

14<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL  
GRADUATE  
CONFERENCE

July 1–2, 2021

# Radical Possibilities!

PROTEST, CRISIS AND RESHAPING NORTH AMERICAN DEMOCRACIES



## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

**REBECCA BRÜCKMANN**  
RUHR-UNIVERSITY BOCHUM

**KHARY O. POLK**  
AMHERST COLLEGE



**John F. Kennedy Institute**  
for North American Studies

CONFERENCE2021@GSNAS.FU-BERLIN.DE  
WWW.JFKI.FU-BERLIN.DE/GSNAS2021

GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF NORTH AMERICAN STUDIES

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

## Radical Possibilities

### Protest, Crisis and Reshaping North American Democracies

14th International Graduate Conference

July 1-2, 2021

[www.jfki.fu-berlin.de/gsnas2021](http://www.jfki.fu-berlin.de/gsnas2021)

#### THURSDAY, JULY 1

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14:00

Opening Remarks by David Bosold, Managing Director of the Graduate School of North American Studies & Elizabeth Horst, Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs, US Embassy Berlin

14:15

Panel 1 – Who Speaks? Identities and Freedom in Public and Popular Discourse

Chair: Curd Knüpfer (Freie Universität Berlin)

- Naomi Smith (Birkbeck College, University of London): *Intersectional Identities & News Selection in US-based Television Newsrooms*
- Kristi Ulrike Schmidt (University of Groningen): *Caught in the Crossfire: Free Speech on Campus, the Negotiation between Rights and Values, and the Defense of a Legacy*

16:00

Panel 2 – Resistance and Reparations: Racial Justice and Democratic Futurity

Chair: Sebastian Jobs (Freie Universität Berlin)

- Selen Kazan (Technische Universität Dortmund): *A Transitional Justice Plan for the US – Truth and Reparations for African Americans*
- Anthony James Obst (Freie Universität Berlin): *“Without Force of Police:” Abolition(-Democracy) in W.E.B. Du Bois’s Black Reconstruction and Dusk of Dawn*
- Alexander Obermüller (University of South Florida/Universität Erfurt): *Raiford Brothers Protest: Prison Activism and Reform Debates in Florida*

18:30

Welcome Remarks by Frank Kelleter, Director of the Graduate School of North American Studies

Keynote 1 – Rebecca Brückmann (Ruhr-Universität Bochum): *#BlackLivesMatter: Historical Roots and Ruptures in the Black Freedom Struggle*

20:00

Networking Event

## FRIDAY, JULY 2

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11:00

### Panel 3 – The Black Radical Imaginary: Afropessimism and Tempered Hope

Chair: Birte Wege (Freie Universität Berlin)

- Eva Puyuelo Ureña (University of Barcelona): *Hope as a Fatalistic Posture: Ta-Nehisi Coates and Afropessimism in the Black Lives Matter Era*
- Max Rhiem (Universität Tübingen): *“Shall a new civilization ... rise from the ashes?” History, Hope, and Painful Progress in Charles Henry Holmes’s Ethiopia, The Land of Promise*
- Kristine Guillaume (University of Oxford): *“Toward Tomorrow:” Radical Revolution and Freedom Dreams in Assata Shakur and Ericka Huggins’ Prison Poetry*

13:00

### Panel 4 – From the Ground Up: Community Organizing and the Remaking of Space

Chair: Myka Tucker-Abrahamson (Freie Universität Berlin)

- Marie Menard (Université Paris-Est Créteil): *Striking against the Odds: A North/South Comparison of Teacher Organizing in the USA (2012-2019)*
- Judith Keller (Universität Heidelberg): *We Not Moving! Urban Social Movements and the Fight for a Place to Call Home*
- Yaakov Kobi Cohen (Freie Universität Berlin): *A Pipeline for Social Change: A Case for Environmental Struggles as Engines for Radical Native American Inclusion*

15:00

### Panel 5 – The Use of Force: Rhetorics and Realities

Chair: Betsy Leimbigler (Freie Universität Berlin)

- Bohan Zhang (University of Oxford): *The John Birch Society: A Case Study of American Extreme-Right Politics*
- Marta Kobylska (University of Rzeszów): *Writing the 2019-2020 Persian Gulf Crisis: US Military Action against Iran*
- Natalia Botonaki (Universidad Carlos III Madrid): *Blue/Black: Considerations on Violence Based on 2020’s BLM Protests*

17:00

### Panel 6 – Crossing the US Border: Spatial Limits and Liminalities

Chair: Tobias Jochum (Freie Universität Berlin)

- Julia Machtenberg (Ruhr-Universität Bochum): *Of Estrangement and Belonging: Reimagining US Space in Meena Alexander’s “Kabir Sings in a City of Burning Towers”*
- Paul Druschke (Technische Universität Dresden): *You Can Vote From Anywhere, Except. A Survey of Territorial Voting Rights in the United States*
- Debby Esmee de Vlugt (Leiden University): *“Black Panther Types on the Streets and Byways:” Transnational Black Power and the 1969 Curaçao Uprising*

19:30

### Keynote 2 – Khary O. Polk (Amherst College): *Democracy, Fantasy, Race*

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

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THURSDAY, JULY 1 | 18:30

Rebecca Brückmann:

*#BlackLivesMatter: Historical Roots  
and Ruptures in the Black Freedom  
Struggle*

Rebecca Brückmann is an assistant professor of North American history in its Transcultural Context at Ruhr-University Bochum. She completed her Ph.D. in modern history at the Graduate School of North American Studies at Free University Berlin in 2014 and taught at the Universities of Cologne and Kassel. Her research focuses on North American sociocultural history, the history of the Black Freedom Struggle and white supremacy, and gender history in their entanglements. Her recent work includes articles on Black activism in the United States and white supremacist grassroots resistance, published in the *South Carolina Historical Magazine* and the *European Journal of American Studies*, and the monograph *Massive Resistance and Southern Womanhood: White Women, Class, and Segregation* (University of Georgia Press, 2021).



FRIDAY, JULY 2 | 19:30

Khary O. Polk:

*Democracy, Fantasy, Race*

Khary Oronde Polk is Associate Professor of Black Studies & Sexuality, Women's and Gender Studies at Amherst College. He is a cultural historian of the African American diaspora, a specialist in LGBTQ studies, and a scholar of race, gender, and sexuality in the U.S. military. Polk received his Ph.D. in American Studies from New York University, and teaches courses on race & the American imagination, military history, African American studies, Black European studies, Black sexuality, and queer theory. He is the author of *Contagions of Empire: Scientific Racism, Sexuality, and Black Military Workers Abroad, 1898-1948* (UNC Press, 2020). A child of an African American military family, his new book examines how the movement of Black soldiers and nurses around the world in the early-to-mid twentieth century challenged U.S. military ideals of race, nation, sexuality and honor. *Contagions of Empire* was a finalist for the Organization of American Historians 2021 Lawrence Levine Prize, awarded to the best book in American cultural history. Polk also has written for the Studio Museum of Harlem, *The Journal of Negro History*, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Gawker, and the journal *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*. He has also contributed essays to a number of queer of color anthologies, including *If We Have To Take Tomorrow*, *Corpus*, and *Think Again*. Polk is a member of the African Atlantic Research Group, and recently held a visiting professorship at the JFK Institute for North American Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin.