

## ARC-GS Yearly Report 2014

### Introduction

The Amsterdam Research Center for Gender and Sexuality (ARC-GS) was founded at the end of the academic year 2009-2010 thanks to the concerted efforts of several research programme groups from the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR). Its aim is to provide an interdisciplinary forum for synergistic research and teaching at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) in the fields of gender and sexuality, tapping into the state-of-the-art research that current staff member across disciplines are already engaged in and generating new collaborations.

It builds on the productive and innovative gender and sexuality studies tradition of interdisciplinarity and is situated institutionally at the heart of the social sciences, primarily anthropology, political science, social geography sociology, and science and technology studies. It works to situate the UvA in a global academic context, enabling new international scholarly collaborations, providing intellectual visibility to current research, attracting new students at all levels, enabling timely interventions in public debates in the Netherlands, Europe, and beyond, and producing a lively intellectual community that integrates research and teaching.

### Mission

The intellectual transformations of women's studies into gender studies, and gay and lesbian studies into sexuality and queer studies since the late 1970s have produced a new interest in the social norms, cultural forms, and political regulations that shape processes of in- and exclusion, gendered identities and sexual practices. This new interest converges with larger societal problems around globalization and localization, nationalism and the nation-state, inequality, and new configurations of identity that concern us all. These problems are frequently connected to issues of gender and sexuality (e.g., political representation, civil rights, human trafficking, labour movements, homophobia), and can often benefit from the theoretical and methodological insights developed within gender and sexuality studies. Whereas public debate is often mired by problematic and unrecognized assumptions, scholars in this field provide a much needed context for our understanding of these complex problems.

Gender and sexuality scholarship has tied gender to the emancipation and visibility of various groups of women while simultaneously problematizing categories of gender such as masculinity, transgender, and intersex. In addition it has also opened up the investigation into identity-producing mechanisms in everyday life, such as pleasure, affection, intimacy, love, and friendship, while building on longer feminist traditions of unveiling truth claims and analysing political processes. It has reclaimed the body as an object of social research,

locating it at the convergence of the subjective and the structural, and has foregrounded the relationship between gender, sexuality, and other categories, such as race. In short, it has taken up intersectionality as its core business.

The contribution that gender and sexuality scholarship can make thus reaches well beyond the confines of understanding the aforementioned categories and provides innovative approaches to a wide range of social and political dynamics, including those surrounding race/ethnicity, class, nationalism, religion, age, space, and other forms of social difference.

### **Organizational Structure**

ARC-GS is institutionally situated within the social sciences, which is reflected in its organizational structure. ARC-GS is supported by the following AISSR Programme Groups: Anthropology of Health, Care, and the Body; Political Sociology; Cultural Sociology; Globalizing Culture and the Quest for Belonging: Ethnographies of the Everyday; Institutions, Inequalities, and Life Courses; Urban Geographies; Challenges to Democratic Representation; and Transnational Configurations, Conflict, and Governance.

The ARC-GS Advisory Board is comprised of:

Niko Besnier, Saskia Bonjour, Amade M'charek, Sébastien Chauvin, Jan Willem Duyvendak, Conny Roggeband, Gert Hekma, Willemijn Krebbekx, Mieke Lopes Cardozo, Liza Mügge, Rachel Spronk, Stephanie Steinmetz, and Saskia Wieringa

The ARC-GS Advisory Board is composed of full professors, assistant professors, and PhD candidates from varied disciplines within the social sciences and provides guidance and support to the Daily Board.

The ARC-GS Daily Board is currently comprised of:

- Rachel Spronk (ARC-GS Executive Director)
- Liza Mügge (ARC-GS Associate Director)
- Robert Davidson (ARC-GS Program Manager)

The Daily Board is accountable to the Advisory Board. The Daily Board meets weekly and is responsible for the day-to-day management of ARC-GS.

### **ARC-GS Monthly Lecture Series**

-January 2014: Dr. Giulia Sinatti (Research Fellow, International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University): "Intersectionality and Migration: Multiple Positionalities and Construction of Manhood in a Transnational Sphere"

-February 2014: Dr. Geneviève Pruvost (Researcher at CNRS): "Thinking Female Violence"

-March 2014: Dr. Theo van der Meer (Institute for the International Education of Students): "Achieving Masculinity Through Emasculation. The castration of sex offenders in The Netherlands 1938-1968"

-April 2014: Dr. Bettina Bock von Wülfingen (Institute for Cultural History and Theory, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): “Economies in the cell: Economic perceptions of biological conception and genetics between 1900 and 2000”

-May 2014: Prof. Ken Plummer (Emeritus Professor of Sociology, University of Essex): “Cosmopolitan Sexualities”

-October 2014: Dr. Chris Dolan (Director of Refugee Law Project, Kampala, Uganda): “Gender-based Violence and The Case for Inclusive Gender”

-November 2014: Dr. Eldad Davidov (Associate Professor, Institute of Sociology, University of Zurich): “Human Values and Approval of Homosexuality in Europe”

-December 2014: Dr. Emily Grabham (Reader in Law, Kent Law School, University of Kent): “Progression: Time and the Materialisation of HIV in Canadian Law”

### **September 2014 Event – Opening of the Academic Year**

The September 2014 Opening Event was entitled “Foucault 2.0: Moral Panics & The Question of Sexual Liberties.” The following scholars presented a paper at the event:

Prof. Roger Lancaster (Professor of Anthropology and Cultural Studies, George Mason University): “The Last Pariahs?”

Prof. Feona Attwood (Professor in Cultural Studies, Communication & Media, Middlesex University): “Sexuality, Sexualisation and ‘Healthy Sex’”

Prof. Liesbet van Zoonen (Professor of Sociology, Erasmus University Rotterdam): “Sexualisation Panics and Popular Culture”

### **Lunch Lectures**

In addition to the monthly lecture series ARC-GS hosted the following lunch lectures, which were organised based on the availability of traveling scholars:

-March 2014: Dr. Elisabeth L. Engebretsen (Research Fellow at the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden): “Queer Paradigms and ‘Different Normativities’ in China and Beyond”

-May 2014: Dr. Eline Severs, Dr. Karen Celis and Dr. Silvia Erzeel: “Intersectional theorizing on women’s political representation: Understanding power, privilege and disadvantage”

-October 2014: Prof. Belinda Carpenter (Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia): “The Politics of Sex Trafficking: A Moral Geography”

### **Book Launches**

In May 2014 ARC-GS organized a book launch of *Gender on the Edge: Transgender, Gay, and Other Pacific Islanders* by Prof. Niko Besnier (Professor of Cultural Anthropology, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, UvA).

In November 2014 ARC-GS co-sponsored with the Institut Francais a public discussion by Edouard Louis and Didier Eribon on their recent books *En finir avec Eddy Bellegueule* and *Retour à Reims*, respectively. The event was hosted at the Maison Descartes.

### **Debate: Vrouwen in de Wetenschap**

ARC-GS organized the debate 'Women in Science' at the Academic Club of the UvA. Dr. Louise Gunning-Schepers (Chair of the Board of Directors of the University of Amsterdam and the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences), Prof. Marise Born (Professor of Personnel Psychology at Erasmus University Rotterdam and board member of the Dutch National Network of Women Professors, LNVH), and Dr. Marieke van den Brink (Associate Professor of Strategic Human Resource Management at Radboud University Nijmegen) engaged in the debate, which was followed by discussion with members of the audience.

### **Conference**

ARC-GS facilitated the conference "Sade Today" in December 2014, which brought scholars together to discuss the lasting impact of the work of the Marquis de Sade.

### **ARC-GS event-related publications**

The conference 'Sexual Revolutions' facilitated by ARC-GS conference led to the publication: Hekma, G. & Giami, A. (Eds.) (2014) *Sexual Revolutions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dr. Iman al-Ghafari's time at ARC-GS as a visiting scholar resulted in the following publication:

Al-Ghafari, I. (2014) The Quest for Lesbian Ethics in Contemporary Middle-Eastern Cultures. *Journal of the International Network of Sexual Ethics and Politics*, 2, pp. 19-38.

### **MA Thesis Prize**

ARC-GS awards an annual prize for the best social science master thesis in gender and sexuality. In 2014 Mirjam Fischer won the prize for her thesis: "Does tolerance matter? A study of same-sex unions and well-being in 9 European countries." An honourable mention was also given to Sam Meerhoff for his thesis: "Een apart onderwerp. Een sociologisch onderzoek naar docenten die gestalte geven aan onderwijs over seksuele diversiteit."

### **Teaching**

ARC-GS plays a role in ensuring that high quality, diverse courses are offered that are grounded in the social sciences and teach students about various aspects of gender and sexuality. ARC-GS actively invites students and teachers from courses focused on gender

and sexuality to attend its events. That creates an opportunity for the diverse teachers to get to know each other better, network, and celebrate the successes of the teaching on MA and BA levels and provides opportunities for students to extend their knowledge beyond the classroom.

The following courses are offered in the BA Minor in Gender and Sexuality:

- Introduction to Gender and Sexuality
- Sociology of Sexualities
- Gender, conflict and international relations
- Experiencing differences
- Gender and ethnicity in western and (post)colonial history
- Kritische maatschappijtheorie
- Macht en gender in de mondiale politiek
- Gender, sexuality and institutions
- Sexual Variations
- The Local and Global Complexity of Prostitution
- Moving Manhood
- Intersectionalities of gender - why gender is not always the final answer
- Gender, familie en sociale mobiliteit in Latijns-America

The following courses are offered in the MA Gender, Sexuality and Society:

- Intersections of Gender, Sexuality & Society
- Gender, Sexuality and the City
- Theorizing Gender
- Ethnicity, Class and Gender in a Comparative Perspective
- The Politics of LGBT organizing

### **Networking**

ARC-GS functions as a mediator between various university-based (students' associations, UvA-Pride, Amsterdam United) and non-university based groups (such as the media, NGOs, the local city government, etc.) to facilitate contacts and organise debates about pertinent social issues. In this way ARC-GS connects scientists working in the areas of gender and sexuality with each other and to civil society and local government organizations working on similar issues.

### **2014 Budget**

ARC-GS was financially supported in 2014 by six programme groups from the AISSR. The programme groups Health, Care, and the Body; Political Sociology; Challenges to Democratic Representation; Cultural Sociology; Globalizing Culture and the Quest for Belonging; and Institutions, Inequalities, and Life Courses all made financial contributions to ARC-GS resulting in a total 2014 budget of €12.162,47.