

Panel Proposal (featuring forthcoming edited volume): *Towards Gendering Institutionalism: Equality in Europe*, edited by Heather MacRae and Elaine Weiner (from Rowman & Littlefield International [Feminist Institutional Perspectives Series]) *should be in press, if not published, by April 2017

Panel Chair: Elaine Weiner, Associate Professor (McGill University), Department of Sociology email: elaine.weiner@mcgill.ca

Panel Discussant: Heather MacRae, Jean Monnet Chair in European Integration and Associate Professor (York University), Department of Political Science email: hmacrae@yorku.ca

Panelists (=several of the contributors to collection):

1. Petra Ahrens, Assistant Professor (Humboldt-Universität, as of January 2017 at University of Antwerp), Department of Social Sciences email: petra.ahrens@sowi.hu-berlin.de and Anne-charlott Callerstig, Researcher (Örebro University), Center for Gender Studies email: anne-charlott.callerstig@oru.se

Title: ***“The European Social Fund and the Institutionalization of Gender Mainstreaming in Sweden and Germany”***

Abstract: *The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the best-funded EU policies addressed at reducing social inequalities within and across member states. It was the first policy introducing gender mainstreaming, before the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) were adopted. Despite the vanguard role of the ESF for promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming, we know few details about how effective the ESF is in fulfilling its goals. We examine and compare Sweden and Germany with regard to the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the ESF funding period 2007-2013. Surprisingly, the implementation of formal gender rules into the national operational programme (OP) was far more advanced in Germany than in Sweden despite the fact that Sweden has often been labelled as the most likely case for successful gender mainstreaming implementation. We use the framework of Gains and Lowndes (2014) in order to explain institutional change, or lack of thereof, by looking at the interplay between institutional rules (about gender and with gendered effects), gendered actors who work with rules, and gendered outcomes. By applying a feminist institutionalist lens, we show why overarching gendered rules are not enough to ensure similar improvements with regard to gender equality in different member states.*

2. Gill Allwood, Professor (Nottingham Trent University), Gender Politics email: gill.allwood@ntu.ac.uk

Title: ***“Gender Mainstreaming and EU Climate Change Policy”***

Abstract: *I use feminist institutionalism to examine how gender mainstreaming has been sidelined in EU climate change policy. I find that, with a few exceptions largely emanating from the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, EU responses to climate change are gender-blind. This is despite the Treaty obligations to gender mainstream policy in all areas and despite the intersections between climate change and development policy, which is renowned for having taken gender equality and women's empowerment seriously and for instigating gender mainstreaming and*

specific actions as a means to achieve them. The persistent invisibility of gender can be attributed to various forms of institutional resistance.

3. Lut Mergaert, Research Director (Yellow Window) email: Lut.Mergaert@yellowwindow.com and Emanuela Lombardo, Associate Professor (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), Department of Political Science and Administration II email: elombard@ucm.es

Title: **“Resistance to Gender Mainstreaming in EU Research Policy”**

Abstract: We analyze the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the EU through the study of ‘resistance’ to gender equality initiatives in EU research policy. Contributing to feminist institutionalist theories, we identify resistance to gender initiatives within the Directorate General Research and Innovation, showing that there have been obstacles to an effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in the European Commission’s 6th Framework Programme (FP6). We argue that the encountered resistances reveal tensions between the European Commission’s official mandate of mainstreaming gender equality into all policies and its actual implementation, which results in the ‘filtering out’ of transformative gender equality goals.

4. Hege Skjeie, Professor (University of Oslo), Department of Political Science and Centre for Research on Gender Equality (CORE), Institute for Social Research email: hege.skjeie@stv.uio.no and Catherine Holst, Research Professor (University of Oslo), ARENA – Centre for European Studies, and Centre for Research on Gender Equality (CORE), Institute for Social Research email: cathrine.holst@arena.uio.no and Mari Teigen, Research Professor and Deputy Director, Centre for Research on Gender Equality (CORE), Institute for Social Research email: mari.teigen@samfunnsforskning.no

Title: **“Benevolent Contestations: Mainstreaming, Judicialisation and Europeanization in the Norwegian Gender+ Equality Debate”**

Abstract: It is well known how liberal equality norms commonly face ‘hostile,’ illiberal opposition. Less attention has been given to benevolent contestations; that is, how equality norms are contested within mainly equality oriented and liberally inclined actor groups, those that, at the outset, have no stakes in questioning the high legitimacy of key gender equality norms. We discuss the framing and reception of a set of proposals from a Norwegian public inquiry commission with a focus on the argumentative strategies that were employed – respectively – to promote and resist policy change. The Norwegian Gender + Equality Commission was appointed by a center-left cabinet that was expected to actively promote new and ambitious measures in the area of gender policy. The reception of the commission’s reports was however complex and patterned, and contradict any simplistic expectation. Based on recent articulations of feminist institutionalism, utilizing elements of different branches of neo-institutionalism to better capture gender policy developments, we identify the framings of the commission’s proposals outlined as argumentative strategies for institutional change and in light of Europeanization processes, and central discursive structures in the ‘benevolent’ opposition to these proposals. The strategies of changes employed were layering and conversion; proposals were grounded as new means to carry through established policies and secure their proper implementation, or as necessary to overcome severe discrepancies in existing approaches. While the layering strategy mainly made use of UN references, the conversion strategy relied on references to EU law. Overall however, references to comparable Nordic best practices dominated both lines of argument. Two oppositional frames occurred – ‘against bureaucracy’ and ‘against judicialisation’ – both considered broadly, although variably, as appropriate and legitimate across different groups of gender equality friendly actors.