



# GENDER, DIVERSITY & INTERSECTIONALITY RESEARCH CENTRE

## SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

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*“I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own.”*

— Audre Lorde

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### Upcoming RHEA Research Seminars

#### **Anna Afferi – Inclusion of fertility care into the reproductive health policy and practice in The Gambia**

Involuntary childlessness, medically known as infertility, is a condition that affects more than 50 million couples worldwide. In low- and middle-income settings, particularly in Africa, the inclusion of fertility care in the reproductive health policy and practice is mostly fragmented or non-existent. The aim of this PhD research in health systems is to develop an in-depth understanding of fertility care policymaking including the provision of infertility services and uncovering factors that enable or inhibit the inclusion of fertility care in Gambian reproductive health policy and practice. The research is developed using a convergent and embedded mixed-model designs in which qualitative and quantitative data are combined and used to help interpretation and contextualisation of the findings. In this RHEA research seminar, Anna Afferi will explain some preliminary findings of her PhD research.

#### **Biography Anna Afferi**



Anna Afferi is a specialist in reproductive, maternal and child health. She has been implementing and managing health projects in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean for over 20 years.

Anna has a medical background and obtained two Masters: a Master in Public Health and a Master in Humanitarian Assistance.

Her PhD research focuses on fertility care in The Gambia.

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***Practical info:*** The RHEA research seminar will take place online via Teams on 4 October 2021, 13h00-14h30. The event is free of charge, but registration is mandatory. You will receive a Teams link the day before the seminar. [Follow the link to register for this event.](#)

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## **Eva Vergaert - Ambiguity and scrutiny in documenting Intimate partner violence: a qualitative study looking into different perspectives on the use of medical certifications**

Medical certificates, like injury reports and forms for work incapacity, are documents drafted by doctors to provide official proof, necessary for victims who want to file official complaints. Despite their crucial importance in the procedure, the use of these certificates is surrounded by ambiguity. Based on qualitative research among public prosecutors, victims and GPs, this paper identifies important problems that complicate the use and value of medical certificates. This involves the emphasis on physical injuries, while the effects of psychological violence remain unrecognized. Moreover, the procedure suffers from lack of uniformity in documenting injuries. Further, GPs may feel reluctant when they feel they become instrumentalised in divorce conflicts. The ambiguity shown in our data reveals how victims of abuse are unequally scrutinized. This seminar will provide a critical analysis of the use of medical certificates in the prosecution of Intimate Partner Violence.

### **Biography Eva Vergaert**



Eva Vergaert works at RHEA.

Eva does research on intersectionality, gender-based violence and public policy. She is currently working on the project 'Intimate Partner Violence: impact, processes, evolution and related public policies in Belgium (Brain-Be: IPV-PRO&POL)'.  
[Follow the link to register for this event.](#)

Her PhD focuses on the role of general practitioners and the ethical challenges they face in dealing with partner violence.

**Practical info:** The RHEA research seminar will take place on the VUB campus on 8 November 2021, 13h00-14h30. The event is free of charge, but registration is mandatory. [Follow the link to register for this event.](#)

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## **Jihane Sliti - How do political discourses on the reintegration of returnees relate to politician's gender, ethnicity, religion, and political ideology? And what role does media discourse play?**

With her experience in Journalism and interest in politics and intersectionality, Jihane is currently conducting a PhD research under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Iman Lechkar and Prof. Dr. Karen Celis (Department of Political Science, Vrije Universiteit Brussel). This PhD research will explore how political discourses and media discourses on the

reintegration of returnees relate to politician's gender, ethnicity, religion, and political ideology. The presentation will focus on the first part of her research, which is analyzing media discourses and debates on the reintegration of returnees.

### **Biography Jihane Sliti**



Jihane is a PhD researcher at the Department of Political Science. After obtaining a BA in Journalism from the Erasmushogeschool Brussel (EhB), she obtained a MSc in Political Science from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). For her master's thesis, Jihane did a qualitative research on the leadership style of bicultural female leaders, connecting their gender and biculturality with agile leadership (2021). Furthermore, she enjoyed several internships in Belgian media outlets as well as in Tunisia.

**Practical info:** The RHEA research seminar will take place online via Teams on 6 December 2021, 13h00-14h30. The event is free of charge, but registration is mandatory. You will receive a Teams link the day before the seminar. [Follow the link to register for this event.](#)

## Recordings Black Europe in Brussels Conference



The online interdisciplinary conference '**Black Europe in Brussels**' consisted of a range of inspiring activities which took place between 1-15 July 2021. The conference brought to the forefront the Afro-European communities and Brussels, the capital of Belgium and Europe. It engaged with the dynamism emerging from the growing decolonisation movements and their calls for rethinking dominant modes of knowledge production and representation.

The conference was **interdisciplinary and intersectoral** in nature, which was reflected in the series of events focusing on various themes including Afro-European arts, Afro-European communities and the European Parliament, care and racial inequalities & Black histories. 'Black Europe in Brussels' aimed to be an academic, activist and intellectual space bridging the boundaries between institutions, practices and epistemologies.

This was a conference for, by and with AfroEuropeans with the contributions of their allies and in dialogue with other marginalized communities. This conference is part of the international and interdisciplinary **Afro-europeans Network** and was organized in anticipation of the 8th Biennial AfroEuropeans Network Conference "**Intersectional Challenges in Afro-European Communities**", which is postponed to 6-9 July 2022 due to COVID-19.

If you are interested in **(re)watching** some of the past events, be sure to check out [BlackSpeaksBackTV](#) on Youtube. BlackSpeaksBackTV premiered: [Black Brussels](#), [Black Mental Health & Care](#) and [Black Joy](#).

Bozar also made [Afropolitan Women and Black Europe at the European Parliament](#) available on Youtube.

## RHEA IN THE NEWS

### ***Sekswerk in tijden van corona: Hét bewijs dat we moeten streven naar de decriminalisering van de sekswerksector?***

Begin april 2021 stelde minister van Justitie Vincent Van Quickenborne een wetsontwerp voor waarin sekswerk en derde partijen worden gedecriminaliseerd (Vandecandelaere, 2021). Volgens hem is het huidige Belgische gedoogbeleid hypocriet. De coronacrisis, zo stellen de auteurs van deze bijdrage, toonde inderdaad het failliet van ons gedoogbeleid. Zonder sociaal- of arbeidsrechtelijke bescherming blijft de institutionele discriminatie van sekswerkers immers voortduren. Decriminaliseren van de sekswerksector is dan ook de eerste belangrijke stap om daar een einde aan te maken. Lees het volledige artikel [hier](#).

***Artikel in MO\* door Davy van Oyen op 30 juni 2021: Waarom academici en studenten meer dan ooit een boycot***



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"Het regende verklaringen van solidariteit met Palestina, enkele weken geleden, ook vanuit de universiteiten in ons land. Ze roepen op tot een academische boycot van het 'koloniale nederzettingsregime' van Israël. MO\* polste bij de initiatiefnemers aan de universiteiten van Gent, Brussel, Leuven en Antwerpen. 'We kunnen nu dingen zeggen die velen voor ons niet konden of durfden zeggen.'

wat zou de academische wereld aan precies moeten ondernemen? Het statement vraagt om genoor te geven aan de eisen van de internationale [boycot-, desinvestings- en sanctie](#)-beweging, die ook bekendstaat onder de afkorting BDS. De beweging roept al sinds 2005 op tot verzet tegen Israël via een boycot. Onder de koepel van BDS werd ook de [Belgian Campaign for an Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israël](#) opgericht, die de lijnen uitzet voor een academische boycot in de Belgische universiteiten en culturele sector."

Klik [hier](#) om het volledige krantenartikel te lezen.

## NEW RHEA PUBLICATIONS



### Researching intimate partner violence

RHEA-director **Prof. Dr. Gily Coene** and RHEA-members **Eva Vergaert** and **Prof. Dr. Sophie Withaecx** have edited a special issue of *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies* on the subject of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Despite decades of activism, research, theory development, and policymaking, the problem of intimate partner violence remains a major societal and health problem. This volume present contemporary research on intimate partner violence that engages with the legacies of feminist and intersectional theorising. Despite its societal impact and its central role in the development of feminist and intersectional research, IPV – particularly in Belgium and the Netherlands – remains under-researched, and feminist perspectives in particular are too often discredited in favour of gender-neutral approaches. The contributions in this special issue demonstrate that gender does matter, whether the parties involved are male, female, or queer, and that inequalities based on intersecting identity characteristics importantly shape how violence is experienced. This edited volume highlights some new and interesting research on this topic and brings together scholars from various disciplines.

If you would like to know more, follow this link: [shorturl.at/chGKY](https://shorturl.at/chGKY)

Coene, G., Vergaert, E., & Withaecx, S. (2021). Researching intimate partner violence. Gender, intersectionality and policymaking. *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies*, 24(2), 83-88. <https://doi.org/10.5117/TVGN2021.2.001.COEN>

### Rapport expertenpanel interlandelijke adoptie in Vlaanderen



De laatste jaren rezen bij steeds meer interlandelijk geadopteerden vragen over hun adoptiegeschiedenis en de adoptieprocedure.

Deze vragen kwamen aan de oppervlakte zowel via verhalen in de pers als via rechtstreekse berichtgeving aan het Vlaams Centrum voor Adoptie. Om gehoor te geven aan de

verscheidene vragen en bezorgdheden van geadopteerden, besloot toenmalig Vlaams minister voor Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Gezin, Jo Vandeurzen, in 2019 om een onafhankelijk onderzoekspanel van experts aan te stellen. Het expertenpanel kreeg de opdracht een onderzoek te verrichten naar de interlandelijke adoptiepraktijk in het verleden met als doel de huidige procedure te herwerken en op die wijze adoptiekinderen te voorzien van meer waarborgen.

In augustus en september 2021 heeft het expertenpanel, onder andere bestaande uit voormaling RHEA coördinator Prof. Dr. Sophie Withaecx, haar eindbevindingen en aanbevelingen gedeeld met de bevoegde minister van Welzijn, Gezin, Volksgezondheid en Armoedebestrijding, Wouter Beke, en met de Vlaamse Regering.

Je kan de rapporten ook zelf inkijken [hier](#).

## AGENDA

### Keep it organized!

**Anna Afferi - *Inclusion of fertility care into the reproductive health policy and practice in The Gambia***

Monday 4/10/2021

Time: 13.00-14.30

*RHEA Research Seminar*

**Eva Vergaert - *Ambiguity and scrutiny in documenting Intimate partner violence: a qualitative study looking into different perspectives on the use of medical certifications***

Monday 8/12/2021

Time: 13.00-14.30

*RHEA Research Seminar*

**Jihane Sliti - *How do political discourses on the reintegration of returnees relate to politician's gender, ethnicity, religion, and political ideology? And what role does media discourse play?***

Monday 6/12/2021

Time: 13.00-14.30

*RHEA Research Seminar*

## YOUR NEWS IN THE NEWSLETTER?

If you have some interesting RHEA-related news that you would want to include in our newsletter or you would like to organize an event in collaboration with us, do not hesitate to contact us at [rhea@vub.be](mailto:rhea@vub.be)



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