

GENDER IN/AND THE NEOLIBERAL UNIVERSITY

RINGS small conference and General Assembly 2015

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ABSTRACTS

(in chronological order)

12:45 Gender studies in neoliberal university

- **Lindsay Clowes, University of the Western Cape, Women's and Gender Studies**

The limits of neoliberalism: reflections from an introduction to gender studies classroom at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa

It is the imperative of the market and competitive individualism, where the consumer rather than the critically engaged citizen is the king, that take precedence over questions of morality, ethics and social justice in neoliberalist logic. In the absence of any democratizing agenda neoliberalism can also be described as masculinist, underpinned by patriarchal (and other) inequalities. In such masculinist neoliberal contexts discourses holding out the possibility of alternative worlds, such as those emerging out of feminist scholarship, tend to be dismissed as irrelevant, extremist or unpatriotic. Such discourses inevitably find their way into feminist classrooms and my own classroom is no exception. In this paper I reflect on some of the ways in which these discourses emerge in my classroom, as well as possibilities for challenging them. I draw on interactions between and amongst students, on data obtained through focus group interviews and through course evaluations to explore ways in which teaching and learning that combines new and emerging technologies with feminist pedagogy has the potential to reduce hierarchies between teacher and learner, to foreground self-reflexivity, collaborative and student centered learning. I suggest that such teaching offers space for students to develop more critical insights into ways in which they themselves are subject to (and implicated in) the antidemocratic practices of masculinist neoliberalism, and that these insights offer possibilities of contributing to the development of more critically engaged graduates.

- **Deidre Byrne, University of South Africa, Institute for Gender Studies**

Gender Studies at South African Universities

Like many universities worldwide, those in South Africa have been subjected to increasing managerialism and corporatisation in the past two decades. Bill Readings comments in *The University in Ruins* (1997) on the university's refashioning into a producer of knowledge in the new regime of technocracy, top-down management styles, restructuring, rationalisation and corporatisation in the name of "excellence". This new, neoliberal mode of running universities as centres of knowledge production scarcely leaves room for small disciplines, such as women's and gender studies. This interdisciplinary field of endeavour is often perceived in negative terms, either as a niche discipline, an extra or a pursuit which academics engage in during the spare time that is left over from endeavours associated with their home disciplines.

My paper discusses the effect of this state of affairs on South African women's and gender studies departments, institutes and centres. Higher Education curricula in South Africa are governed by CESM (the Classification of Educational Study Material), which sets out the acceptable areas of study and those that will be funded in university structures. Despite this document's extended length, the word "gender" does not appear at all – a clear sign of the way the country's educational authorities view gender studies. It is perhaps no coincidence, then, that of the twenty-three universities in the country, there are only eight women's and gender studies units at university level, usually kept alive by committed individuals at the helm and often under threat of closure by university management intent on streamlining the operations of the institutions. While some universities fare better than others at mainstreaming gender into their curricular and research agendas, it is more or less marginalised at all of them, as I shall show through an analysis of the situation of these units.

I argue that the managerial mode of university governance in South Africa exerts a regrettable influence on women's and gender studies in the country and is a decisive reason for the discipline not to be better subscribed. This is in stark contrast to the social need for gender equality within the country, where the rate of

gender-based violence is not known with any precision, but has been reliably estimated to be among the highest in the world.

References:

Readings, Bill. 1997. *The university in ruins*. Harvard University Press.

- **Heike Kahlert, Ruhr-University Bochum**

Status and Perspectives of Gender Studies and Gender Research under Conditions of the New Governance of Science

Nowadays the science system and especially the universities are of high importance and at the same time contested: As sites of the production of societal useful and utilisable knowledge and of the monopolized acquirement and the allocation of academic qualifications, scientific organisations are of high meaning for late modern knowledge societies and their outstanding position under conditions of globalisation and internationalisation. In times of neoliberalism, scientific organisations are forced to significant changes, which do not only affect management structures but also the knowledge production, teaching and scientific careers. Gender studies and research have become part of the science system but, as many gender scholars argue, until now in a mostly precarious manner. They mostly introduce themselves as reflective about being situated in the academy and as critical about the conditions of science and its organization(s) as such. They aim at transforming knowledge, epistemological modes and the forms of knowledge production as well as scientific organization(s). Because of this reflexivity and so-called transformative potential they are appreciated for a high potential of innovation. But which meaning is given to gender studies and gender research in the neoliberal academy? And how are gender studies and gender research positioned in the academic field? How do they contribute to the neoliberal changes in academy?

In my presentation I will reflect on the current status and meaning of gender studies in the contemporary German academy under conditions of the new governance of science. Thereby I will relate to preliminary results from the research project "Gender research and the new governance of science". This ongoing project under my leadership has been funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research since July 2013, see: www.genderforschung-governance.de.

The empirical material of the project consists of (1) 14 qualitative interviews with stakeholders and experts from the fields of gender studies in academia, research funding, science politics and selected societal institutions on the scientific and societal acceptance of gender research, (2) 5 case studies based on 30 qualitative interviews with diverse interviewees from academia and science management, (3) 20 qualitative interviews with the next generation of scientists in gender studies (pre- and post-doc-level), and (4) a nationwide survey of public funding for gender research on the national and the federal level.

The presentation will concentrate on selected findings from this project.

- **Rosemarie Buikema, Kathrin Thiele, Utrecht University**

Doing the document and the sixty four thousand dollar question

Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2001), argued years ago that the university has become a site of immense struggle rather than a space for the free and critical exchange of ideas. Since the Bologna process, European universities indeed promote purpose and productivity, measurable outputs with economic benefits, collaboration and outreach to civil society, and an international, European climate (Keeling 2006). It is certainly possible for gender researchers to claim all of these characteristics. But, then, to what extend are we being the critical researchers we think we are? To what extend has criticality become a false essentialism, an identity that we live by but do not actually perform? Joan Scott has formulated the paradoxes of 'mainstreaming' as follows:

Having been critics on the outside, we are now advocates on the inside, looking to preserve the institution – as a faculty-governed, tenure-granting, knowledge-producing space of critical inquiry – from those who would reorganize it according to corporate models [...] The need to prevent the "ruin" of the university casts feminists more often as defenders of the status quo than as agents of change. [...] we vigilantly guard the boundaries of our field, protesting unfair distributions of resources, alert to incursions on our turf from new and sexier areas of scholarship, and wary of surveyors who might redraw the maps we have followed so well. Our protectionism sometimes even leads us to collaborate with those administrators who are intent on commodifying the life of the mind. (Scott, 2011)

How to go about all of this is a difficult question. Can we still rely on the established methodologies of feminist engagement with the university?

In our presentation we'll elaborate on conclusions of other scholars on the effects of all this for the knowledge produced for democracy and freedom. Chandra Mohanty (2003) argued early on, with a reference to Vandana Shiva, that the university has moved from being a public to a private affair, which has severe consequences for the ways in which and for whom knowledges are produced. We'll specifically address the engineerings of processes of in and exclusion and the ways in which they're build in the very systems that are intending to undo inequalities like the policies of EU funding themselves.

- **Maria do Mar Pereira, University of Warwick - Centre for the Study of Women and Gender**

Products, Products, Products: The Changing Value of Gender and Feminism in Times of Academic Neoliberalism

Research on contemporary transformations in the governance and funding of science and higher education (HE) has found that such transformations are having impacts on definitions of what can count as proper knowledge. It has shown that as universities in a range of countries see their core teaching and research funding reduced and come under growing pressure to expand and diversify their sources of income, profitability gains importance as a criterion of evaluation of knowledge. In many contexts, this has resulted in quite sudden changes in longstanding discourses about which fields of inquiry produce valid knowledge and are worthy of space in research centres or university curricula. In this paper, I draw on ethnographic research in Portuguese academia to examine how epistemic boundaries and hierarchies get (re)shaped in times of HE cutbacks, and how this is affecting the institutionalisation and status of women's, gender, feminist studies (WGFS). I show that the recognition that WGFS has financial value (i.e. can attract much-needed student fees and research funding) has dissuaded Portuguese scholars from publicly questioning its epistemic value, a questioning that was common and widespread until very recently. However, I show that this public climate of openness to feminist scholarship coexists with a more or less frequent dismissal, and even ridiculing, of the value of WGFS in academic corridor talk, and I examine the manifestations and impacts of this combination of forms of recognition and rejection of the field.

14:30 Knowledge production in a neoliberal university

- **Anna Croon Fors, Umeå Center for Gender Studies**

Slow Science, Contact Zones and Intra-Activism

It now seems timely to figure out ways to practice research in new ways. Ways to involve "the public" and develop new research practices that "benefit society". Some figuring out has already begun, for instance the design and settling of physical spaces for cross/trans/disciplinary collaborations. Blends of digital and physical environments, tools and materials are already explored in a heterogeneous mix of practices in research, innovation and activism. Queering alternative ways of knowledge and reality production. Such attempts often revolve around what is going on in the academic minds at the intersection between philosophy of technology, digital innovation, urban planning, interaction design, architecture, environmentalism, critical design theory, feminist technoscience and the like. Within intersections like such, new concepts, tools and approaches are explored; carefully attending to the making of new concepts and frames.

Slow Science is here suggested as a response to our need to "slow down" and to explore different possibilities. Slow Science is also an academic response to the pressure to "publish or perish," and as such a response to the urge to move quickly through projects; efficient and cost effective. Of course research has always aimed at serving the public and societal concerns of various kinds. But today the public and societal concerns are imaginably different. Different, perhaps, due to past and contemporary research accomplishments? Slow Science, in as such an approach and an offer to some lines of flights. Perhaps also, as such, an offer that provides alternatives ways for responsibility and accountability. Slowing down research processes is necessary if we want to stay with the trouble, as well as stay connected to public and private concerns. We need to build stronger ties with specific communities; slow ways of talking, thinking and exploring together. In Slow Science new Contact Zones needs to be enacted.

Contact Zones are spaces where we all are encouraged to meet and share our concerns. We are also encouraged to clash and grapple with each other. Within Contact Zones there are plenitudes of asymmetrical power relations, such as expertise, belief systems, desires, solutions, traditions, branches and/or disciplines. Contact Zones enact openings to gather common objects and concerns; gender equality, climate change, urban planning, social innovations, health, ageing and living conditions to name a few. Within Contact Zones no one person, matter. No power structure overrules the other. There is, so to speak, no one expertise that determines the conditions of particular concerns or responsibilities. Rather, collaboration across traditionally distinct disciplines and realms of expertise is imperative. Situated knowledge and partial perspective rules.

Slow Science, Contact Zones are concepts with an ambition to grasp the real differently. Things can always be different, you know. How then to know what or which difference to account for? What does it mean to be accounted for some thing or some one? Maybe, a start is to practice Intra-Activism? Intra-Activism let people and things to come together differently. Intra-Activism is a process where close attention to how objects and matters emerge. Paying attention to particular intra-actions where cutting the specifics, make matter matters. Intra-Activism pays notice to diffraction patterns. That is, patterns affirming to difference. Noticing difference in how we relate to each other and to the world. Faces, cuts, screens, marks on bodies and identities to name a few. Such noticing make us attend to the real differently. Intra-Activism is, as such, a practice that at the same time is dispersed and connected; dispersed by transversal stories, connected by learning by-doing, making, thinking and seeing the real differently; always paying attention to power, differences and others.

- **Jeff Hearn, Örebro University, Sweden & Hanken School of Economics, Finland & University of Huddersfield, UK**

Neo-liberal universities, neo-liberal patriarchies, and neo-liberal masculinities: transnational reflections on the global North

The notion of neo-liberalism is used in many different ways. Here I focus on how, in university settings, broad transnational (if not global) socio-political changes translate and coalesce into organizational and individual levels of practice, focused around the notions of individualism and supposed ‘individual choice’ – in this context, supposed ‘individual, often gender-neutral, academic choice’. As Phipps and Young (2015: 314) have recently written in discussing ‘lad cultures’ in UK universities, “[m]arketised universities exist within (and perpetuate) a culture based in ‘having’ or ‘getting’ (grades and/or jobs), which develops a sense of entitlement and in which education becomes a transactional exchange. ... Such market-based views of personhood threaten the existence of community ... residing in the ways we relate to the Other.”

Drawing on research, policy and working experience in UK, Finland and Sweden, I examine how neo-liberal tendencies have taken both similar and different forms in universities in these three countries over the last thirty-five years. Engagement with these three national contexts is overlapping, sedimented, transnational and located in the global North, rather than ‘global’ or simply nationally contextualized. Beginning with the UK, the shift from 1960s and 1970s ‘collegial fraternity’ and patriarchal-fraternal-homosocial university and its management to the technocratic patriarchies of universities from the early 1980s. This was seen in new financial and planning systems, more centralized powers at both government and local university level, the use of standardized measures across disciplines, the expansion of monitoring, surveillance and reporting systems, and a prioritizing of staff publications over other aspects of academic work, along with emphasis on ‘quality’ from less resources. This led onto a whole variety on contradictions, and competing, probably unresolvable demands, in the contemporary university. Somewhat similar systemic reforms have followed in Finland and Sweden, in terms of the creation of legal university ‘autonomy’ in both countries, if not so explicitly or virulently associated with austerity as in the case of the UK.

More recent shifts, both gendered and generational, may involve the locus of change moving from institutional, organizational and managerial change towards the constructions of self-monitoring and self-surveilling academics, or perhaps, to draw on rather different traditions and metaphors, introjecting, docile embodied academics. This entails attention to the fetishism of the location (especially journal impact factor) of publication as more important than content of the publication, and more broadly the construction of different forms of gendered, generational careers, with precariousness, sought geographical mobility, ‘reserve armies’ of academic (both teaching and research) labour, and knowledge production through dispersed networking, strategic co-authorship, and projectization. In such ways the academic hegemony of the global North and West may be both and contradictorily affirmed and subverted.

- **Fiona Jenkins, Australian National University**

"Gendered Excellence in the Social Sciences: Neo-liberal Contexts"

My proposal for this RINGS meeting will track some of the early findings of a collaborative project titled "Gendered Excellence in the Social Sciences" which was recently funded by the Australian Research Council. One aspect of this project aims simply to direct attention toward the major problems that continue to confront women in key social science disciplines such as politics, economics and philosophy. Attempts to improve the participation of women in areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are now widespread. Yet relatively little attention has been paid to the problem of continuing gender inequality in disciplines within the social sciences, despite the contribution these can make to understanding and addressing the obstacles to women's advancement elsewhere. This project asks: why does gender inequality persist in some social science disciplines more than others, and what impact does women's limited influence in certain fields of research have upon our capacity to grapple with the social changes necessary for full gender equality? How self-reflective are the social science disciplines about their own gendered practices and biases? The context for this research includes central reference to the changes that have been underway for some time in the broad guise of neo-liberal university reform. This places particular pressures on disciplinary values, asking them to conform to 'market' rationality as well as an audit culture that shapes the force and meaning of such terms as 'excellence'. How does this impact on gender equity in the social sciences? And how does it impact on feminist practices and approaches in these fields?

My presentation will take its direction from the initial work I have done on disciplinary philosophy, which throughout the Anglophone world, and perhaps more widely, has very low participation rates for women as faculty – though relatively good numbers of students compared to STEM.

How do the sorts of social ends marked by feminism fare within the terms provided by the project of disciplinary survival in the neo-liberal academy? At least some parts of institutional philosophy have in fact flourished under the competitive systems introduced in the university sector to mimic market-driven rationality – notably via the discourse of 'excellence' and the logic of rankings. One topic I am particularly interested in is how, under neo-liberal regimes, academic disciplines become 'prestige' economies in ways that favour ongoing masculine hegemony. In neo-liberal contexts, certain defining but also competing 'internal' conceptions of the discipline might be regarded as adapting themselves to the spirit of the times and I'll try to show how the dominance of one or other such conception carries implications for gender relations within the discipline.

- **Marcela Linková, Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences**

Excellence and Its Others: Gendered notions of what it takes to succeed in science

A crucial element in the organization of the research profession is what constitutes scientific quality or, in more recent parlance, what and who is recognized as excellent. The traditional notion postulates that what matters in science is quality, not socially ascribed characteristics such as gender, race or ethnicity. On the one hand, excellence may appear to be uncontested and self-evident (experts in their field recognize it when they see it) (Lamont, 2009). On the other hand, it is elusive and highly context dependent, with criteria and selection logics tailored to the desired fit (van den Brink & Benschop, 2011). Because gender is part of social organizing, it affects the culture and practices of science, including the definition and assessment of scientific merit.

In this paper I will focus on the natural sciences and how merit, excellence and gender play out in this highly competitive field that has driven reforms in the country. I choose the natural sciences for several reasons: Firstly, natural scientists at the Academy of Sciences played a pivotal role in introducing research assessment at the national level (Linkova & Stockelova, 2012) and the practices of the natural sciences continue to sway the ways research is assessed in the country. Secondly, the natural sciences have set the tone for larger organizational changes in Czech academia, embodied in the shift from the dynastic to the dynamic lab, with elements of strong competition, stress on mobility and performance indexes. Garforth & Stockelova (2012) assert that the natural sciences with the lab form the heartlands of research assessment both in the UK and in the Czech Republic (Garforth, 2012; Stockelova, 2012). If the Methodology for Evaluating Research and Development Results reflected the practices of the natural sciences, it is of relevance to examine what is valued in the natural sciences and with what gendered effects.

In this paper I want to contribute to the existing scholarship on gender and excellence. Building on research studies I performed in natural science institutions, I will examine perceived barriers to women's excellence on the symbolic level, with consideration of repercussions for the institutional and individual levels. Clearly, these levels are not separate, but rather co-constitute powerful gendered scripts and create major obstacles along

the academic hurdle race. On the symbolic level I will examine how the research profession is visioned and research excellence defined, and which aspects of perceived women's characteristics and biographies are seen to be in contradiction with the definition of excellence. With Louise Morley, my concern is to see whether "quality assurance procedures are producing new systems of power and reinforcing gendered power relations in the academy" (Morley 2003, ix).

The results presented in this paper are based on my long-term interest in issues of governance, research assessment and gender. The data come primarily from two research studies performed at two natural science institutes of the Academy of Sciences and additional interviews carried out with research managers and policy makers. The two institutes I studied are seen as excellent in the Czech research landscape. Arguably, the situation in the Academy of Sciences is different from universities which perform the dual role of teaching and research. Research assessment systems have taken a stronger root in institutes of Academy of Sciences (and not only in the natural sciences) whereas the situation at universities is more varied, even faculty to faculty. But because the institutes of the Academy of Sciences can be more easily interpolated by the logic of competition, they offer a particularly suited ground for examining the gendered impacts of the recent shifts to competitive organization of research.

- **Rosemarie Buikema, Kathrin Thiele, Utrecht University**

Neoliberal feminism and the challenge of freedom for all

A major concern of twenty first century feminist activism in Western Europe is that the achievements of the movement for women's liberation threatens to become disconnected from its initial manifestations of equality for all, understood as transnational solidarity. Instead the outcome of two feminist waves seems to mainly serve neoliberal capitalism and the concomitant individualization of the process of emancipation and social participation. (Scott 2011). As Nancy Fraser's timely summary in *The Guardian* (October 14, 2013) suggests, this risk of female empowerment becoming the handmaiden of global neoliberal capitalism, might have been implicated in the movement from the start. Western European second wave feminist goals and strategies in the end seem to have been ambivalent and thus susceptible for two different elaborations. The initial deeply political commitment to participatory democracy and social justice included goals which, in hindsight, simultaneously served the neoliberal vocabulary of autonomy, choice and meritocratic advancement. Contrary to the feminist postcolonial and post socialist project which situates the female subject as submitted to patriarchal, racist and capitalist structures, -the very same structures which produced the image of women as the Angels in the House-, neoliberal feminisms seem to promote participation to capitalism and patriarchy. The feminist struggle for paid labour for women, economic independence and female empowerment for example now threatens to serve an increasingly fluid and flexible labour market. Movements like Facebooks CEO Sheryl Sandberg's Lean In encourage women to develop themselves in the vocabulary of the free market. Proceed and be bold is the mantra. Female autonomy as a brand. Neoliberal feminism is therefore at risk of serving the status quo and, in that process reducing subjects to economical actors, to servants of capital, encouraged to invest in their own individual liberation and autonomy instead of striving for social justice for all. To paraphrase Wendy Brown (2013), neoliberal feminism seriously risks the gradual replacement of the homo politicus for the homo oeconomicus. Additionally, the rightful second wave feminist emphasis on differences within possible manifestations of feminine identities (black, white, coloured, queer, trans, hetero etc.), threatens to replace analysis of political economic developments and circumstances and instead, takes the patriarchal capitalist vocabulary of the free market for granted. Third wave feminism became so concerned with stressing the differences within the category of woman as such that the feminist enterprise of analysis on the level of the productivity of societal structures and transnational solidarity became under theorized.

We will elaborate in our presentation on the challenge for twenty first century third wave feminists is to develop and practice an activism which continues to truly connect the local and the global, the private and the public, the personal and the political, the empirical and the symbolical.

- **Irma Erlingsdóttir, UNU-GEST and EDDA-Center of Excellence, University of Iceland**

The "Unconditional University"

The paper revisits Jacques Derrida's vision of a "university without condition" by stressing the duty of the academic community to "speak up" and to resist diverse forms of power—whether transmitted through the state's sovereignty claims, economic or ideological hegemony; cultural or religious truth regimes, or media control. Using the recent Icelandic economic and societal crisis as an example, it seeks to show the damage done to the university's immune system as a result of market-driven commodification and technocratic inroads into teaching and research. This development has intensified the reification "professionalism" within the university and had a taming effect on the academic community's ability to contest and question. As will be shown, this development has also profound gendered implications. The argument is made that to preserve itself as a site of critical creativity, the university has to occupy a space "in-between" institutions, ideas, and discourses. If it succeeds in doing so, it is not only in a far better position to counter those forces of the state and market, which seek to remake the university in their own images. It would also signify a step toward what may be termed an "unconditional university."

16:15 Policies for gender equality in neoliberal policyscapes

- **K. Scheibl, M. Reutter, S. Ihsen, Technische Universität München, Gender Studies in den Ingenieurwissenschaften**

Gender Issues as an Integral Part of the Neoliberal University. Challenges and Risks of Gender Issues in Germany's Excellence Initiative for Women in SET

In Germany, the neoliberalistic specification is called "soziale Marktwirtschaft" (social market economy) and combines capitalism with social legislation [1]. Its main influence in the educational and science system was, up from the 1950s in Western Germany the question of equal opportunities and participation [2]. In the 1990s, additionally new controlling instruments adjusted economic interests and enhanced competition between universities to increase their international visibility and to strengthen cutting-edge research [3]. In this context, the 'Excellence Initiative' (ExIni) has been initiated by Federal and State Governments in cooperation with Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG – German Organization for Science and Research) and Wissenschaftsrat (WR – German Council of Science and Humanities) in 2005 as a program with three funding lines: cluster of excellence, graduate schools and institutional strategies. Within the program, the linking of excellence and gender is crucial since gender equality is one of the eligibility criteria [4, 5]. Actually, ExIni has affected the scientific landscape. It created high quality research projects, better ranking results and internalization [6]. However, ExIni has caused criticisms, three main points are [6, 7]: 1) Economic applicability stands contrary to the goal of profiling and diversification. 2) The loss of the unity of research and teaching. 3) Distributional conflicts within Higher Education after termination.

The establishment of gender measures in the ExIni is accompanied by governmental programs such as the Program for Female Professors and scientific activities of the DFG the Research-Oriented Standards on Gender Equality. Since activities foster young female scientists, gender perspectives in research projects and organizational concepts, conditions for gender equality have been improved. Thus, on an organizational level, equality measures have been successfully launched in the last decade. They lead to a gender sensitive recruitment and career development for women [8].

Focusing engineering, there are three main arguments for a consistent inclusion of gender policies in science and education [9]:

- **Economical argument:** Germany faces a shortage of engineers. The traditional 'male resources' will not be sufficient, so it is necessary to recruit new diverse target groups (i. e., women, people from abroad, people with migration background).
- **Quality argument:** A better balance of Diversity in science and engineering could positively influence the market orientation of technical product design and development.
- **Equality argument:** Women should have the same opportunities in the labour market as men to benefit from excellent job prospective in engineering.

In engineering, specific measures like the 'MINT-Pakt' (national network of science, politics and industry to integrate more women in SET) and 'Girls' Day' have promoted a better integration of women in the last decade. The number of female students and graduates in engineering is increasing steadily as well as the

number of female professors [10]. Likewise, the percentage of female principal investigators participating in engineering proposals for ExIni grew from the first to the second funding period [11]. Thus more female leaders and role models are available now.

The establishment of governmental led gender measures in university and industry show on the one hand that these changings come to good results in case of “gender counting”. On the other hand, gender often is attributed to a differential approach: It still is deemed as ‘women’s issues’ [12] and not transversally examined in organizational change or research topics. Many gender programs and measures are not sustainable [13]. This means an increased risk to implicitly strengthen gender stereotypes and traditional disciplinary cultures. Though these strategies have contributed a lot integrating more women in SET these matters still impede the major chance of gender and diversity oriented organizational change.

- **Liisa Husu, GEXcel International Collegium for Advanced Transdisciplinary Gender Studies; Centre for Feminist Social Studies, Örebro University**

Gender research and national research policy – the Swedish case

In many European countries gender research and/or gender in research are hardly mentioned in national research policy documents. Sweden is often perceived as a country where gender research has a relatively favourable position seen from an international perspective, and a country where gender research has been generously supported by the state, having a firm foothold in universities. In Sweden, the White Paper of Research Policy forms the framework for national research policies for a four-year period. During the last decade Sweden has been ruled by successive centre-conservative coalition governments. Gender issues and gender research have gradually received less and less attention in the national research policy framework. In the White Paper of 2004 the word gender was mentioned 80 times, in the 2008 White Paper seven times, whereas in the latest one, 2012, the term gender was totally absent. The new Social-Democratic-Green Coalition that came to power in October 2015 declared itself as a “feminist government” and included several gender-related aims in its governmental programme. A new White Paper of Research Policy is being prepared in 2015. The Swedish gender research community mobilized collectively to influence this coming-up White Paper towards more attention on gender research and its conditions, as well as gender equality in research. A coordinator in this mobilization was the National Secretariat for Gender Research, which is a state-funded body promoting gender in research. All gender studies and gender research stakeholders were invited to contribute, and the Secretariat collected and consolidated the contributions to a joint letter to the Minister of Higher Education and Research. The paper addresses and analyses this lobby process, and by the time of the conference in November, it may be possible to make some assessments on the impact of this intervention. The paper is linked to an on-going study on gender paradoxes in the Nordic academia.

- **Birgit Riegraf, Universität Paderborn**

Excellence and Gender Equality. Policies in Neoliberal University

The metaphor ‘Entrepreneurial University’ stands for a new format of the scientific landscape in Germany as well as in many other countries. Competitive orientation, managerial steering, the weakening of professional issues, progressive devaluation und deregulation of employment relationships are catchwords to cover the restructuring process and the scientific reflection of the development in the last years. In this restructuring process ‘excellence’ has become one of the most important notion in the science policy and scientific system in Germany. To be an ‘excellent’ university is one of the crucial aims in the competition between the organisations in the scientific system. The ascription as an ‘excellent’ university is very tight linked together with the successful participation in new steering programmes like the ‘Exzellenzinitiative’. The implementation of the competition process is combined with two others aspects: At the same time and as a part of the process the scientific professions are facing the weakening of her issues and are facing in a historical new manner restrictions. Also nearly at the same time science policies opens itself for gender equality policies and universities opens themselves for women’s employment on the level of professorship. Steering programmes like the ‘Exzellenzinitiative’ include also gender aspects and in this way the competition upon excellence is combined with gender equality politics. Against this background there are some open questions: Which construction of ‘excellence’ und ‘gender equality’ are visible in the different programmes, policies and in the guidelines of the universities? Are there references between ‘excellence’ and ‘gender equality’ to gain excellent Students, Lectures or Scientists? Or is the emphasis of ‘excellence’ just another instrument in the gendered selection process in the scientific system?

In the face of this constellation the contribution discusses if and how the leading model of the 'entrepreneurial university' is combined with the requirement of 'excellence' and 'gender equality'. The contribution looks at the development in Germany and asks, if we face another variation of the much known process that degrading and feminisation of work goes together hand in hand. I point out, that the situation is more ambiguous and that we have to get a broader view to get an overall understanding of the process.

18:00 Parallel sessions 1 & 2

PARALLEL SESSION 1: RESEARCH CAREERS

- **Kadri Aavik, Tallinn University**

Gendered mobility in the neoliberal academia: career paths of female academics in Estonian universities

Especially in the last decade, processes of neoliberalisation and commercialisation of higher education have increasingly gained scholarly attention. Research, notably in the emerging field of critical university studies, has focused on the nature of these processes and their consequences to academic culture and to the idea of the university more broadly. This critical body of research has investigated ways in which the university increasingly operates according to market logic, contributing to growing inequalities within and beyond the academia.

While these neoliberal processes have become ubiquitous around and within Western academia, they also increasingly occur in other parts of the world, such as in the post-socialist region. Since their re-independence in the early 1990s, most of those European countries formerly part of the Soviet Union, have been led by right-wing governments whose neoliberal policies have had a profound impact on higher education.

This presentation focuses on gendered mobility in the Estonian academia, where processes of restructuring, following neoliberal logic and austerity measures, are currently under way, impacting all major public universities. In this context, it is important to ask what kinds of academic career paths in higher education does the neoliberal university produce and how are these gendered? This presentation focuses on the career paths of female academics in Estonia. In particular, the following questions are explored. What meanings do female academics attribute to their careers? What broader conditions within and outside the academia and what kinds of institutional support do they see as necessary to enable their success as scholars? What kinds of institutional support mechanisms and gender equality/equal treatment policies are actually present in Estonian universities? Whether and how do university leaders and human resource managers see gender as a relevant category to consider when designing these policies and measures? What impact do neoliberal reforms have on the career opportunities and career paths of especially young female academics?

This paper draws from empirical material collected from four major Estonian universities in the framework of the project "Supporting the career tracks of female researchers in the academia", conducted by the Institute of International and Social Studies in Tallinn University. The analysis draws from interviews conducted with early career female academics, university leaders and human resource managers. In addition, university documents and policies for ensuring and promoting gender equality and equal treatment are examined. Throughout exploring the questions above, it is considered how talk produced in institutional settings (as manifested in the interviews, for example) constitutes those (neoliberal) settings, as well as challenges them.

- **Marta Vohlídalová, Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences**

Motherhood and the career paths of young women academics in the Czech Republic

Academia is an area that has been historically constructed to fit the traditional male career model that assumes a perfectly mobile and flexible worker who is willing to entirely devote himself to his job, has no caring commitments, and builds his upward career without longer breaks and interruptions. However, such a notion of an academic career is incompatible with life biographies of significant proportion of women (and some men), and particularly is in conflict with parental commitments (especially with motherhood and active fatherhood). Family and social policies, together with gender relations in the family and the setting of academic institutions create an important context in which women academics cope with requirements of their careers. As in other countries the Czech academic environment and research policies has been subjected to neo-liberal reforms. One of the main changes are associated with the introduction of research assessment in 2004 which has been followed by steep decrease in institutional funding and resulted in increase in share of short-term competitive funding, growing job insecurity, pressure on academic mobility and extreme competitiveness. But

unlike in many western countries that have undergone this transformation Czech Republic shows very poor conditions for combining work and care for small children, especially children up to 3 years of age. A conservative family policy based on the assumption that women should stay at home until the child reaches 3 years of age, along with a lack of childcare facilities for young children up to the age of 3 and an absence of incentives for fathers to get more involved in childcare, creates an extremely unfriendly environment for combining parenthood with academic careers. In my paper I will focus on how the conditions of scientific work and academic careers as well as conditions for combining parenthood with academic careers are reflected in career paths and career plans of young women academics. The analysis is based on unique data from a quasi-longitudinal project, which included 14 in-depth interviews with early-stage career women academics repeated in two waves: i) between 2005-2007 (when they were Ph.D. students or fresh Ph.D. holders and majority of them was child-free); and ii) between 2013-2014 (where majority of them started a family and their career paths have significantly diversified).

- **Kateřina Cidlinská, Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences**

Whom and why the Czech academic science loses in the pursuit of excellence and competitiveness? Gender aspects of dropouts from academic science

The contribution deals with the theme of leaving the academic science by early career researchers. Against the backdrop of the present changes of academic environment related to the rise of academic capitalism (Slaughter and Rhodes 2004) and the specifics of the Czech science policy (primarily funding), I explore who are those people who are leaving the science and which factors influence their exits. Current European and Czech science policies emphasize the need of high quality human resources in order to achieve the research excellence and competitiveness. The excellence should be guaranteed by a system of the funding and an assessment of scientific work based on neutral meritocratic criteria. This system stresses the publication performance and provides mostly short-term contracts. My contribution questions the main idea of the system, namely that only the best researchers will stay in science. My analysis based on my dissertation project draws on an online questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews focused on the persons who have left the Czech academic science in the last 10 years mostly in the postgraduate and postdoctoral phase, their reasons for exit and subjective evaluation of working conditions in science. The paper argues that current criteria of excellence and working conditions support gender, social and age inequalities in science and the homogenization of research population. Instead of the development of high quality and motivated human resources and excellent research, they lead to burnout syndrome and exits from science of early career researchers, especially women.

PARALLEL SESSION 2: FEMINIST PEDAGOGY AND TEACHING PRACTICE

- **Blanka Nyklová, Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences**

Broadening horizons or commodifying difference?

Despite extensive feminist scholarship on teaching, the context of the teaching-learning experience remains often largely unaffected by these insights and beyond the control of those who have to increasingly approach their role as that of a "service provider." These paradoxes take a specific shape when the geopolitical location of both those "teaching" and "taught" becomes the focus and indeed the "commodity" to be exchanged. The Council on International Educational Exchange has been operating on the international educational market with study abroad programs since the late 1940s. After 1989, the program established its centre in Prague, the Czech Republic, offering among other subjects, a gender studies course. For the past eleven semesters, I have been teaching this class and reflected on the ethical discontents the teaching experience and related commodification of "difference" inadvertently brings. These have recently been exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, which had led to the drop in enrolment in e.g. Saint Petersburg to the benefit of the centre in Prague.

In my paper, I predominantly reflect on my own situation as a teacher in an increasingly precarious educational environment exacerbated by the specific framing of the US-based program and its economic-moral rationality. To achieve this, I focus on the situation of gender studies in the Czech Republic and the region under the reform of the science system guided by neoliberal principles and the specific repercussions the reform has had locally.

- **Ulf Mellström, Karlstad University, Sweden**

The gendered politics of student mobility in neoliberal global eduscapes

In this paper I open up for a discussion of the gendered particularities as well as the commonalities of student mobility in the current globalisation of higher education. With a point of departure in the northern hemisphere and empirical examples drawn from work on international students and student mobility in Russia, Sweden and Norway, I will link this to cultural imaginaries of desired and sought for locations in the global food chain of university rankings. In particular I will focus on the 'power of English' and the gendered politics of student mobility in global eduscapes (Forstorp and Mellström 2013). The experiences of student mobility in the Scandinavian and Russian context will but also be put in conversation with earlier and ongoing studies of student mobility on a global basis (cf. Murphy-Lejeune 2002, 2008, Sidhu 2006, Collins et al 2014, Lee and Koo 2006, Waters 2003, 2005, 2008, Sin 2009, Brooks and Waters 2011, Gurüz 2011, Mellström 2012, Forstorp & Mellström 2013, fc.).

Related projects:

Globalised eduscapes: students, learning and mobility in the knowledge society. The Swedish Research Council, 2010-2014.

Transforming the Northern future through student exchange? Building of a research network on internationalization of education, The Norwegian Research council 2012-2015

Beyond the national university. A study of corporate universities in India, Dubai, and Brazil. The Swedish Research Council, 2015-2017.

- **Tamara Shefer, University of the Western Cape**

Critical thoughts on dominant responses to sexual practices and abuses at universities within contemporary neoliberal dominant South African higher education contexts

A range of contemporary empirical studies highlight how normative gender roles and gender power inequalities, intersecting with multiple markers of difference and disadvantage including class, 'race', nationality and age, are reflected and reproduced in tertiary educational campus life in South African contexts. Arguably higher education has the imperative to not only ensure the safety students and staff, but also to provide a critical and supportive framework for challenging the campus and larger social framework of gender and other inequalities as they are articulated through heterosexual practices. Indeed South African higher education has been engaged in a transformation project attempting to challenge the legacies of apartheid including continued racist and sexist practices and within the context of challenges of HIV and high rates of gender-based violence, particular attention has been directed at young students' sexual practices. The paper foregrounds how university life represents a specific location shaped by localized micro contexts that serve to both reflect and reinscribe a range of social inequalities and divides. While it is important to acknowledge the practices of power and related violences in university contexts, the paper suggests that the dominant response to the challenges of HIV and young peoples' practices of intimacy in general has been shaped by predominantly disciplinary and punitive responses framed within continued patriarchal and growing neoliberal contexts of regulation and bureaucratization of the academic project. The paper argues for resisting the plethora of policy and related punitive measures being generated. It suggests the value of accounting for multiple, intersecting and complex dynamics of gender norms and sexual practices, and that foregrounds students' experiences and agency in leading and shaping.