

**Monday, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2019, 7 p.m.**

**Nayia Kamenou**

**Abstract:**

The rise of the far right has led to an extensive body of scholarly work. However, it remains understudied from a feminist lens, while the grounding of theoretical explorations in empirical research remains scarce. Even scarcer are empirical case study analyses on the growth, role, and effects of women's participation in the far right. This paper contends that we must explore why, despite its essentializing and exclusionary discourses and practices, the far right increasingly becomes women's chosen channel for exercising political agency. To address these gaps in the study of the far right, it examines the role of gender and women's agency in the Greek *Golden Dawn* (GD), one of the most noteworthy far-right movement-parties, and its Cypriot sister movement-party, the *National Popular Front* (ELAM). The study employs a women-centred approach and analyzes data from in-depth interviews with GD and ELAM women politicians and seasoned activists, and from party-women-produced literature. Focusing on research participants' perspectives, it notes the ways in which they position themselves within their parties and the impact of their participation on party ideology, organization, structure, and strategies. Moreover, it discerns tensions between far-right women's agency and ideological outlooks on gender relations, it marks dynamics of far-right gender discourses and politics, and it highlights the complex ways through which gender is employed by the far right to augment its support base. Far-right women's various approaches to gender and political agency indicate that, by hijacking elements of feminism, they have managed to construct a flexible and versatile gender discourse that troubles some of essentialized dichotomies commonly associated with far-right ideology but which, nonetheless, is becoming central to their movement-parties' ideological and policy positions. It argues that this gender discourse and its gender politics can be attractive to people with diverse views about gender, feminism, and politics since, in them, they may see opportunities for political self-confidence, professionalization, and actualization. Consequently, they may help increase the appeal of the far-right and far-right party support in Greece, Cyprus, and elsewhere. In doing so, this analysis contributes to discussions in feminist and gender and politics scholarship on the topic, by revealing the perils that the multiple and fluid intersections of gender and other power relations within the far right generate for feminist theory and praxis.

**Dr Nayia Kamenou** is a VC2020 Lecturer in the School of Applied Social Sciences at De Montfort University, Leicester, UK. She holds a PhD in European Studies from King's College London. Her research that is interdisciplinary and cuts across political science, sociology, and gender studies focuses on gender, women, sexuality, and political agency. Nayia conducts research and has published work on the interrelations between nationhood, ethnic identities, gender, and sexuality; the impact of Europeanization on LGBTIQ rights, identities, and activism; women's participation, political agency, and the role of gender in far-right parties; women and gender's role in peace-building processes in divided societies; representations of gender and sexual identities in cinema; and the impact of (trans)national legal and policy paradigms on trans\* identities and political mobilization.

**Location:** Frauenhetz - Frauenhetz – Feminist Education, Culture, Politics,  
Untere Weißgerberstraße 41, 1030 Vienna.

After the talk there will be an opportunity for an informal get-together with snacks and drinks.