



CENTRE FOR GENDER AND SEXUALITY

ARC-GS Yearly Report 2015

Introduction

The Amsterdam Research Centre 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 sociology, anthropology, political science, social geography, economics, 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 sexual practices and gendered identities. 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., prostitution, 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 opened up the investigation into identity-producing mechanisms in everyday life, such as pleasure, affection, intimacy, love, and friendship. In addition, it has tied gender to the emancipation and visibility of women while simultaneously problematizing categories such as masculinity, transgender, and intersex. 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.

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 2015: Dr. Paul Boyce (Lecturer in Anthropology and International Development, University of Sussex): “Envisioning Sexual Rights and Embodying Non-Normative Sexualities and Genders in the Context of Socio-Economic Transformation in Nepal”

-February 2015: Prof. Jan Willem Duyvendak (Professor of Sociology, UvA): “Does LGBT mobilizing change the mainstream, or are LGBT normalized by the mainstream?”

-March 2015: Prof. Janice M. Irvine (Professor of Sociology, University of Massachusetts): “The Other Sex Work: Sexuality Research and the Persistent Problem of Shame”

-April 2015: Prof. Sandra Harding (Distinguished Professor of Education and Gender Studies, UCLA): “Recent Standpoints on Decoloniality”

-May 2015: Dr. Stella Nyanzi (Research Fellow, Makerere Institute of Social Research): “Paradoxes of the Homosexuality Debates in Uganda”

-October 2015: Prof. Gloria Wekker (Emerita Professor, Institute for Cultural Inquiry, Utrecht University): “Class, Race, Gender and all that Jazz”

-November 2015: Symposium with Prof. Dr. Belle Derks (University of Utrecht), Dr. Inge Bleijenbergh (Radboud University Nijmegen), and Dr. Niels Spierings (Radboud University Nijmegen): “The Feminist Methods Myth – Why Gender Studies has to Overcome Methodological Determinism”

-December 2015: Prof. Rosemarie Buikema (Professor of Art, Culture and Diversity, Utrecht University): “Transitional Justice, Feminist theory and the Arts”

September 2015 Event – Opening of the Academic Year

The September 2015 Opening Event was entitled “Tedious, Thorny and Quintessential Gender mainstreaming in academia” but was postponed due to the last-minute cancellation of speakers.

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:

-May 2015: Dr. Paromita Chakravarti (Associate Professor, Department of English, Jadavpur University): “Women on the verge: Gendering Homeless Movements in Kolkata, India”

-June 2015: Prof. Oscar Guasch (Sociology Department, Universitat de Barcelona): “Masculinities and male sex work in Spain (1975-2015). An ethnographic approach”

-October 2015: Prof. Eka Srimulyani (Lecturer at Faculty of Arts and Humanities, State Islamic University of Ar-Raniry; Senior researcher at International Centre for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies, ICAIOS): “Women’s agency in Contemporary Aceh: Islam, Gender Issues and Beyond”

Lectures on Eastern European LGBT History and Politics (in collaboration with Bojan Bilić)

-February 2015: Franko Dota (PhD candidate, Department of History, Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities, University of Zagreb): “An Ambiguous Affair: The Yugoslav Socialist State and Its Homosexuals”

-March 2015: Dr. Čarna Brković (New Europe College, Institute for Advanced Studies): “Queering Montenegro: Challenging Homophobia in Montenegro”

-April 2015: Dr. Judit Takács (Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Sociology, CSS, Hungarian Academy of Sciences): “Homosexual Listings in 20th Century Hungary”

-November 2015: Dr. Piro Rexhepi (Center for Global Affairs, New York University): “From Orientalism to Homonationalism: Queer Politics, Islamophobia and European Enlargement in the Balkans”

-November 2015: Roman Kuhar (Associate professor of sociology, University of Ljubljana): “It’s the End of the World as We Know It: Marriage Equality Debates in Slovenia”

-November 2015: Dušan Maljković (Journalist, publicist, translator and long-term LGBT activist): “Queering Marx and Marxing the Queer: Normality of the Belgrade Gay Pride”

Book Seminar

-October 2015: “Sexual Revolutions! Three innovative perspectives on an international landslide” with Dr. Agnes Andeweg, Robert Davidson and Dr. Gert Hekma (In collaboration with the Mosse Foundation)

Visiting Scholars

ARC-GS hosts visiting scholars for 3-6 months, during which scholars pursue independent research and interact with ARC-GS faculty, students, and staff.

February-June 2015: Dr. Oscar Guasch (Departamento de Sociología i A. O., Universidad de Barcelona)

June-July 2015: Dr. Paromita Chakravarti (Department of English, Jadavpur University)

MA Thesis Prize

ARC-GS awards an annual prize for the best social science master thesis in gender and sexuality. In 2015 Stephanie Stelko, won the prize for her thesis entitled “Doing Vaginismus: Activity and Self-Interpretation of Clenching Bodies.” The committee was impressed by the systematic and well-structured analysis of the data. The uniqueness of the thesis lies in the fact that the study of sexual conditions needs more socially scientific reflections in order to unpack the relation between the individual patient and the social environment. Studying vaginismus in relation to the coital imperative and the mindful body opens new doors in the biomedical approach to vaginismus, while analysing the mindful body and its experiences addresses a blind spot in the feminist study of gender and sexuality.

Conference

In October ARC-GS successfully organised the conference “Social Class in the 21st Century: Intersections between class, gender and sexuality revisited”. Colleagues from various backgrounds and program groups of the AISSR organised panels at the conference. There

were 76 registered participants from a number of different countries and continents. The conference embodied the mission of ARC-GS: bringing together many AISSR colleagues who work on gender and/or sexuality.

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.

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.

2015 Budget

ARC-GS was financially supported in 2015 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 2015 budget of €15.042,28.

| Activities | Costs |
|--|-------------------|
| Monthly lectures | €4.266,51 |
| Opening Event | €0 |
| Lunch Lectures | €242,97 |
| Visiting Scholars | €350,00 |
| Thesis Prize (2014 & 2015) | €1.000,00 |
| Conference: Class in the 21 st C. | €8.782,80 |
| Dinner with ARC-GS Board | €400,00 |
| Total Expenses | €15.042,28 |