



CENTRE FOR GENDER AND SEXUALITY

ARC-GS Annual Report 2020

By Robert Davidson, Sarah Bracke, & Julie McBrien, 29 January 2021

Introduction

The Amsterdam Research Centre for Gender and Sexuality (ARC-GS) is a central hub for the study of gender and sexuality: the centre brings together and consolidates a community of scholars and scholarship on gender and sexuality at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). Founded in 2010 and embedded in the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), the centre provides an interdisciplinary forum for research and teaching in Gender & Sexuality at the UvA. It brings together scholars of gender and sexuality from different disciplinary contexts, including different theoretical and epistemological approaches, relying on different methodologies, focusing on different themes and also with differences in emphasis on gender or sexuality. ARC-GS is a space where such differences are welcomed and considered to provide fertile ground for interdisciplinary conversations and new ways of thinking. As such, the centre taps into cutting edge research by its affiliated researchers and generates new local, national, and international collaborations.

ARC -GS builds on the productive gender and sexuality studies tradition of interdisciplinarity in the social sciences, primarily sociology, anthropology, political science, social geography, international development studies and science and technology studies. The centre provides intellectual visibility to current research, attracts new students at all levels, and organizes academic debates about timely public issues. ARC-GS firmly positions the UvA in a global academic context through a lively intellectual community of scholars and students.

The centre organizes lectures with internationally renowned scholars as well as occasional seminars, public debates, roundtables, conferences, and workshops and ARC-GS awards an annual Master Thesis Prize awarded for the best master thesis written on gender and/or sexuality in the social sciences at an academic institution in the Netherlands.

Organizational Structure

ARC-GS is governed by representatives of AISSR programme groups. The director and co-director rotate every three years to ensure the centre's interdisciplinarity. The Daily Board is responsible for the day-to-day management of ARC-GS. As of September 2020, the ARC-GS Daily Board was composed of:

- Prof. dr. Sarah Bracke (Sociology) – Director
- Dr. Julie McBrien (Anthropology) – Vice-director
- Robert Davidson – Programme Manager
- Diego Galdo Gonzalez – PR Assistant

The Daily Board is accountable to the Advisory Board. The ARC-GS Advisory Board reflects the diversity of the AISSR and is composed of full-, associate-, and assistant professors and PhD representatives. The Advisory Board provides guidance and support to the Daily Board. In 2020 the Advisory Board was composed of:

- Dr. Afsoun Afsahi (Political Science)
- Dr. Marguerite van den Berg (Sociology)
- Dr. Saskia Bonjour (Political Science)
- Dr. Willem Boterman (Human Geography, Planning and International Development Studies)
- Prof. dr. Amade M'charek (Anthropology)
- Sherilyn Deen (PhD representative)
- Dr. Esther Miedema (Human Geography, Planning and International Development Studies)
- Prof. dr. Olav Velthuis (Sociology)
- Dr. Conny Roggeband (Political Science)
- Dr. Rachel Spronk (Anthropology)
- Anne Louise Schotel (PhD representative)
- Prof. dr. Saskia Wieringa (Anthropology)

In 2020 ARC-GS was financially supported by the following five AISSR programme groups:

- Globalizing Culture and the Quest for Belonging
- Governance and Inclusive Development
- Health, Care, and the Body
- Moving Matters
- Political Sociology

Additionally, ARC-GS received financial support in 2020 from the Centre for Urban Studies (CUS) to co-host the 28 January closed workshop “Between ‘rapefugees’ and nativist rape threats. A workshop on the intersection of race, sex, and (representations of) violence in the

city” (see details below) and from the Chief Diversity Officer to co-host the 14 February event “Barriers to Diversity in our Academic Institutions: The Case of Institutional Racism” (see details below).

ARC-GS Activities in 2020

2020 was an unprecedented year ARC-GS in a number of ways. First of all, ARC-GS developed a regular collaboration with IMES (Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies), embarking upon a joint research project on the intersection of race, gender, and (sexual) violence in the city, supported by the Centre for Urban Studies (XL seed grant), and organizing an important event (lecture & panel discussion), together with the Chief Officer of Diversity, on institutional racism in the academic world at large, and at our own university in particular.

Second, ARC-GS was preparing to celebrate its 10th anniversary in the Autumn with a conference, but due to the pandemic, those celebrations were postponed. Instead, the founding members were invited to write reminiscences and reflections on the founding moment in June 2010, and these were published on the website (<https://arcgs.uva.nl/events/10-years-of-arc-gs/10-years-of-arc-gs.html>).

And third, the impact of covid-19 on the usual activities of the centre was of course significant: as all public lectures and other events were cancelled from mid-March onwards, ARC-GS had to rethink its activities and the ways it could continue to foster a gender and sexuality studies community within the AISSR. Initially, the centre focused on its online presence, with the support of a PR-assistant. Next to a newsletter (since September 2019 the newsletter appears monthly), the centre maintains a Facebook page (Amsterdam Research Centre for Gender & Sexuality), which has 2125 followers as of January 2021. ARC-GS has 529 followers on Twitter as of January 2021. Together with FmG Communications Advisor Wouter van den Eijkel, the centre completely redesigned its website to give it a fresh look and make it more up to date and accessible: this includes a page dedicated to the activities of the ARC-GS PhD community, as well as a list of recent key publications related to gender & sexuality produced by ARC-GS researchers.

Subsequently, the centre shifted its entire programming online, and opened the 2020-2021 academic year with an online version of the “Nice to meet you” event (see details below), to introduce the centre and its researchers and lecturers to (incoming) students and to stimulate a dialogue between teaching and research. The fact that this event was attended by around 50 students demonstrates the enormous interest of students in the centre’s activities.

ARC-GS proceeded by launching two webinar series: *Thinking through the Crises*, with a focus on how contemporary crises can be approached and thought through with feminist and/or queer theory and *Research in Focus*, in which new exciting research on gender and/or sexuality is highlighted. The webinars were recorded and posted on the AISSR's YouTube Channel, and a vlog was made of the first *Thinking through the Crises* webinar. All of these did comparatively well in terms of views, which speaks to a wide-spread interest within the Social Sciences in the questions and themes that ARC-GS puts on the agenda.

ARC-GS lectures, lunch seminars, and other events in 2020

January

Lecture "Profiled cafes, beaches, and various associations" by Agnieszka Kościńska (University of Warsaw), 17 January. (11 attendees)

Closed workshop "Between 'rapefugees' and nativist rape threats. A workshop on the intersection of race, sex, and (representations of) violence in the city", 28 January. Organized by ARC-GS and IMES with the financial support of the Centre for Urban Studies (XL seed grant). (20 attendees)

February

Lecture and panel discussion "Barriers to Diversity in our Academic Institutions: The Case of Institutional Racism" 14 February, with the lecture "On 'Brick Walls', 'Ghosts', and Other Feminist Dilemmas: Anger, Psychic Institutional Pain and Silencing in Academia" by Shirley Anne Tate (University of Alberta) and a panel discussion with Tasniem Anwar, Anne de Graaf, Olga Sooudi, Darshan Vigneswaran, and Gloria Wekker, co-organized with IMES and with the office of the Chief Diversity Officer. (more than 140 attendees)

March

Lunch Book Launch "*Testosterone: An Unauthorized Biography*" by Rebecca Jordan-Young (Columbia University), 12 March. (32 attendees)

September

Student event: "Nice to meet you: An introduction to gender and sexuality at the FMG", 10 September. (53 attendees)

Lecture (*Thinking through the Crises* series) "What is Essential Work? Social Reproduction in Pandemic Times" by Tithi Bhattacharya (Purdue University) in conversation with Marguerite van den Berg (AISSR), 16 September. (75 attendees; 295 views on YouTube; Vlog 576 views on YouTube)

November

Lecture (*Research in Focus* series) “A Queer New York: Geographies of Lesbians, Dykes, and Queers, 1983-2008” by Jack Giesecking (University of Kentucky) in conversation with Andrew Shield (Leiden University) and Ladan Rahbari (AISSR), 12 November. (58 attendees; 74 views on YouTube)

December

Lecture (*Research in Focus* series) “The Child, True Gender Self and the Clinic” by Sahar Sadjadi (McGill University) in conversation with Geertje Mak (University of Amsterdam), 10 December. (48 attendees; 86 views on YouTube)

This amounts to a total of 436 attendees at and 1032 views of ARC-GS events in 2020.

ARC-GS PhD Club

The interdisciplinary ARC-GS PhD Club for PhD candidates working on gender and/or sexuality met regularly, and the meetings were attended by 14 PhD candidates on average. The meetings continued throughout the lockdown, and many participants reported that these monthly meetings to discuss work in progress proved to be an important instance of support, especially during the lockdown, within the gender and sexuality studies PhD community within the AISSR.

Master Thesis Prize

ARC-GS awards an annual prize for the best social science master thesis in gender and sexuality. In 2020 Fabian Holle was awarded the prize for the thesis “Queer creations between a rock and a hard place. Art practicing LGBTQ+ forced migrants unsettling Dutch hegemony”. Besides the financial prize, ARC-GS also offered the graduate student the possibility of making a brief video about the research project.

An honourable mention was awarded to Maya Lane for the thesis “‘It’s like a knife is plunged into me’: how good care is done for chronically painful vulvas”.

Visiting Scholars

ARC-GS hosts visiting scholars, for three months to one year, during which scholars pursue independent research and interact with ARC-GS faculty, students and staff. The centre hosted the following visiting scholar in 2020:

- Amanda Friesen (September 2019-March 2020)

The restrictions resulting from covid-19 resulted in scholars who had been accepted to become visiting scholars at ARC-GS from March 2020 deferring their stay at the UvA.

Teaching

ARC-GS aims to ensure 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 lecturers from courses focused on gender and sexuality to attend its events. This creates an opportunity for the diverse lecturers to exchange experiences and knowledge and celebrate the successes of the teaching on MA and BA levels and provides opportunities for students to extend their knowledge beyond the classroom.

2020 Budget

ARC-GS was financially supported in 2020 by five programme groups from the AISSR. The programme groups Globalizing Culture and the Quest for Belonging; Governance and Inclusive Development; Health, Care, and the Body; Moving Matters; and Political Sociology as well as the Chief Diversity Officer made financial contributions to ARC-GS resulting in a total 2020 budget of €10,444.92.

Activities	Expenses
Lectures	€4,108.74
Thesis Prize	€500.00
Video Recording & Editing	€2,648.69
Website	€500.00
PR Assistant	€2,112.75
Other	€574.74
Total 2020 Expenses	€10,444.92