

1 – The advert sent to Research staff in FEPS (by Natasha Partt and other FEPS PAs) and to all known ECRs (by Marianne Coleman).

This event is brought to the researcher community by the Equality and Diversity Working Group of the Early Career Researcher Reps Forum.

Gender and academia: Inequalities, precarities, intersections

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Lecture Theatre E

All early career staff and PGRs welcome, no need to register

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This talk will draw on experience in higher education teaching and research over twenty years in the UK and internationally, with a focus around issues of inequalities, inclusion and exclusions in higher education, that includes but is not restricted to gender. Tamsin will suggest the need for us to recognise the ongoing significance of gendered inequalities in HE spaces, but in ways that avoid creating hierarchies of inequalities, instead acknowledging the complexity of shifting, slippery configurations of privilege, power and exploitation.

Acknowledging the privileges and prejudices that we all have enables us to apply ourselves collectively to railing against inequalities and precarities in academia, in pursuit of creating a more equitable, human and kinder university to our shared benefit. After sharing insights from her own experience, Tamsin will invite participants to join in discussion together around identified priorities, challenges, and ways forward.

Speaker Biography:

Tamsin's background is as a sociologist of gender and education, including former Co-Director of the Sussex Centre for Gender Studies. She has nearly twenty years experience teaching and researching in higher education, with a central focus around HE participation inequalities for different groups including lone parents, care experienced young people, and people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) backgrounds. Tamsin's interests include experiences of students and staff, in access, transitions, remaining and progressing in HE spaces. Her work has led her to become involved in institutional strategic and policy development around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; and she also works with academic leaders around gender and equality issues in international contexts.

2 – The summary of the talk (by Giovanni Mirouh, not vetted by the speaker)

Tamsin Hinton-Smith started as a single mom BA student. During her career, she took leading roles in equality and diversity, being part of Athena Swan and other committees and noticed how some of these discussions remain frustrating and disappointing. She also worked abroad, for instance in Nigeria, promoting gender and equality through various projects.

What do we think are the issues around gender, inequality and academic careers?

A first problem that was mentioned is child care not being provided during conferences, possibly preventing women from attending them (E. Henderson).

Women are also less likely to get to ruling positions, as hiring committee members tend to hire people that are similar to them (familiarity bias) -- references include Deem 2014, Savigny 2014, Shepherd 2014, Blackmore & Kandiko 2011, Coate & Kandiko-Howson 2014, Blackmore et al. 201?). This leads to the pregnant legacy of the "Bachelor boy": white middle-class males ruling the institutions (O'Shea & Lysaght 2010).

Two studies that Tamsin mentioned confirm that there is a difference in treatment between people with the same qualifications. In terms of gender, the pension-and-pay example is striking, with the gender pay gap resulting in a massive loss in terms of pension by the end of a career (sometimes to a loss of pension altogether). It is not a battle of the sexes though, as these inequalities extend beyond simply gender, but actually a built-in flaw for everyone.

Another caveat is to avoid both externalising and internalising: the former is to confuse personal characteristics for gender-related characteristics, the latter the opposite when a characteristic due to social constructs is understood as a personality trait (note that this is not limited to gender).

The cause for these inequalities is not only childcare responsibility mostly lying on women: other things are acting here, such as unconscious/implicit biases. Tamsin made the point by comparing the situation to the "rotating snakes" optical illusion. Just as knowing the drawing is immobile and should not be seen moving is not enough to prevent one to see it move, going beyond biases requires both the knowledge they exist and the conscious effort of avoiding them.

Some distance has been travelled but there is still some to travel:

while gender inequalities are studied and their reduction incentivised, there are other inequalities to address (race, LGBT, age, mental health, disabilities...) and intersections (e.g. black women, see Bhopal 2016, Manfredi 2014). This requires a holistic view. Charter marks for instance prioritise some inequality over others, and need to include intersectionality more explicitly. A problem that charter marks face is, for instance, the shame in addressing institutional racism (for instance, what about a potential race pay gap?)

What is needed then?

Having equality, diversity and inclusion policies in place are not a proof of success. However, it is important that the university have such a policy as a recourse in case of need (e.g. a policy for trans pronouns, sexual harassment, ...) to avoid bullying or discrimination.

Examples of individual behaviours that can be relevant are: supporting and amplifying messages from people who know (dubbed as "speaking nearby", see Trinh T. Minh-ha), deciding when to call in and call out inappropriate behaviours (Ngoc Loan Tran), transform predictive into active (do rather than tell).

Questions:

- * The risk of defining university-specific roles in the fight against some inequality is to limit them to this specific role (a feeling that is shared by people researching gender studies).
- * Positive feedback should be encouraged for "good" behaviour regarding overcoming inequalities.
- * While part of a larger, inegalitarian society, efforts can be done on an higher education-specific context and they can set a trend and mobilise people around the university.
- * In Nigeria, with most people being black, the prejudice is based on the ethnicity and gender.
- * Advocate for yourself: it is important to become a role model, an "emotional cheerleader".

3- List of people recommended for future talks by Tamsin Hinton-Smith

Dr Charlotte Morris - has done work on ECR experience and while currently at Sussex she will soon be elsewhere if you are looking for speakers from a range of places.

Dr Emily Danvers and Dr Tanja Jovanovic - have both done work on experiences of Roma academics in European HE.

Rosa Marvell - Really good current ESRC funded PhD student researching PG students and social class

Dr Jessie Abraham - used to be at Surrey now at Bristol. She has worked on a Leverhulme project on students' experiences in and beyond their first degree, focusing on social class, social mobility and institutional differentiation and the extent to which universities promote social mobility.

Dr Jessica Gagnon - as worked on inequalities in HE projects and is a really good speaker. Based at Glasgow but has connections in South East so would probably come.

Dr David Davies, University of Sussex criminologist - David ran a pilot programme looking at first generation scholar girls accessing elite profession of architecture and law.

Dr Sarah Leaney, University of Brighton - formation of classed identities including in HE.

Dr Shadreck Mwale, University of Brighton - Shadreck's area is medical ethics but he has also done work I think around HE inequalities.

Dr Verona Ni Drisceoil - a really great Law academic with a big commitment to equality and diversity issues in HE.

Dr Carli Rowell, has just come back from Glasgow to Sussex. Carli was recently awarded the SRHE Newer Researcher Award for the project "No words, just two letters 'Dr'": Working-class early career researcher's reflections on the transition to and through a social-sciences PhD and into academia.