

Partridge, Damani J. 2012. *Hypersexuality and Headscarves Race, Sex, and Citizenship in the New Germany (New Anthropologies of Europe Series)*. 189 pp. Pb.: \$24.95. ISBN: 9780253223692.

In *Hypersexuality and Headscarves*, Damani J. Partridge, associate professor of Anthropology and Afro-American and African Studies at the University of Michigan explores the relationship between citizenship, rights, and identity politics. More specifically, he examines the lives of “noncitizens” in the reunified post-1989 Germany, with emphasis on how body politics is related to exclusion, citizenship and social control mechanisms by the new German nation. While the fall of communism and the German reunification was a time when the ‘possibility of universalised unity seemed greatest’, the author focuses on the upsurge of nationalism and violence against ‘noncitizen workers, students, refugees, and racialised subjects, who experienced the most intense impossibility of belonging’ (p. 25). In many cases, these groups, as well as Partridge himself, have risked being physically attacked by neo-Nazis merely by leaving their houses.

In addition to an introductory chapter, a conclusion, and an epilogue, the book consists of five loosely related chapters. These cover topics as diverse as EU policies, citizenship, racism, Muslim headscarves, “black bodies, street bureaucrats, and hypersexual returns”, West German schools, “guest workers as leftover bodies”, and “travel as an analytic of exclusion” (p. 144). The cover shows images of a veiled woman and of a half naked, “hypersexualised” black man as examples of what Partridge understands as noncitizen bodies subject to ‘persistent acts of exclusionary incorporation’ (p. 144).

Exclusion can be seen as a ‘way of keeping people out, even while keeping them in’ (p. 24). As Partridge shows, this can take many forms. The purpose is to shed light on how “technologies of exclusion” operate, a term which denotes the ‘social technologies of governance, representation, and population construction that have the effect of (sometimes unwittingly) managing and producing noncitizen bodies’ (p. 19). Noncitizens are those excluded from full citizenship because their bodies are different, non-white and “foreign”.

Partridge’s take on this is that there are “technologies” in Germany (and Europe) that exclude those bodies deemed biologically non-German at work, not merely in social policy and through laws. ‘Noncitizen production’ also takes place in pop culture, asylum camps, neighbourhoods, schools and dance clubs, which Partridge approaches as places where the Other is eroticised and consumed (p. 20).

The author claims that European and German efforts to learn from the past (“genocidal forms of exclusion”) actually produce new forms of exclusion. In his view, ‘claims that seem to demonstrate the ability to learn from past atrocities [“genocidal forms of exclusion”] actually produce a semi-legitimacy for supranational forms of exclusionary violence’ (p. 24). The German reunification is interpreted as an “ethno-patriarchal return” that produced many new noncitizens. While acknowledging that the German law on citizenship from 2000 means a shift away from a blood-based idea of belonging and citizenship, Partridge maintains that universalism carries with it a range of injustice that necessarily compromises the Other and keep people out.

Partridge questions Agamben's distinction between 'bare life and political life' and suggests that there is maybe no 'outside to political life' (p. 137). This is problematic. The dissolution of the distinction between the political and non-political is that the term "political" can be applied to almost everything. In turn, that makes the term imprecise and reduces its analytical value. Moreover, the presumption that all human interaction is normative and political in character easily reduces persons to containers of ideology. In the case of white ("White") German women who have sex with, fall in love with or marry African men (Chapter 3), for example, Partridge interprets this as German 'street bureaucrats' participating in exclusionary practices of hypersexualisation of black ('Black') bodies that incorporates them into the German society in a way that produces noncitizens, to use the author's own terminology.

This begs the question of how Partridge would explain the hypothetical case that all white German women would refuse to get involved with black men. In general, one may discuss the utility of theoretical tools that potentially allow the same explanation of opposite phenomena. Moreover, while questions of citizenship and "hypersexualisation" (or just sexualisation?) obviously are part of the story in some of the cases under scrutiny, Partridge's approach is disappointingly one-sided.

Since the idea that everything is political permeates the book, it would have been better to discuss it in the beginning. Conceptual clarification is often lacking. A major weakness of the book is that the text is often so obscure that it is hard to understand what Partridge actually means. At least this reader is unable to understand formulations like 'integration – also referred to as incorporation ... or exclusionary incorporation' (p. 135). This is one reason Partridge's analysis comes across as less convincing.

Partridge asserts that German and European norms of citizenship exclude people with "bodies" that the majority consider foreign and in various ways deny full integration in the nation even when they are "incorporated". At the same time, he emphasizes the 'articulations and production of noncitizen bodies' (p. 134). Noncitizens become noncitizens because their bodies are different, but this difference is also seen as a social, cultural and political product. This might be a correct description of a two-way dynamics, but could also conceal a circular argument. The book would have benefited from a narrower focus and a more rigorous data analysis. The data are not adequate to substantiate all Partridge's claims because his focus is not only the excluded, but the regimes and technologies seen as the cause. Still, the book does provide certain insights into the lives and experiences of those who in different ways are or feel excluded.

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