My work connects to questions raised by the German reception of postcolonial theory (cf. Castro Varela & Dhawan 2015) and Critical Whiteness Theory (cf. Eggers et al 2009; iak 2013) and addresses problems of representation politics and the possibilities and impossibilities of privileged antiracism. Privileged means that activists define themselves as men* without negative racism experiences or as white men*. The project focuses especially on the interplay of whiteness and masculinity (cf. Connell 2005).

The main research interest lies in ways of dealing with the tension that arises between a social position (white male*, privileges) and a political position (antiracist activist). The research questions are: How does racism affect people who, in the context of the power-knowledge-complex, are credited with privileged social positions? Which discourses and practices are related to these positions? How are the subjects reacting to the positions they are interpellated (Althusser 1977) on (submission, resistance, reinterpretations)? How do the subjects form in the course of antiracist practices and discourses?

The dissertation wants to show that privileged social positions are formed by racism, sexism and other normative orders. The political positioning cannot overcome the social position and its powerful effects but activist find specific strategies to deal with their privileges in an antiracist matter.

Methodologically the project is aligned with approaches of empirical subjectivization (cf. Traue/Pfahl/Globisch 2017). The project makes use of two methods. First, a literature study of relevant racism theories shows the functionality of racism as a powerful societal discourse or dispositive. Whereas the goal of this approach is to show how racism works on the discursive level, the second method demonstrates how privileged subjects deal with those discourses (reproduce it, use it as a power tool, fight against and reinterpret it). Here, I use narrative interviews (cf. Rosenthal 2015) with 10 people who define themselves as privileged antiracists. Antiracist is defined by people that engage themselves in antiracist initiatives. For the data evaluation the project uses the methodological concept of reconstructing narrative identity (Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann 2004). Here identity narration is understood as a performative social practice that follows certain narrative patterns.

The project started in October 2016 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2020.

The dissertation is affiliated at the Department of Educational Studies and the Department of Sociology. The first supervisor is Professor Erol Yildiz and the second supervisor is Professor Frank Welz.


