

# SYMPOSIUM



## PARTICIPATION, MARGINALIZATION, AND EXCLUSION IN THE U.S. WELFARE STATE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021

1.30-7.30 PM CET VIA ZOOM

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Please register via Stud.IP (course no. 46597),  
external guests via **fricke18@ads.uni-passau.de**

# WELCOME

## American Studies, University of Passau

Poverty and subsequently anti-poverty measures and policies have been a contested terrain throughout U.S. history. The idea of public assistance commonly termed welfare has a strong moral content: it entails notions of how we should live and how others ought to live their lives. Hence, how Americans view poverty and who is thought to be worthy or unworthy of deserving welfare benefits is linked not only to more abstract principles such as equality, social responsibility, or justice, but to -at times- very nuanced understandings of marriage, family, motherhood, or work ethic. These understandings, however, are deeply ingrained in a white racial frame and as such create exclusionary and discriminating policies for various minority and immigrant groups thus fostering racial inequalities.

Our symposium "Participation, Marginalization, and Exclusion in the U.S. Welfare State" critically addresses the entangled relationship between race, class, and gender and the welfare state from various perspectives. Furthermore, our keynote lecture attends to the troubling issue of systemic inequality expressed in the widening racial wealth gap.

We are looking forward to a stimulating discussion and welcome you to an exciting symposium.

Grit Grigoleit

PI in "'Welfare Queens' and 'Losers': a Critical Race and Intersectional Perspective on the U.S. American Welfare State" funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research

For more information please see: <https://www.uni-passau.de/us-welfare/>

## Thomas Shapiro

### Racial Wealth Inequality and the State

The intentional racialization of wealth is a foundational dynamic of the United States, simultaneously creating wealth for some and imposing a highly restrictive welfare state for others. This process manufactures systemic inequality and racial injustice while framing its legitimacy.



**Thomas M. Shapiro** is the David R. Pokross Professor of Law and Social Policy at the Heller School for Social Policy, Brandeis University.

His primary focus is on race, wealth, and policy. Current research projects and writings center student debt and race. He co-authored the award-winning *Black Wealth/White Wealth* (1995) with Dr. Melvin Oliver. His latest book is *Toxic Inequality* (2017).

# PROGRAM

1.30 PM

## **Opening & Welcoming Remarks**

Karsten Fitz, University of Passau

## **Introduction**

Grit Grigoleit, University of Passau

2.00-2.45 PM

## **Michael Oswald (University of Passau) & Laura Christen (University of Hohenheim):**

Legitimacy of Inequality: Frames and Narratives

2.45-3.30 PM

## **Isabel Heinemann (WWU Münster)**

Safeguard of the Nation: Advocating the White Middle Class Nuclear Family Ideal through Welfare

3.30-3.45 PM

Coffee Break

3.45-4.30 PM

## **Claudia Roesch (GHI Washington)**

Family Planning in the Great Society. Planned Parenthood, African Americans and the War on Poverty

4.30-5.15 PM

## **Viola Huang (Middlebury College)**

Independence and Self-Sufficiency: Black Power Schools as a Response to Educational Injustice

5.15-5.30 PM

Coffee Break

5.30-6.15 PM

## **Axel Schäfer (University of Mainz)**

White Evangelicals, the Faith-Based Initiative, and the Neoliberal Welfare State in the U.S.

6.30-7.30 PM

## **Closing Keynote: Thomas Shapiro (Brandeis University)**

Racial Wealth Inequality and the State

## **Isabel Heinemann**

WWU Münster, Professorship for Modern and Contemporary History

### **Safeguard of the Nation. Advocating the White Middle Class Nuclear Family Ideal through Welfare**

Taking the example of motherhood, the contribution will discuss how categories “race” and “class” structured the discourse on the American family and, thus, the American nation, during the second half of the 20th century. With special focus on the 1960s through 1980s, it also scrutinizes how governments from Johnson to Reagan used welfare to promote the ‘right’ family values among individuals and families in need. Especially, the paper discusses how women’s work and women’s reproduction became highly contested, but also classed and racialized categories in the public debate on welfare. Special consideration is given to the initiatives of the emerging welfare rights movement.

Sources come from the Johnson, Carter, Nixon and Reagan administration as well as from Welfare rights activists and the media.

**Claudia Roesch**

GHI Washington

## **Family Planning in the Great Society. Planned Parenthood, African Americans and the War on Poverty**

As part of Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society, the War on Poverty legislation (1964) sponsored local initiatives to fight poverty. Planned Parenthood clinics were eligible for funding and the organization's national headquarter strong encouraged them to apply. They recommended focusing on family planning as a form of social justice for inner-city single mothers, which meant African American mothers. The handout "Planned Parenthood in the War on Poverty" showed a single African American child supported by two white hands rather than being part of a family.

This campaign took place against the backdrop of criticism against family planning campaigns in rural African American communities, concerns about Latino immigration, debates about counselling single women and protests by the civil rights movement against these measures.

My paper will investigate the role of race in Planned Parenthood's participation in the War on Poverty. First, it will give a short overview of family planning campaigns for African Americans. Then it will investigate how counselling urban single mothers became a shorthand for race and how these Planned Parenthood campaigns differed from campaigns for white or Latino families. The third part will address the protests by the African American civil rights movement by analyzing a SNCC protest against a Planned Parenthood event in 1966. In a conclusion, it will discuss the changes that the protests brought about within Planned Parenthood. The paper will show how in the War of Poverty, family structures became associated with poverty and race. It will discuss how white activists presented controlling single inner-city women's fertility as a form of social justice, while their Black counterparts uncovered sterilization abuse and demanded voluntarism and community participation in family planning. This way, my paper presents an in-depth analysis of the factors race and family within the American welfare state of the 1960s.

**Viola Huang**

Middlebury College, Black Studies

## **Independence and Self-Sufficiency: Black Power Schools as a Response to Educational Injustice**

In 1967, 1,700 students boycotted PS 125, a Harlem public school, for several weeks. Instead, they attended a so-called “liberation school” that was initiated by parents and community members after numerous attempts to reform this particular public elementary school with a majority Black and Puerto Rican student body had failed. In response to being denied more control over and participation in their children’s education, more than 3,000 parents not only withdrew their children, but they, along with community members and retired teachers, also provided the kind of education they wanted to see implemented in the curricula of the public school system.

West Harlem Liberation School was just one of a number of independent schools outside the public school system that emerged in 1960s Harlem and that drew rhetoric, ideals, and methods from the Black Power Movement. I argue that these schools were one expression of the fight over establishing quality education within the Black community that went beyond integration and community control of public schools. Instead, these schools aimed at enabling students – and the community more broadly – to become self-sufficient and self-reliant outside and beyond state institutions. The history of these alternative educational institutions reflect what ideas the Black community engaged with and how ideals of independence from the state, self-sufficiency, and self-reliance were translated into practice on the local level. While some of these schools were a response to the state’s failure to provide quality education for all citizens, others moved beyond the state’s promises and understood their mission as providing Black youth with knowledge and skills that were relevant to them and that had been excluded from public school curricula.

## **Axel Schäfer**

University of Mainz, Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies

### **White Evangelicals, the Faith-Based Initiative, and the Neoliberal Welfare State in the U.S.**

One of the first acts of the incoming Biden administration was the announcement that the new president was going to re-establish the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, which funnels federal grants to religious organizations engaged in social welfare work. Enjoying bipartisan support, funding for faith-based organizations has since the Great Society become an ever-growing component of devolved social welfare provision in the U.S. Crucially, however, Biden combined his announcement with the objective to use the new initiative to “tackle systemic racism and other forms of bias” in the welfare system. This raises the question whether faith-based approaches can help transform the persistent legacy of race and gender discrimination within the U.S. welfare state. This paper contributes to this discussion by exploring the ways in which public funding for evangelical providers has reinforced or challenged the segmented welfare state. Providing a historical perspective, the paper on the one hand examines the growing role of white evangelicals in delivering federally-funded social services as part of the development of a distinctive neoliberal welfare regime since the 1980s. On the other hand, it shows how the growing engagement with the welfare state has transformed the evangelical movement. On this basis the paper seeks to untangle the historical relationship between public funding for evangelical providers and patterns of race and gender discrimination in the welfare state.