but also researchers and the subjects of their research – engage with each other, fostering or inhibiting non-colonizing solidarity-building.

Against this backdrop, the workshop aims to provide a critical space for discussions on existing research on solidarity and foster an interdisciplinary debate on the epistemological, theoretical and political implications of research on the concept of solidarity for transnational and cross-border mobilizations and political articulations. Questions that will be discussed include:

- How do social movements conceptualize the difficult and contested relationship between difference, intersectionality, unequal (global) power structures, and solidarity?
- How is solidarity understood, framed, negotiated, contested and practiced in transnational social movements and arenas?
- Which role does the idea of solidarity play for cross-border organizing?
- How does solidarity become linked to other related political concepts, such as responsibility, collectivity, or redistribution?
- How can we grasp practices of (intended) cross-border solidarity analytically?

- Should solidarity be conceptualized as a normative concept or rather as a heuristic tool to describe particular motivations, intentions and/or practices and forms of cross-border organizing?
- Can (or should) solidarity or practices of cross-border solidarity be “measured” on an empirical level?
- How can we systematize (and compare) different ideas, types, concepts, practices and forms of cross-border solidarity?

The workshop includes two parts: first it starts with an introductory lecture by Janet Conway, followed by a discussion. Second, we also invite participants to present (parts of) their current research projects pertinent to the questions above.

**Janet Conway** is Professor of Sociology and former Canada Research Chair in Social Justice at Brock University, St. Catharine's, Ontario, Canada. Her areas of research and teaching are social movements, feminism, democratic theory and postcolonial critique, with particular focus in recent years on the World Social Forum, transnational feminisms and Indigenous resurgence in the Americas. She is a long-standing Toronto-based activist with history in women's and anti-poverty movements, social justice coalitions, the Toronto Social Forum, and Indigenous solidarity efforts.

#### **How to apply:**

We invite researchers of all levels (including doctoral students and post-docs) working with the concept of solidarity and with an affinity to critical research perspectives and methodologies to participate in this workshop. We welcome both theoretical and empirical work and participants from different research areas and disciplines.

Those interested in taking part in this workshop or presenting their research are invited to email a **short statement** (five to seven sentences) to the workshop organizers describing why they are interested in this event and/or how the workshop topic is related to their research. Please register by **February 10th, 2019**. The workshop is limited to 15 participants. To submit and for all other inquiries, please contact Johanna Leinius ([leinius@uni-kassel.de](mailto:leinius@uni-kassel.de)).