

Call for Papers

4th International PhD conference in Global History of Empires
January 21-22 2027, University of Turin, Italy

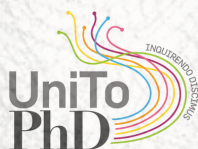
Gender, Methodology and Research in Global History and Anthropology



The PhD students of the “Global History of Empires” program at the University of Turin are pleased to announce the international conference “Gender, Methodology and Research in Global History and Anthropology”, scheduled for January 21 - 22 2027, which is now accepting applications.



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This conference invites PhD candidates and early career scholars (max 5 years from the completion of their PhD) from diverse academic backgrounds to reflect critically on the epistemological, methodological and ethical implications of gender in historical and anthropological research. The initiative aims to create a transdisciplinary space for discussing research in progress, interrogating how gender operates not only as an object of inquiry, but also as a structuring principle of knowledge production itself in both history and anthropology.

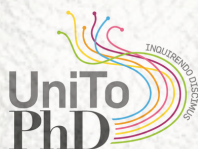
Scientific background

Over the past decades, gender has become a central analytical category in the humanities and social sciences. From foundational interventions such as Joan W. Scott's *Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis* to anthropological interventions such as Gayle Rubin's theorization of the "sex/gender system," scholars have demonstrated that gender is not simply an empirical variable but a culturally, historically contingent and relational structure of power. Anthropological research on kinship, exchange and social classification has further shown how gender is embedded in systems of meaning and material practice, rather than functioning as a universal or self-evident category. These insights resonate with the emergence of an intersectional methodological analysis: one that attends to the multidimensional and compounded nature of lived experiences, situating gender alongside other axes of social positions such as race, class, and sexuality (Crenshaw, 1989). The enduring resonance of "Ain't I a Woman?" continues to orient our inquiries into gender, unsettling monolithic and univocal conceptions of personhood as a stable, self-identical subject (Riley, 1988).

Along these lines, important critiques have emerged regarding the universalization of gender as a primary and binary organising principle. As dyadic constructions of gender followed Eurocentric ideological organization of the social along female-male oppositional bodies, Western models of vision aspired to global naturalization. Scholars across history and anthropology have questioned not only the political significance of this dichotomy, but also the epistemic assumptions underpinning it, including the ambiguities of hyper-visibility in making bodies legible (Haynes, 2005). In the much-debated *The Invention of Women*, Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí argues that Western modernity is structured by a "visual logic of thought", in which the visible body becomes the primary criterion of social classification. The reason the body acquires such epistemic centrality is that this worldview is grounded in perceiving and organizing reality through sight. As noted by Evelyn Fox Keller and Christine Grontkowski in *The Mind's Eye*, Euro-American cultures routinely equate knowledge with illumination and truth with light, revealing how the privileging of vision has shaped dominant epistemologies and reinforced a masculinist logic. As a result, sexual difference, because it is immediately readable, comes to be naturalized as the foundation of social order. Gender thus appears universal while being historically, culturally, and epistemologically specific.



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This “regime of visibility” continues to operate today:

- through the quantification of gender (quotas, board representation, statistical indicators),
- through the reduction of gender to a binary variable,
- through the normalization of dominant masculinity as the unmarked standard.

Building on these debates, this conference seeks to rethink gender not only as a category, but as a methodological and epistemological question that engages colonial and imperial dimensions and traverses the expansive terrains of global history and anthropology. It invites participants to interrogate how gender shapes research practices, fieldwork experiences, archival access, and the positionality of scholars across different geographical and institutional contexts.

Submissions may address (but are not limited to) the following themes:

1. Rethinking gender as an analytical question:

- From category to problem: revisiting the legacy of gender as a primary analytical tool.
- Critiques of universalism and binarism; gender as relational, historically contingent and geographically situated.
- The limits and possibilities of “gender” as an epistemological framework.

2. Gender and regimes of visibility:

- The hegemony of visibility in Western epistemologies and the visible body as classificatory principle.
- Quantification, metrics and statistical governance of gender.
- Visibility as empowerment and as a dispositif of (de)normalization.
- Analysis of people and power structures in international relations/international political economy through gender.

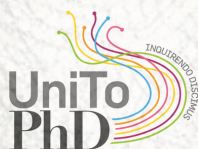
3. Gender, positionality and knowledge production:

- Gender dynamics in anthropological fieldwork, archival research and institutional settings.
- The researcher as a socially and corporeally situated subject.
- Intersections of gender with race, sexuality, nationality and “foreignness.”
- Embodiment, vulnerability and hyper-visibility in asymmetrical contexts (i.e. researchers from the Global South doing research in the Global North and viceversa, LGBTQIA+ people doing research in institutional settings etc).

4. Methodology, Ethics and Interdisciplinary Dialogue:

- Dialogues between historical and ethnographic methods.
- Ethics, reflexivity and the material conditions of research practice.
- Methodological experimentation and collaborative or participatory research practices.

We invite submissions referring to all geographical areas and contexts from the 1700s to the present



Submission and deadlines

The conference is open to PhD candidates and early career scholars (within 5 years of obtaining their degree) from diverse academic backgrounds, including researchers in global history, anthropology, sociology, gender studies, economic and international history.

To apply, participants must submit a single Word document containing the following:

- Name and institutional affiliation.
- A title and an abstract of the proposed paper of maximum 500 words, with three keywords.
- A list of essential bibliographic or archival references related to the abstract (max. 1 page).
- An academic CV, including research interests and any relevant publications (max. 2 pages).

Proposals must be submitted via email to ghempires.conf@gmail.com no later than October 25, 2026. The scientific committee will notify applicants of the selection results by mid November, 2026.

Program details

The conference will feature:

- A keynote lecture.
- Panel discussions with brief participant presentations to allow ample time for discussion and peer feedback, moderated by senior scholars.
- A workshop/roundtable for all participants reflecting on a related topic.

The conference will be held at the University of Turin, Department of Cultures, Politics and Society. Participation at the conference is on site, in the city of Turin.

There will be no attendance fee. The University of Turin will provide meals and a social dinner. Participants are expected to cover their own accommodation and travel expenses.

If you have any further questions, please reach out to the conference organisers at ghempires.conf@gmail.com

Scientific and Organising Committee

Eleonora Ferrazzi, Gloria Berenice Moreno, Miriam Bettamin, Andrea Edoardo Paron, Laura Maria Cinquini