

# Gender & Women's Studies Fall 2018

Thursday, November 29, 2018

3:45 pm

3401 Sterling Hall

## Myra Marx Ferree

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University of Wisconsin-Madison

### "The Crisis of Masculinity and the Rise of Political Repression in Europe and the US "



In this talk, I argue that the masculine basis of the social contract theories at the heart of liberalism has become fragile, and gender insecurity among men contributes importantly to contemporary illiberalism. I develop this argument in three parts. First, I define masculine fragility and point to the features of the contemporary social order that would increase the experience of masculine fragility among men. Second, I present a case for understanding gendered power as a continuing feature of all social organization. Following Carol Pateman, I see the organizational basis of "brotherhoods" as the social anchors of masculine power that emerged when familial patriarchy declined. Both feminist claims for inclusion and female collective actions challenge brotherhoods, and encourage the collective mobilization of defensive masculinity. Third, I connect gender anxiety – not only economic or racial anxieties – as a key feature of the support enjoyed by repressive regimes, by examining the links between reproductive injustices, anti-gender politics and more generalized forms of repression in Europe and the US. This vicious circle of antifeminist and anti-liberal mobilizations characterizes much contemporary politics. I argue not only for resistance, but for a remaking of liberal politics on more intersectional and explicitly feminist lines.

**Wheelchair accessible, free, and open to the public. For ASL interpretation or other accessibility requests, please contact [dazeps@wisc.edu](mailto:dazeps@wisc.edu) by November 9th**

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