

**International Geographical Union  
Commission on Gender and Geography Conference**

**"Post-socialism, neo-liberalism  
– old and new gendered societies and policies"**

**22<sup>nd</sup> –24<sup>th</sup> May 2009.  
Szeged–Timișoara**

*Co-organised/sponsored by  
Békéscsaba Department, Great Plain Research Institute, Centre for Regional Studies, HAS  
Department of Geography West University of Timișoara  
Department of Economic and Social Geography, University of Szeged  
Regional Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS), Szeged*

# PROGRAMME

## Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May

**Building of the Regional Committee, HAS, Szeged (Somogyi street 7. 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Room 103.)**

8.00 – 9.00 Arrival and registration (Hall)

9.00 – 10.30 **Introductory plenary session**

- 1) Welcome speeches:  
Robyn Longhurst (University of Waikato)  
György Enyedi (Centre for Regional Studies, HAS)  
Zoltán Kovács (University of Szeged)
- 2) Judit Timár (Centre for Regional Studies, HAS)  
*Gender studies on gendered spaces of post-socialism and neo-liberalism*
- 3) Júlia Szalai (Institute of Sociology, HAS)  
*The domestication of neo-liberalism: issues of class, gender and ethnicity in contemporary post-socialist societies*

10.30 – 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 – 12.30 **First session: Gendered understandings of and knowledge production under post-socialism and neo-liberalism**

Chair: Sorina Voiculescu (West University of Timișoara)

- 1) Ania Plomien, Majella Kilkey, Diane Perrons (London School of Economics, Hull University)  
*From post-socialism to neo-liberalism? Gendered understandings and experiences: insights from the migrant handyman sector in the UK*
- 2) Ekaterina Frolova (University of Bern)  
*Women's Experiences with arranged marriages: the case study of post-Soviet Tajikistan (transition period)*
- 3) Matej Blazek, Fiona M. Smith (University of Dundee)  
*Post-socialist geographies of knowledge? Researching the gendered subjectivities of young people in contemporary Slovakia*
- 4) Robyn Longhurst (University of Waikato)  
*'YouTube': a new space for birth?*

**Department of Economic and Social Geography, University of Szeged (Egyetem street 2., 3<sup>rd</sup> floor)**

12.45 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 15.30 **Second session: Representing gender under post-socialism and neo-liberalism**

Chair: Doris Wastl-Walter (University of Bern)

- 1) Nárcisz Fejes (Case Western Reserve University)  
*An uneasy continental split: migrant labour, sex-trafficking, and Eastern European women in contemporary British novels*
- 2) Andrea P. Balogh (University of Szeged)  
*Travelling gendered identities and cultural differences in post-socialist Hungarian women's literature*
- 3) Ilona Szóró (Hungarian Library Service Nonprofit Company)  
*Gender studies in Hungarian publishing, after the change of regime*
- 4) Mireia Baylina, Nina Gunnerud Berg (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Norwegian University of Science and Technology)  
*Gendered ruralities in Norway and Spain. A study of two life style magazines*

- 15.30 – 16.00 Coffee break
- 16.00 – 17.15 **Third session: *The production/use of gendered space in post-socialism and neo-liberalism***  
 Chair: Tovi Fenster (Tel-Aviv University)
- 1) Erika Nagy (Centre for Regional Studies, HAS)  
*The rise of gendered spaces of consumption – Changing interpretations and use of space in 'post-socialist' cities under neo-liberalism*
  - 2) Oana Mihaela Stoleriu (University of Iasi)  
*Gendered practices in leisure spaces*
  - 3) Éva G.Fekete (University of Miskolc)  
*The role of women in the development of rural area in post-socialist Hungary*
- 17.30 – 18.30 Sight seeing walk guided by Lajos Boros and Gábor Hegedűs (University of Szeged)
- 20.00 Reception (Building of the Regional Committee, HAS: Somogyi street 7. Ground floor, Room 4)

## **Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May**

### ***Department of Economic and Social Geography, University of Szeged (Egyetem street 2.)***

- 9.00 – 10.30 **Fourth session: *Geographies of women's and men's participation in neo-liberal and post-socialist labour market***  
 Chair: Janice Monk (University of Arizona)
- 1) Maria Dolores Garcia-Ramon, Herminia Pujol, Anna Ortiz (Autonomous University of Barcelona)  
*Labouring in the "neoliberal" university: gendered professional careers in Spanish Academia (Geography)*
  - 2) Eriko Ikeya (Kochi National College of Technology)  
*Study about regional difference in the woman's labour participation of Japan: research at Kochi Prefecture*
  - 3) Irén Szörényiné Kukorelli (Centre for Regional Studies, HAS)  
*The role of gender in rural tourism in post-socialist Hungary*
  - 4) Lajos Olasz (University of Szeged)  
*Hungarian women in front-line service*
- 10.30 – 11.00 Coffee break
- 11.00 – 12.30 **Fifth session: *The impact of post-socialist/neo-liberal political-economic processes on women's/men's status and lives in public and private spaces***  
 Chair: Elisabeth Buehler (University of Zurich)
- 1) Medea Badashvili (Tbilisi State University)  
*The impacts of political and economic trends on women's lives after the collapse of Soviet Union (case study – Georgia)*
  - 2) Nandini Chakravarty Singh (Rajiv-Gandhi University)  
*Impact of neo-liberalism, social space and identity: the changing profile of tribal women in India*
  - 3) Parijat Borgohain, Harendra Nath Sharma (Cotton College, Gauhati University)  
*Women's careers and household chores: a perspective on management problems*
  - 4) Alvaro Lopez-Lopez, Gino Jafet Quintero Venegas (National Autonomous University of Mexico)  
*Men who sell sex to men in a touristic context in Mexico City*
- 12.30 – 14.00 Lunch, Open meeting for IGU Gender and Geography Commission

14.00 – 15.30 **Sixth session: *Women's and men's responses to socio-economic changes under neo-liberalism and post-socialism***

Chair: Janet Henshall Momsen (University of California, Davis)

- 1) Alena Rochovska (Comenius University, Bratislava)  
*Women in post-socialism: different livelihood practices from gender perspective*
- 2) Margareta Lelea (University of California, Davis)  
*Gender intertwined: negotiating livelihood strategies in Romania's western borderlands, 1999–2005*
- 3) Sebastian Jucu (West University of Timișoara)  
*Lugoj, the municipality of 7 women for a man – from myth to post-socialist reality*
- 4) Madhushree Das, Harendra Nath Sharma (Cotton College, Gauhati University)  
*Cultural continuities and social change among the tribal women in Assam, India*

15.30 – 16.00 Coffee break

16.00 – 17.30 **Seventh session: *Spaces of women's and men's policy participation and social networks under neo-liberalism/post-socialism***

Chair: Joos Droogleever Fortuijn (University of Amsterdam)

- 1) Antonia Casellas, Marta Pallares-Blanch; Antoni F. Tulla (Autonomous University of Barcelona)  
*Gender participation in rural administrations in neo-liberal parliamentary democracy in Catalonia (1970's – 2000's) as social public networks in rural Pyrenees*
- 2) Elisabeth Buehler (University of Zurich)  
*Maternity insurance legalisation in Switzerland. Regulating the intersection between paid and unpaid work*
- 3) Anne C. Bellows (University of Hohenheim)  
*Human rights and the contribution of the academy in the era of economic and food crises*
- 4) Chen Misgav (Tel-Aviv University)  
*Embodiment and space in environmental and queer riots/struggles in a global world*

**A permanent posters 'session'** (Foyer, Department of Economic and Social Geography, University of Szeged: Egyetem street 2.)

- 1) Costela Iordache (University of Craiova)  
*Demographic changes of gender in post-communist Romania*
- 2) Bálint Csátári, Ede Petrás (Centre for Regional Studies, HAS)  
*A gendered view of higher education services in a Hungarian region*

## **Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> May**

7.00 (*Hungarian local time*) Departure from Szeged to Timișoara

10.00 (*Romanian local time*) Arrival in Timișoara at the Association for the Promotion of Women in Romania (APoWeR)

10.00 – 10.30 Coffee break

10.30 – 12.30 **Discussion with the activists at the Association for the Promotion of Women in Romania**

Adela Dinu, Vasile Moldovan (APoWeR)

Moderator: Margareta Lelea (University of California, Davis)

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch at West University of Timișoara

14.00 – 16.00 **Closing plenary panel discussion: *Teaching and publishing gender in a neo-liberal academic world*** (West University of Timișoara, Room A 13)

Chair: Sorina Voiculescu (West University of Timișoara)

Janice Monk (University of Arizona)

Joos Droogleever Fortuijn (University of Amsterdam)

Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon (Autonomous University of Barcelona)

Robyn Longhurst (University of Waikato)

Sorina Voiculescu (West University of Timișoara)

Tovi Fenster (Tel-Aviv University)

16.00 (*Romanian local time*) Departure from Timișoara to Szeged

18.00 (*Hungarian local time*) Arrival in Szeged

## **ABSTRACTS**

## **Gender studies on gendered spaces of post-socialism and neo-liberalism**

*Judit Timár*<sup>1</sup>

This IGU conference commemorating the 20th anniversary of the fall of state socialism is an out-of-the ordinary event: interdisciplinary and international in nature, it first allows for the possibility that such geographers from ECE countries who wish to understand the world that surrounds them, whether they consider it to be post-socialism or neoliberal capitalism, also through the prism of 'gender' can meet. As one of them, in this paper I am striving to point out a few issues for the discussion and subsequent study of which 'encounters' of *feminism* and *geography*, such as the one now, provide an excellent opportunity.

The introduction will highlight two, already existing views. One emphasises that *space matters* in understanding both post-socialism and neo-liberalism. Therefore, it is worth making the most of the international nature of the conference and, by comparing the experience of older industrial, developing and post-socialist countries, identifying the dynamics, forms and particular geographies of 'neo-liberalisation'. The other stresses the advantages of applying the feminist approach to the conceptualisation of post-socialism or neo-liberalism. I.e., *gender does matters*. The participation of feminist scholars cultivating various disciplines in our conference is another excellent opportunity to be seized. Thus, this conference provides a platform for *a feminist evaluation and conceptualisation of the complex spatialities of post-socialism and neo-liberalism*.

Towards the above end, several different approaches can be used, some of which are outlined in this paper:

- Studying the role of neo-liberal/post-socialist political-economic agenda in the contemporary remaking of gendered space (e.g. the gendered labour market in the context of uneven spatial development, capital-labour relations, expansion of market relations, and commodification; geographical peculiarities of changing gender regimes in the context of the changing role of the state; changing institutions of "capitalist democracy").
- The application of 'the domestication of neo-liberalism/post-socialism' approach (the studying of the local and the everyday practice/experience).
- An analysis of how neo-liberalism/post-socialism as a mode of discourse and the changes of cultural conceptions of femininity and masculinity on gender identities, women's/ men's symbolic and material spaces are interrelated.

It is worth putting a double perspective to the above, i.e. how gender relations shape and are shaped by neo-liberalisation.

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<sup>1</sup> Békéscsaba Department, Alföld Institute, Centre for Regional Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

**The Domestication of Neoliberalism:  
Issues of class, gender and ethnicity in contemporary postsocialist societies**

*Júlia Szalai*<sup>1</sup>

As widely acknowledged, neoliberalism has had a leading ideological-political influence in shaping the policies of postsocialist transformation. Many would owe its dominating impact exclusively to external forces: the global financial institutions and the inflow of international (mostly US) expertise in making the concrete designs. In addition to their undeniable affect, in the introductory part of the presentation, I will point to the wide range of *domestic* interests that have been equally well served by neoliberalism. It will be pointed out that the uttermost importance of decomposing the once omnipotent totalitarian state mobilised all the social forces around marketisation – from above as well as from below. These interests created rather broad coalitions around certain neoliberal values: in our context, it is the peculiar interpretation of individual freedom and the outstanding role associated with the family that deserve particular attention. A brief historical account will show the “domestication” of these values in the context of two types of ongoing postsocialist recognition struggles that got at odds with each other: those of women to define and identify their new roles amidst the developing market conditions, and those of Roma to search some protection against the exclusionary processes that marketisation has brought about for them.

As to a brief detailed account on these movements of “domestication” and their built-in conflicts, first the discussion will introduce women’s strives at gaining acknowledgement to certain forms of work that had been forcibly locked into informality under the old communist regime. In analysing women’s silent mass-movement for improving their economic and social positions, an attempt will be made to point to the obscure ‘trade-off’ that has emerged between decreasing gender inequalities and increasing class inequalities in contemporary postsocialist societies. The latter issue will lead the discussion to the presentation of an utterly different example of recognition struggles: that of the dramatically impoverished and deprived Roma minority. Concerning their struggles, the continuous reinterpretation of Roma identity amid the ongoing process of massive marginalisation on ethnic grounds will be presented, and the causes of a marked rejection of the policy of social integration on the part of the majority will be explored. Some of the major consequences of this mass-refusal will be considered, and the dangers that follow for the newly established democracies of the region will be outlined.

In a closer look at the relationship between the mentioned two movements, it will be shown that their choice is not arbitrary: much of the success of any of the two movements depends on the state of the other. Given the weak institutionalisation of legally guaranteed social protection, it is women’s flow into the expanding local social services that functions as a ‘substitution’ for the decline of universal provisions. The immediate consequences appear in middle class women’s improving chances for upward occupational mobility and the betterment of their economic and social positions. However, the very same processes induce clearly negative changes for the majority of Roma: it is the intensified reproduction of chronic

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poverty and the accompanying social and political deprivation of them which also follow from the recent sharp curbing of the state's roles and responsibilities in matters of social protection. Of course, it is not 'them' – neither women flowing into the social services, nor Roma struggling for the acknowledgement of minority rights – who create these traps. Rather, both of them seem to be captivated by their own circumstances which neither of them can control, even less can change. It is the main aim of the presentation to show that, instead, it is the turning of the 'withdrawal of the state' to the 'desertion of the state' that creates the socio-political space for their conflicts. The continuous clashes of interests between women entering the enlarged job-market of social services and Roma fighting back their social deprivation in the arena of minority-politics follow from the same – decisive – process of post-communist transformation: the ruining of the institutional pillars of the earlier all-embracing power, presence, and influence of the central authority. It is this complex process of misguided (though interest-driven) transformation that creates room for marketisation from below for large groups of women but that leads also to the sharp reinterpretation of societal policy, thereby throwing universal social and political rights into the dustbin, and leaving their 'redefinition' to the often cruel internal fights of local communities.

**From post-socialism to neo-liberalism? Gendered understandings and experiences: insights from the migrant handyman sector in the UK**

*Ania Plomien<sup>1</sup>, Majella Kilkey<sup>2</sup>, Diane Perrons<sup>3</sup>*

Two major historical events affecting the Central East European region – the collapse of state socialism in 1989 and the accession of A8 countries to the European Union in 2004 – together with the global spread of neo-liberal ideology may tempt the conclusion that post-socialism is no longer a relevant analytical category. Is this thesis confirmed by empirical research? Based on emerging findings from a broader gendered analysis of the relationship between globalisation, migration, and social reproduction focused on the migrant handyman sector in the UK, we argue that a more nuanced conclusion is warranted. Our geographical focus on the migrant-labour sending countries from the CEE region representing the post-socialist world and on the migrant-labour receiving country - the UK - as the epitome of a neo-liberal state, permits us to critically evaluate a range of gender relevant themes straddling post-socialist and neo-liberal contexts in a dynamic perspective. Drawing on qualitative interviews with migrant handymen and their labour-using households, we find that the post-socialist and neo-liberal political, economic, social and cultural locations are important to some gendered understandings, experiences and practices, but not others as similarities and differences emerge. In particular, we consider them in reference to migration paths and decisions, insertion into specific labour market sectors, skill development and construction, quality of work, and conceptions of femininity and masculinity in the gendered division of domestic labour and parenting practices – especially fatherhood.

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<sup>1</sup> London School of Economics

<sup>2</sup> Hull University

<sup>3</sup> London School of Economics

**Women's Experiences with Arranged Marriages:  
the case study of post-Soviet Tajikistan (transition period)**

*Ekaterina Frolova*<sup>1</sup>

The post-independence period following the collapse of the Soviet Union has been difficult for Tajik women in many ways. Women's lives have been shaped by a complex set of political, economic and cultural contingencies limiting their opportunities in terms of legal rights, access to education and labor market, their positioning within the social hierarchy.

Besides, women's opportunities have been strongly limited by the dominant discourse on gender which privileges kinship and family life and assigns high value to the domestic sphere. The traditional practices associated with marriage and family life were preserved throughout the Soviet period, but have enjoyed greater resurgence during the years after independence. During the Soviet Union, traditional practices and religion in Tajikistan were strictly controlled. And nevertheless, the virulent anti-Islamic Soviet campaigns had failed to eradicate Islam and adherence to traditional practices in the Soviet Tajikistan. Thus, the influences on women's lives through sovietization whereby women were encouraged to enter public life, pursue careers and enter higher education contrasted sharply with the continuity of Islamic and ethnic traditions and practice in their private lives. In the independent Tajikistan, together with the religious resurgence and the reappearance of traditional practices in the public life of Tajikistan, family and community values, have become strengthened, which at the same time supported a social conservatism that severely limited any liberalization of gender relations.

Investigating particularly the question of arranged marriages in the context of independent Tajikistan, this paper provides insights into various forms of oppression that shape Tajik women's lives while at the same time trying to show that despite the fact that women in Tajikistan are being discriminated in many ways, they nevertheless manage to maneuver behind the scenes and affect outcomes. The aim of this paper is to present Tajik women's experiences with arranged marriages and to identify the ways in which they exercise their individual agency and deal with a variety of oppressive situations related to their marriage. This work challenges the victimization discourses about Tajik women and investigates the coping strategies and techniques that these women adopt and use in order to obtain (more) power.

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<sup>1</sup> Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies, University of Bern

**Post-socialist geographies of knowledge? Researching the gendered subjectivities of young people in contemporary Slovakia**

*Matej Blazek<sup>1</sup>, Fiona M. Smith<sup>2</sup>*

This paper takes the form of a dialogue between its two authors on the experiences of a doctoral research project focused on the gendered subjectivities of young people in Slovakia. Through this method, we examine how complex geographies of knowledge production, distribution and contestation are bound up with the research process. As doctoral student and doctoral supervisor, we explore how a negotiation of our differing perspectives on, and relations to, key terms and concepts such as 'gender', 'youth', 'post-socialism', and 'neoliberalism' is at the heart of the process of creating knowledge about these issues in the context of the research project. We examine critically how such key ideas are translated as situated knowledges between the academic sphere and the experiences of ethnographic fieldwork with young people in Slovakia and back to the academic realm. In particular, as we explore how these ideas are negotiated in the everyday lives of the young people (in an urban neighbourhood in Bratislava) but also in the spheres of academic debate and the shifting, overlapping spaces between them, the paper contributes to wider challenges to 'Anglo-American' dominance in feminist geographical knowledge production and to questions about the relations between academic research and wider social and political agendas on gender and for young people.

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<sup>1, 2</sup> School of Social and Environmental Sciences Geography, University of Dundee

## **'YouTube': a new space for birth?**

***Robyn Longhurst<sup>1</sup>***

Birth, in many societies, is considered to be a private affair. Although health and medical professionals usually assist, the only other people who share the birth process with mothers are their nearest and dearest. This, however, with the rise of neo-liberalism, new technologies, and 'time-space convergence', is changing. Some women are now sharing their birthing experiences with millions of international viewers using 'YouTube' - online video. Searching (using 'Google') the phrase 'YouTube Birth' results in more than half a million 'hits'. The methodology used to carry out this research involved viewing approximately 100 videos of birth on 'YouTube' and reading the accompanying 'commentaries'. These data were analysed using feminist, poststructuralist, geographical theory. It was found that some births are restricted to those aged 18 and above, and some are removed by 'YouTube' staff because they are considered to contain 'inappropriate content'. Others are permitted. In this way, traditional stereotypes of birth, mothering and gender relations are strongly reinforced not just in material space but also in virtual space. The paper concludes that the internet is not just a space that provides information on birthing but it also constructs birthing bodies in particular ways. It is transforming and producing new knowledge about birth that crosses national boundaries but many of the videos that were examined appear to be United States based and provide a view of birth that reiterates hegemonic discourses of Western health and medical care.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning, University of Waikato

**An uneasy continental split: migrant labor, sex-trafficking,  
and Eastern European women in contemporary British novels**

*Nárcisz Fejes<sup>1</sup>*

The switch from a Soviet-controlled economy to open market economies after 1989 resulted in increasing unemployment rates especially among women. In the countries of Ukraine and Moldova, the closing of textile factories that supplied goods for Russia have left women, especially single mothers, in desperate situations. Conservative and misogynist behaviors against women and a lack of adequate political representation of human rights have forced many of them escape the oppressive political and economic climate of their countries. The subjection of these women to sex work and their victimization in the international sex trade have already gained considerable international attention from political and humanitarian agencies. In this conference paper, I will introduce two contemporary British novels—Marina Lewycka’s international “sensation,” *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* (2005) and *Two Caravans* (2007)—which represent Ukrainian women’s journey to England, migrant labor practices, and the apparent threat of their coercion into prostitution. Most importantly, these novels allow us to analyze the current fascination with and demand for Eastern European women as prostitutes, workers, or mail-brides in Western Europe and explore the connections of earlier and current conceptions of Eastern Europe as the exploitable hinterlands of Europe. Based on these novels, this conference paper unfolds aspects of the current demand for East European women in migrant labor economies, prostitution rings, and the entertainment industry in the framework of continental economics and transnational flows of goods. With its emphasis on the marketing and selling of female (Eastern European) bodies, this paper hopes to contribute to the overall aim of the conference to shed light on the impact of current neo-liberal economic practices on women in the post-socialist context.

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<sup>1</sup> Case Western Reserve University

**Travelling gendered identities and cultural differences  
in post-socialist Hungarian women's literature**

**Andrea P. Balogh<sup>1</sup>**

Although state socialism professed gender equality, literature was unarguably the business of men under state socialism in Hungary. Women entered the literary institution as the exception rather than the rule. Interestingly enough, the status and prestige of women in Hungarian literature came to the fore in the public literary debates relatively late, more than a decade after the fall of communism. Women's literature has, partly, become a hot topic through the hostile critical responses to an all-women anthology, *Night-time Zoo: an anthology of female sexuality* (eds. Bódis Kriszta, Forgács Zsuzsa Bruria and Gordon Agáta (2005)), followed by a second volume, *Thirsty Oasis: an anthology of the female body* (ed. Forgács Zsuzsa (2007)). This women-centred literary project is directly engaged in the issues of women's oppression and marginalization and draws on the ideas of creating a women's network and an alternative literary community in Hungarian post-socialist culture. My paper looks at the ways in which three authors of the anthologies (Zsuzsa Bruria Forgács, Zsuzsa Kapecz and Noémi Kiss) address the relation between gender identity and geographical location as a constitutive element of making sense of one's national and cultural belonging and differences. I will explore how these three authors represent the Cold-War Eastern European conceptions of the West and Europe as well as the Post-Cold War reassessment of Europe and Hungary's position in the West in terms of gendered power-relations.

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<sup>1</sup> Gender Studies Research Group, Institute of English and American Studies, University of Szeged

## **Gender studies in Hungarian publishing, after the change of regime**

*Ilona Szóró<sup>1</sup>*

Following the change of political system, the social and political situation of women and the opinion of their role changed to a great extent, which had a stimulating effect on research related to gender studies and on new approaches to the issue acquiring a place in public thinking. Earlier academic studies concentrating on a few areas of “socialist emancipation” (family, job, social policy) were replaced by a broader professional outlook, comprehensive empirical studies and internationally valid theoretical activity from the mid 1990s. The discrepancies originating from the geopolitical and cultural differences between East and West, and the general and specific features typical of the Central and Eastern European region became really tangible at that time. All this received greater and greater attention in Hungarian book publishing in the post-socialist period.

Academic book publishing deserves special attention as regards research on gender and social discourse from a number of aspects. Books with a large print run reach broader sections of society than studies and conference materials mainly concerning the narrower professional interest. Thus promoting a given topic through book publishing may have a long-lasting attention-drawing and approach-forming effect. At the same time, publishers must calculate on the receptiveness of the potential readership as well, the public interest the publication in question may generate.

The number of academic publications on gender studies showed a perceptible increase in the years following the change of political system (around 1993) compared to the earlier period, but it achieved a considerable expansion from the second half of the 1990s (from 1997-98). Apart from omnibus editions, more and more independent volumes dealing with separate areas of gender studies appeared. The range of topics discussed expanded significantly. As gender problems gradually emerged in education as well from the mid 2000s, textbooks and teaching materials related to the subject proliferated in addition to academic works. Thus book publishing in part follows, in part characterises, and in part influences to some degree the development of interest in gender studies in post-communist Hungary.

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<sup>1</sup> Hungarian Library Service Nonprofit Company



**Gendered ruralities in Norway and Spain.  
A study of two life style magazines**

***Mireia Baylina<sup>1</sup>, Nina Gunnerud Berg<sup>2</sup>***

The paper analyses how the rural is conveyed in two life styles magazines in Norway and Spain and how gender is displayed in these landscapes. Framed as part of studies on the social representation of the rural areas, our aim is to analyse how both countrysides are culturally constructed, emphasizing the ways in which they are commodified, and how dominant imaginings of rurality obscure other meanings and experiences of what is rural in each country. The research has been conducted in two different European countries in terms of climate, landscape and also historical, cultural, social, economic and political background. It will permit to see if different countries ascribe different dominant national meanings to the rural landscape and living, and to ascertain to what extent the Nordic and Mediterranean cultures and sceneries may influence how the rural and gender in the rural are perceived and represented in each place. Despite the spreading of the rural idyll and the homogenisation of landscapes and ways of living under neo-liberalism, place matters and local particularities show up. The method used is discourse analysis through images and texts of two magazines, *Levlandlig* in Norway and *Vivir en el Campo* in Spain.

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Geography, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

**The rise of gendered spaces of consumption – Changing interpretations and use of space in 'post-socialist' cities under neo-liberalism**

*Erika Nagy*<sup>1</sup>

The emerging structures of capitalism produced new interpretations and uses of space throughout East Central Europe, that manifested (also) in the construction of new spaces of consumption. The process had 'post-socialist' idiosyncrasies, such as the undiscerning adoption of principles of Neoliberalism in national policies as well as in the praxis of local state, supported largely by the general distrust in planning, the scarce 'civic' control over local processes, lacking planning competencies and capacities, the attitudes and (short-term) interests local political elites. Moreover, new shops and malls emerged as scenes for consumption of goods and services of symbolic meaning in society that had just left the 'economy of shortage' behind, thus, the spectacular development of shopping facilities was highly appreciated.

In this way, the logics of capital (major developers' design) replaced the tyranny of 'socialist' urban planning in the 'abstract (conceived)' urban space, increasingly governing the daily praxis of users of urban space. Consequently, individuals' social relations and practices were re-interpreted in the context of consumption, governing the perception and use of urban space. The (re-)organisation of space reflected and also mediated norms and values prevailing in the emerging capitalist society: new consumption spaces were designed for particular groups of 'valuable consumers', such as young shoppers, well-off, and women who take care of their family and must (should) be 'dressed all over' (Blomley, 1996).

In the paper, the rise of new 'gendered' spaces of consumption shall be discussed as a '*product*' of the '*new*' (emerging) *capitalism*, as well as of '*post-socialist*' conditions. To understand the changing relationships to space, interpretations and use of urban space shall be analysed through questionnaire surveys conducted in two county towns in Hungary of different size and development trajectories that were scenes to large scale retail developments and re-organisation of consumption spaces.

Blomely, N. (1996): 'I'd like to dress her all over': masculinity, power and retail space. In: Retailing, consumption, and capital. Towards a new retail geography (eds. Wrigley, N and Lowe, M.); Harlow: Longman, 238-256.

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<sup>1</sup> Békéscsaba Department, Centre for Regional Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

## Gendered practices in leisure spaces

*Oana Mihaela Stoleriu<sup>1</sup>*

The post-socialist period induced major transformations in the everyday life of the Romanian women. The fascination for the western society models, appropriated, in various degrees, through media channels or by personal experience, changed the general perception of women, their spatial practices and symbolism.

Associated to liberty, escape and interpersonal connections, the leisure places play a major role in the construction and understanding of the gender relationships and of young people's social network. Strictly controlled and controlling before 1990 (in terms of gestures, clothes, lighting, music, beverages etc), shaping behaviors and reinforcing the social constraints, these places were an indirect instrument intended to form ideal citizens for that period. After 1990, the deregulation and the liberalization of leisure activities changed only the actors, the direction and the means of exerting their social function. Despite the promises of total liberty and multiple individual choices, their internal codes (explicit or implicit) are reflecting the new liberal policies: they are continuing to control and adjust attitudes and gender relations, sustaining new patterns of personal fulfillment through consumption.

Therefore we focused our analysis on the social (gendered) construction of a very specific and interesting place inside the city: the club. We tried to see how this limited place is perceived and appropriated by different users, in different days/moments, and how their sex, age, economic status and physical appearance influence their spatial and social itineraries.

We also wanted to see how a leisure place operates on the identity of its users, limiting or liberating them through the club's atmosphere (music, lightening), its policies and/or through the unwritten rules imposed by certain social groups. Are there any dress or spatial codes, how are they imposed and who are they excluding? What is their effect on the gesture, movement and image of the young women's body (clients or employees)? How is seen this place from a feminine and masculine point of view, what are their expectations? So, we tried to find an answer to all these questions using different methods like: social surveys, interviews and active observation. And, in order to emphasize also the potential generation conflicts enhanced in these places, the role of history in the construction of young people's leisure practices, we tried to find out the opinion of their parents (which are still profoundly marked by the communist and/or religious constraints), regarding the outfits and behaviors associated to the clubs.

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## **The role of women in the development of rural areas in a post-socialist Hungary**

*Éva G.Fekete<sup>1</sup>*

Although, practically speaking, the issue of rural development policy and gender inequality was raised in the academia – either spontaneously or linked to other social and economic issues – in a special ideological environment in Hungary already before the political changeover, it became an integral part of public thinking only after the fall of state socialism. Undoubtedly, the political changeover has contributed to increase in the importance of the two issues and to changes in the related policies; yet, they are more like the products of the post-industrial era, a large number of whose components were taken over during the process of accession to the EU. One of the objectives of this paper is to identify the ideological legacy of the past and the effects of the three new processes. Next, I will look into the issue of the relationship between women and rural development. The following questions can be raised:

1. To what extent does rural development seen as a series of intentional interferences with development processes along certain interests serve women's interests?
2. What role do women play in the process of rural development?

In answering these questions, I will elaborate on (1) changes in views concerning rural development where innovative rural development has taken priority over social approaches, (2) the way economic trends that have become increasingly dominant in rural development are linked to women's social participation and (3) a rise in prestige of women's active participation in rural development.

I will propose points of consideration that can help (1) formulate the stake that women has in rural development and (2) interpret, from a female perspective, processes in rural societies and in the economy in the Hungary of today.

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**Labouring in the “neoliberal” university:  
gendered professional careers in Spanish Academia (Geography)**

*María-Dolors Garcia-Ramon<sup>1</sup>, Herminia Pujol<sup>2</sup>, Anna Ortiz<sup>3</sup>*

In Spain as in many other western countries neoliberalization processes are taking place within the context of the universities. These include the infusion of market and competitive logics, the rise of audit processes and cultures of accountability and the replacement of public with private funding. These processes are having an important impact in the perceptions and practices of Spanish geographer's professional career. In Spanish geography the presence of female geographers is decreasing in relative numbers and their professional status is not improving much.

The aim of this paper is to focus on the experiences linked to women's professional careers within Spanish Geography departments, a professional space that is becoming increasingly competitive and masculine. We will focus on women's strategies and practices in reconciling work and family life as well as in obtaining promotion and power. The paper also draws upon male academic's accounts to compare the “masculine” and the “feminine” professional career.

Many quantitative analysis have been published in the US and elsewhere on the situation of women in academic geography but few qualitative analysis have been carried out on the topic. The research of this paper is based on qualitative analysis , mainly in depth-interviews, as it is the most appropriate method to study women's and men's experiences and strategies within this increasingly competitive environment.

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**Study about regional difference in the woman's labor participation of Japan:  
research at Kochi Prefecture**

*Eriko Ikeya\**

In contrast with economic status, gender index of Japan is very low compared to the rest of the world. After legislation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law at 1985, gender pay gap began to slowly narrow. The Child-care Leave Law and the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society were passed by the Diet in the 1990s, but, Total Fertility Rates fell to 1.3 and are still decreasing. About 70% of women are leaving work after children birth. Compared to western countries, female labor participation rates in Japan are lower and the participation rate profile by age has an M-figure curve even now. An M-figure curve illustrates decreasing rates of working women in their late 20's and 30's because of child care and house work based on gender roll division and gender bias in work place. Additionally, deregulation in globalization and economic depression increased non-regular workers. Women are far more likely to become low paid unstable non-regular workers, part-time workers and dispatched workers, when compared with men.

To narrow this gender gap and improve poor working conditions, awareness should be focused on local regions where the gender gap reveals different aspects compared to the average of all Japan. In this report, I selected Kochi Prefecture as a study field. Kochi, located on southern periphery, is one of regions suffering economically from the effects of a falling birthrate and an aging population. As these problems are important and serious, results of this study will be helpful to think near future of Japan.

Female labor participation rates in Kochi are higher than the Japanese national average and gender pay gaps are narrower than that of Japan. The following facts are instrumental to these variations from the national average.

The average income level of Kochi is very low compared to other parts of Japan. Income for males is below average, so male breadwinner female caregiver families are rare in actual life. Women have to get jobs to support family members economically. 2. Kochi has higher than average divorce rates. As public assistance is not easily acquired in Japan, divorced females have to work to live. 3. Kochi has a relatively high availability of day care nurseries for working families. 4. Kochi has various tertiary care jobs, such as nursery teachers, nurses, care persons and jobs in primary industries for females to work.

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## **The role of gender in rural tourism in post-socialist Hungary**

*Irén Szörényiné Kukorelli<sup>1</sup>*

After the transition in the '90 years in agricultural sector huge changes were played out concerning the land-privatization process. Instead of the state and corporative property the private property was getting dominated. The restructuring of the economy touched not only the agrarian but the whole rural economy as well. One of the elements of changing economy is the rural tourism as a developing sector. The rural tourism came into sight of „void” in different parts of the country. The power of appearing tourism sector connects to the rural women, but first of all not the women labour disengaging from agrarian sector were transferred to the rural tourism sector but the changing of whole rural economy, getting to follow the West-European good practices and appearing of innovative rural communities strengthened this sector. We can put a question what women's motivation is to start small tourism businesses whether the forced entertainment, beforehand escaping, innovative behaviour or the challenge? We should not forget the catalyst role of rural social capital which played a high role in foundation of civil organisations.

During the research process we examined the main factors which promoted rural tourism sector. We searched the answer that why the role of women was determined in it, moreover which part of the country is characterized mainly by rural tourism activity. Surveys and interviews helped our research.

In the presentation we would like to answer the above questions and analyse our results deeply.

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## **Hungarian women in front-line service**

*Lajos Olasz<sup>1</sup>*

The integration of women into the armed forces is a lengthy process even in Western European countries, which occurred not on one occasion in the wake of sharp professional and public debates, and a major change of social attitude. The disappearance of the bi-polar world order, the change in security policy challenges, the reorganisation of the social environment of the armed forces, and the gradual change in public thinking about the role of women opened the way to making all service posts and all ranks in the new-style specialising, professional armed forces available to the sex that was for a long time dubbed the “weaker”. Armies can hardly exclude women, who are gaining an acknowledged place in other walks of life, and yet for the time being there are few women serving in either the most dangerous places or high-ranking positions in NATO forces.

Women in Hungary, unlike in the majority of Western countries, served in the armed forces even prior to the change of political system. However, military service for them meant not combat but other ancillary duties, mainly in the areas of health, communications and logistics. The new political and strategic preferences that emerged in the wake of the change of political system, the advance towards and accession to Euro-Atlantic integration, and in parallel with this the change in the duties, social assessment and personnel recruitment of the Hungarian armed forces led to greater opportunities for women in choosing a military career. After the ending of compulsory military service, the creation of the professional army accelerated the integration of women into the armed forces.

The expansion of the role women can play in the military, however, continues to raise numerous problems. A particularly complicated issue is the assignment of women to combat duties. Although current peace missions primarily mean the provision of an activity of a policing nature, armed attack has to be counted on anywhere. There are a number of pros and cons in NATO countries in relation to this which acknowledge, emphasise or actually debate the suitability of women for such duties. Even military leaders who support women’s military service in the fullest range of activities become uncertain if direct combat activity arises, and women are not given duties where clashes or firefights are likely. The Hungarian armed forces are also seeking an answer to these questions, but ensuring conditions necessary for the integration of women into the army and finding the appropriate forms will probably take a long time.

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**The impacts of political and economic trends on women's lives  
after the collapse of Soviet Union" (case study - Georgia)**

***Medea Badashvili<sup>1</sup>***

Almost 20 years are gone since the collapse of Soviet Union, but we are still dealing with the question whether post-socialism is still a relevant category for us, as for researchers. As a feminist geographer living in post-soviet Georgia, I would love to pay your attention to the issues of the impacts of political and economic trends on women's and men's lives, their private spaces and different places.

Women's roles in Georgia have significantly transformed in the post communist period. The transition period was marked with economic collapse, the poverty of majority, injustices, corruption, ethnically coloured conflicts with their heavy human results, disenchantment in democratic principles and political indifference of the oppressed.

Extensive socio-economic transformation experienced by Georgia over the last more than fifteen years has substantially affected not only the structure of economy and living standards of the whole population, but also the prevailing role and the meaning of gender in the society. Collapse of the old system has affected families and gender relations to a considerable degree, and it has affected men and women differently. In the context of the overall socio-economic decline, people's adaptation to a new social reality often proceeded slowly. Devaluation of cultural and traditional values, painful transformation of intra-family relationships, revision of traditional male and female roles in the family and frequent emergence of conflicts, enhancement of non-traditional means of family income and expenditure and family management became very common in response to the social and economic upheaval in Georgia during this period.

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**Impact of neo-liberalism, social space and identity:  
the changing profile of tribal women in India**

***Nandini Chakravarty Singh<sup>1</sup>***

In an age when the quest for women empowerment has become a universal phenomenon (Moser, 1993; Braidotti, et al.1994; Shiva, 1989; Harding, 1986 etc) and the relationship of women and social space has been recognised as an important issue, the need for understanding women's role and her status in the social and economic space is one of the key components in the process of transformation and development at large in any society. It is however ironical that despite having half of the world population, sharing more than ½ of work load women still continues to be at the margins of almost all development. Particularly in the third world countries where they continue to relegate under the pressure of social values/ customs which play a dominant role in relegating women in the drudgery of daily chores.

India the home for over 400 million women, a country acknowledged for its plurality of traditions, customs and institutions and proud of its heritage of eclecticism, though have contributed to the global women debate in a rich and diverse manner which stands as unique in its own way it still has a wide gap between the status of women across the length and breadth of the country. Like the many contrast that India's long and variegated history mirrors, the image of the Indian woman is far from uniform. Nothing would therefore be, more inaccurate than to try and posit a generalized picture of the Indian Women across social economic and cultural space. One of the important component of this diversity is the Tribal population of India which accounts for almost (67.6million) 7 percent of the total population of the country. A tribal society in general exhibit more or less the same trends like their counterpart and perhaps more so because of the long geographical isolation and age old socio-economic stagnation which continues to perpetuate in one form or the other almost unedited, until recently when the impact of change of the policies and measures made in roads to these areas exposing and breaking these societies to the larger and more dominant culture which can be termed as modern in the present day context, a reflection of India's neo liberal policies more popularly called as Globalization. Thus the impact of globalization reached even these remote interiors affecting their socio-economic practices, consequently the waves of change that was but unavoidable swept the cultural ethos of the new generation there by bringing about a change in the role of women in these societies both in the family and the economic front ushering in the Echoes of changes which have penetrated these areas and today one cannot surpass the emerging trends that has started taking a shape in the social arena, be it literacy or living style, the question of identity or the demand for social space among these tribal women.

The present paper is an attempt to understand the echo's and impact of such changes among the tribal women population of North East in general and the Nocte Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh in particular which is at the beginning of a broader social transition.

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**Women's careers and household chores:  
a perspective on management problems*****Parijat Borgohain<sup>1</sup>, Harendra Nath Sharma<sup>2</sup>***

Working women are an indispensable part of the workforce in every industrial society and are making many forays into different fields of occupations on an equal footing with men. Since independence in 1947, acculturation and modernization of Indian society has changed many existing socio-cultural norms at home and in the workplace. Also, with the spread of female education in India and the opening up of many employment opportunities during the last few decades, the number of women entering the workforce in various capacities has shown an increasing trend. But women are still considered to be responsible for taking care of the domestic front in addition to their job responsibilities. Since working women have to spend considerable amount of time outside their homes in the course of a day, their roles and responsibilities at home have to be completed within a shorter time span. This in turn has often resulted in stress, as women usually have to undertake the major chunk of domestic responsibilities. The present study is about married working women in Guwahati City, the premier city of North East India where the number of working women is increasing day by day.

The present study tries to see how married working women of Guwahati City manage their homes and careers and how they cope with the different problematic situations in their day-to-day lives. The study has found that women are mainly responsible for numerous household chores like cooking, looking after sick children, looking after children's studies, etc. in all socio-economic groups of the city. The study has also found that the resultant effects and problems vary depending on such factors like different career pursuits, the location of workplaces and residential areas and the economic backgrounds of the working women of the city. The study has been carried out mainly on the basis of primary data collected through a questionnaire for different categories of working women through stratified random sampling method. Secondary data on the subject has also been collected from sources such as books, journals, articles and the Internet.

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## **Men who sell sex to men in a touristic context in Mexico City**

*Alvaro Lopez-Lopez<sup>1</sup>, Gino Jafet Quintero Venegas<sup>2</sup>*

This work examines male-male sex tourism, which in Mexico City is becoming more and more important; however there is not enough academic research on this matter done by Mexican geographers. A sector in the central area of Mexico City is the most important area for male-male prostitution in the country. At the same time, it contains the largest gay district in the country with a variety of lodging facilities. All these circumstances have been instrumental in consolidating the spatial expression of male-male sex tourism. In addition to documentary information, we are considering the sex-workers vision. Thus, we interviewed ten male prostitutes who offer their sexual services to men (many of who are tourists). Most of them are young, poor, street hustlers who have migrated from the countryside to Mexico City.

Spatially, we have detected in Mexico City two forms of sexual tourism between men: one of them in closed spaces (discotheques, telephone, Internet, etcetera) and the other in open places (street prostitution). We have focused our study street prostitution; Thus, although Mexico City has been exposed to neoliberal policies for several years, masculine street prostitution always has been a marginal activity, that is the reason because this kind of prostitution there is not connected with new structural changes. Thus, men tourists who come to Mexico City in order to buy sexual services with Mexican sex workers, remain in an informal sector, far from local neoliberal influences.

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**Women in post-socialism:  
different livelihood practices from gender perspective**

***Alena Rochovska<sup>1</sup>***

The early years of transition after the end of socialism in Slovakia were marked by the strong neoliberal reform with a significant impact on Slovak society. In the paper we want to show how neoliberal policy in post-socialist Slovakia enabled and created different survival strategies in households in different locations around the country.

Based on previous and ongoing research we will show how was the role of women changed in both public and private spaces in the post-socialism, especially dramatically in households marked by poverty and social exclusion. The paper will present daily household practices, and search how similarly or differently is everyday livelihood constructed.

This paper reflects on fieldwork in two very different areas. The first one – Petržalka - the biggest housing estate in Slovak capital Bratislava, with low natality, low unemployment rate, with the highest wages but also with very high cost of living. Second place of our interest – rural region in the north of Slovakia known as „White Orava“ is the place with poor job opportunities, high migration, very high natality and long historical tradition in home agriculture. Using results from qualitative research we will present how are processes of neoliberalism differently understood and employed in households from these two different areas

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**Gender intertwined: negotiating livelihood strategies  
in Romania's Western borderlands, 1999–2005**

*Margareta Lelea*<sup>1</sup>

This paper looks at the role of gender through the negotiation of livelihood strategies on the Romanian side of the Romanian-Hungarian border in the context of dramatic political and economic change encompassing the transitional period between overlapping post-socialist and neo-liberal logics. In particular, this paper examines how women and men living in the borderland in Western Romania are required to adjust to processes of neo-liberalization in their everyday lives, especially as this, the Western border of Romania, has been a nexus demonstrating broader changes. Specifically, neo-liberal demands are highlighted through clusters of factories, the creation of a Free-Trade Zone, trends in migration and cross-border trade as well as by the changing meaning of the border itself. The methodological thrust of the paper is ethnographic, based on fieldwork conducted between 1999–2005 including interviews of entrepreneurs, factory workers, and farmers.

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**Lugoj, the municipality of 7 women for a man  
– from myth to post-socialist reality**

**Sebastian Jucu<sup>1</sup>**

The municipality of Lugoj, in Romania, is considered to be one in which women are prevailing in the context of local demographic background. Otherwise, as a traditional custom or a popular myth, this urban space is frequently assessed as one with seven women around for every man. Is this for real? However statistics show that women represent the majority and play an important role in the local evolution of the Neoliberal market. Evolving as an industrial town, Lugoj has prevailed in light industry (both during the communist period and during the post-socialist one) generating a strong attraction for the feminine labor force. After 1990 the society stands the strain of many difficulties that back and forth affect the feminine population. The restructuring process, especially in the labor market, privatization, deregulation, de-industrialization, the rise of the service sector as components of Neoliberal current as well as Brenner, Theodore, (2005: 101)\*, points out, directly affect women. Does the collocation of *seven women for a man* the right to the masculine population to behave in a particular mode? How powerful are everyday women exploited on the labor market and, paradoxical, how powerful are women implied as investors, patrons or managers on the entrepreneurial field of the town? How they protect their feminine employers? How strongly are women represented and which is their visibility on the politics and, also, on the local social and administrative field? Which is the men's opinion about the social reproduction role of the women in the local community? All these are several questions thereupon this study ties to objectively answer in connection with all the Neoliberal peculiarities of the contemporary Romanian society.

\*Brenner, N., Theodore, N., (2005), *Neoliberalism and the urban condition*, in *City*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2005, Routledge.

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**Cultural continuities and social change  
among the tribal women in Assam, India**

***Madhushree Das<sup>1</sup>, Harendra Nath Sharma<sup>2</sup>***

The tribal communities though small in size occupy an important position in the society, economy and polity of Assam. Having diverse ethnic origin, representing racial stock from Proto-Australoid to Mongoloid, with a distinctive socio-cultural system, own cultural ethos, unique-way of adaptation to different ecological niches and a distinctive social structure of their own, they seem to respond to social change processes quite differently and in different orders. This phenomenon gets reflected in their prevailing socio-cultural characteristics, and it is more glaring in the case of female segment. In general terms, the prevalence of low female literacy rate, low female participation in non-primary sector and low proportion of urban female population among them as compared to the tribal male and non-tribal female counterparts are evidences to this phenomenon. Further, variation among social groups as in terms of location of places has also resulted in varying degrees of social change and socio-political scenario. Thus, the pace of social change among the tribal women in the state is found to vary significantly from one area to another and also socially from one group to another. All these phenomena are largely associated with a variety of factors like the variation in the level of development, pace of urbanization and industrialization, tribal and non-tribal interaction and political awareness among them. As a matter of fact, most of the tribal women of the state are in the midst of continuities and change. While on the one hand, their tradition-bound practices continue to exist, they adapt to new wider forces, on the other. With this background an attempt is made in this paper to understand how new socio-cultural changes are accepted, rejected or adapted by the tribal women of the state in general, and particularly by the eight major tribal groups (Boro, Mising, Karbi, Rabha, Sonowal-Kachari, Tiwa, Dimasa and Deori) living here. The study is based on both secondary and primary data. While secondary data have been obtained from relevant Census of India publications for the period 1971-2001, necessary primary data have been collected through field survey from eight major tribal groups, as mentioned, in their dominant pockets in the state.

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**Gender participation in rural administrations  
in neo-liberal parliamentary democracy in Catalonia (1970's – 2000's)  
as social public networks in rural Pyrenees.**

***Antonia Casellas<sup>1</sup>, Marta Pallares-Blanch<sup>2</sup>, Antoni F. Tulla<sup>3</sup>***

From a political and economic point of view, women in the rural settings in Spain have traditionally been in a clear disadvantageous position compared to men, since given the predominant patriarchal structure, women's realm has been limited often to the private and family domains. In this paper we analyze gender participation in rural administrations in six high-mountain counties in the Pyrenees, placing them in the Catalan and Spanish political context. In recent years, Spanish women have been appointed to political positions in growing numbers, to the extent that in March 2008, the re-elected socialist Spanish government appointed a predominantly female cabinet. Our research highlights however that rural settings present a different political reality. There is a clear gender gap in political appointments that becomes especially evident in small towns. In this sense, it is evident that high-mountain regions do not present a uniform political pattern in respect with common trends in Catalonia. Therefore, as remote areas present a significant bigger gender gap. There is not only underrepresentation compared to Catalonia but there is also a greater gender segregation since there is a clear division of political duties between genders, as far as in rural Catalonia men dominate the appointments that hold more power (major, infrastructure, urban planning, etc.) while women are disproportionately concentrated in more social oriented positions (health, culture, cooperation, among others). Hence, results from this initial research seem to prove the need to reinforce women empowerment policies in these areas in order to achieved equal representation on public sphere.

Because before ending Spanish Franco's dictatorship in 1977 has growth an important movement of associations with women's engagement we would expect that formal politics will show this equal participation of women and men in elected bodies, either in urban and rural areas. Without doubt, in urban areas neighborhood associations were very important when in rural areas most of associations were less incisive and mainly related to former economic and social institutions. We believe that this discrimination is not only because production or reproductive marginalisation but also a clear third reason: real invisibility of women implication on social, economic and political decision making.

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**Maternity insurance legislation in Switzerland.  
Regulating the intersection between paid and unpaid work**

*Elisabeth Buehler<sup>1</sup>*

Discussing maternity insurance legislation in Switzerland this paper focuses on the interface between paid and unpaid work. Maternity insurance benefits are small, yet important elements of the overall welfare state benefits that affect gender relations in parenthood. The arrival of a new child – especially the first child – demands a reorganisation of the workday and very often initiates new developments in gender divisions of labour within partnership.

After almost 100 years of political struggles, a compulsory maternity insurance was finally established in Switzerland in 2005. In a time of deregulation and neo-liberal policies this event may at a first glance be considered as extraordinary and in contradiction to general trends, since it means a strengthening of the welfare state, an additional regulation.

In a first part of the presentation facts, arguments and evaluations of the long history and the present state of the Swiss maternity insurance regulation will be provided. In a second part possible interpretations for this new legislation will be discussed. I will argue that this legislative innovation can be related to new gender cultural values, as well as to profound structural changes in gender divisions of labour produced by recent neo-liberal economic restructurings. Both factors caused that a large proportion of mothers from middle-classes can take profit from a maternity insurance only recently. This opened up new possibilities for political coalitions that finally helped to implement this new regulation successfully.

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**Human rights and the contribution of the academy  
in the era of economic and food crises**

*Anne C. Bellows<sup>1</sup>*

Neoliberalism and post-socialism purport the triumph of market-based democracy. Vibrant and free civil society is defined as its marker and yet economic democracy is deemed anarchic and indeed repressed. Concurrently, wealth disparity and civil repression have grown. A recent example is the global food crisis. Although recognized by the media a year ago, persons living with chronic hunger have grown steadily (now at 963 million) since the 1996 FAO World Food Summit and the 2000 Millenium Development Goals.

Those living food insecure lives are predominately food producers themselves, other rural-based persons, and urban poor (Windfuhr and Jonsen 2007). Women and girls compose approximately 70% of these groups (Suarez-Franco 2008) while they are concurrently recognized as the “key to food security” (Quisumbing and McClafferty 2006). The development of agricultural research is recognized to co-exist with increasing food insecurity and reforms call for recognition of local and women’s knowledge and civil participation (IAASTD 2008).

Human rights as theory, as law, as social mobilizer, and in the hands of a global administrative structure that is developing capability in monitoring and justicibility provides some hope as well as true structures with which to address the growing economic crises. Some argue that neoliberals try to subvert this potential power (see e.g. reporting on the January High Level Meeting on Food Security in Madrid (Via Campesina, COAG, FIAN, etc. 2009). Multi-disciplinary academics can cooperate with CSOs to share resources and skills to leverage public policy changes that augment food security and the rights of vulnerable groups. Feminist theories of epistemology and research praxis pave the way for cooperation that is inclusive of the knowledges of, and policy participation by, the most disenfranchised from human security. Human rights research methodologies must be developed that support CSOs and pass muster of scientific knowledge generation.

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**Embodiment and space in environmental  
and queer riots/struggles in a global world**

*Chen Misgav<sup>1</sup>*

In this paper I would like to present in front of the gender commission members a few themes that might construct the basis for my Ph.D thesis. The mainstays of this research are three: the body, the environment and the place and role of gay people in space. What do I mean when I come to combine this three? Rose said that: "Bodies are maps of the relation between power and identity" (1993:32), and in a global world of both political environmental struggles and queer struggles for equality and acceptance we might find an embodiment connection between power, knowledge, identity and gender issues.

Environment issues usually tend to be very "scientific" disembodied and non gendered issues. This way of thinking might be a mistake since the environmental struggles take place in a social, cultural, gendered and political spaces and by people from a range of identities, beliefs, sexual preferences and so on.

Since many geographic researches examined the role of environmental struggle and the politics of this struggles in the constructing of our space, urban or open spaces, but there is no body of knowledge that consist also the embodiment of the sexed-gendered gay/queer fight and the aspects of this on the urban and lived spaces. Maybe this is the time to search for the geographical embodied aspects of the psychically, socially, sexually and maybe even the discursively and representationally bodies of gay people and the way which environmental issues may take part into that embodiment. My paper will present some theoretical background for this issues and primary leading question for the continuation of this research.

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## **Demographic changes of gender in post-communist Romania**

***Costela Iordache***<sup>1</sup>

The population evolution in time, the changes which take place in the age structures and the demographic transition have a series of particulars for the feminine and masculine population. The natural decrease of population started in 1992 when, the negative natural balance registered for males advanced the positive natural growth for females but, starting from 1994, when also the feminine population registers a natural decrease, we find the negative natural balance for both sexes. If, in 1994, the negative natural balance for masculine population was 13,8 times higher than the one registered for feminine population, after year 2000 the situation begins to even up, so that in 2006 the natural decrease of masculine population reaches to be 1,6 times higher than the one for the feminine population.

The age pyramid truly reflects the chronicle of generations, emphasizing the disparities between the population age and sex structures. The Romanian population continues to be characterized by a numerical surplus of the feminine population, both for the total and for the age groups over 45 years.

Following the continuous decrease of birth rate, the intensification of migratory flows and the emphasis of the over-mortality for the adult masculine population is emphasized the demographic aging of the population, especially the feminine one in rural areas.

The changes which take place into the demographic behavior also reflect in the structure of population regarding the civil status. Therefore, in 2006, the ration of married masculine population was almost 2% smaller than the value registered in 1992, the same situation being noted also for the females. In exchange, the percentage of widows was five times over the ones registered for the widowers.

Wedding rate, divorce rate and migrations are other phenomena which registered transformations in the last decades.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Craiova

## Teaching and researching gender in a neo-liberal world

### **Janice Monk**

*Department of Geography and Regional Development, University of Arizona*

Janice Monk will focus on teaching, showing examples from different parts of the world and focusing on some issues such as what have geographers written about the implications of neo-liberalism in academia and its possible implications for teaching; about who makes decisions about the curriculum (politics of offering courses); at what levels can there be place gender in the curriculum; about student acceptance and resistance; what pedagogical strategies can be used;

### **Maria Dolors Garcia Ramon**

*Department of Geography, Autonomous University of Barcelona*

Maria Dolors Garcia Ramon will present insights from her experience in publishing on gender in Spain and elsewhere as well as insights of her experience in teaching gender in the Spanish university. A special attention will be paid to the language problems typical for Spain such as Spanish, Catalan and English.

### **Joos Droogleever Fortuijn**

*Department of Geography and Planning, University of Amsterdam*

Joos Droogleever Fortuijn will make some comments on the issue of teaching, in particular on the strategies of teaching separate gender courses or teaching on gender in 'regular' courses with examples of content and pedagogy. The presenter will bring insights from the former position as chair of the curriculum geography (responsible for the bachelor and master program) and her current position as head of department as well as from her experiences as teacher of a joint gender course with the University of Groningen.

### **Tovi Fenster**

*Department of Geography and Human Environment, Tel Aviv University*

Tovi Fenster will share her experience as the head of Women and Gender Studies Program at the university she is working at and the negotiations needed for maintaining such a program and especially the opening of MA program which means more courses and more teaching. She will also explain how neo liberalism affects the university structure, budget, requirements etc and how these affect the teaching process.

**Robyn Longhurst**

*Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning, Waikato University*

Robyn Longhurst is going to present insights on teaching and researching gender in the Universities of New Zealand especially at University of Waikato. The neoliberal policies have put a strong imprint on the competition for students and governmental funding in the context in which universities have increasingly come to be seen as 'businesses' which must compete internally but also with each other. Several other topics will be brought to discussion such as: preference of vocational courses over courses that are not seen to be vocationally orientated; lecturers seen as service providers and students as their customers; universities as profit centers which contribute to NZ's international competitiveness in the global economy.

**Sorina Voiculescu**

*Department of Geography, West University of Timisoara*

Sorina Voiculescu is going to present the context in which Gender and geography has been taught for the first time in a Romanian university under the circumstances of teaching and researching in a neoliberal environment with the imposed Bologna system, with the visibility of English language as the only language that 'counts' points in the promotion process as well as that of the articles published in Thompson ranked reviews which are meant to place universities higher in Shanghai academic ranking of world universities.