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RN33 Newsletter ESA Research Network 33 Women's and Gender Studies

Dear RN33 Members,



We are pleased to present our first RN 33 Newsletter. We hope that it will be a platform where all the members can share news, ideas and insights. You are most welcome to contribute to the Newsletter. We would also like to especially thank you for supporting this network. The RN33 is one of the biggest research networks of the ESA, currently counting 141 active members. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our

new members. We are so much looking forward to collaborating with you and we hope to see you all in Milano next year (June 2022).

As you know, we have been elected as the new Coordinators of the RN33:

Elisabetta Ruspini, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy, Coordinator

Ana Vidu, University of Deusto, Spain, co-Coordinator

Elzbieta Czapka, University of Gdansk, Poland, ass. co-Coordinator

Lise Widding Isaksen, University of Bergen, Norway, ass co-Coordinator



Below the new composition of the Board is listed:

Maria Carmela Agodi, University of Naples Federico II

Consuelo Corradi, LUMSA, Rome

Milica Antić Gaber, University of Ljubljana

Rassa Ghaffari, University of Milano-Bicocca

Nilay Çabuk Kaya, University of Ankara

Ombretta Ingrascì, University of Milan

Monica Massari, University of Milan

Tal Meler, Zefat Academic College

Lena Näre, University of Helsinki

Elina Oinas, University of Helsinki

Martina Panzarasa, University of Milan

Constanza Tobio, University Carlos III, Madrid

Shalva Weil, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

ESA RN33 Newsletter

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Who are we?

In this section we would like to present our members: research interests, activities and current projects. We are looking for volunteers 😊

What's new?

You are welcome to send us information about your recently published articles, books, conference papers. Please, send us short descriptions of the publications. It would be great if you could share with us notes on the seminars, webinars and conferences. We would be also happy to publish calls for conference papers.

Articles and books

***Ana Vidu and her colleagues are coordinating a Special Issue for the Gender, Work and Organization Journal.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14680432/homepage/si-call-for-papers>

https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/pb-assets/assets/14680432/GWO_SI_CfP_Enabling%20Sexual%20Consent%20without%20coercion-1616684930013.pdf

***The special issue edited by Paola di Nicola and Elisabetta Ruspini, published around one year ago.

<http://www.italiansociologicalreview.com/ojs/index.php?journal=ISR&page=issue&op=view&path%5B%5D=36>

***6 articles were published in 2021 following the call for contributions launched in May 2020 by our RN - in collaboration

with the scientific journal CAMBIO-Rivista sulle Trasformazioni Sociali. RN33 encouraged all members to publish texts on gendered dimensions of the Covid-19 pandemics. CAMBIO has so far published 6 texts from Iceland, Israel, Italy, Norway:

Here you can view the CfC "Gender and the Coronavirus Crisis":

<https://journals.fupress.net/call-for-paper/gender-and-the-coronavirus-crisis-in-collaboration-with-research-network-33/>

We Need a Feminist 'New Deal' to Shape a Post-pandemic Society, by Elisabetta Ruspini, University of Milano-Bicocca & Lise Widding Isaksen, University of Bergen. Published Online: 2021-04-19.

Being a nomad in one's home: The case of Italian women during Covid-19, by Sandra Burchi, University of Pisa & Sahizer Samuk, University of Pisa, Published Online: 2021-04-15.

The Loneliness of the Dying, by Lise Widding Isaksen, University of Bergen & Trude Gjernes, Nord University, Published Online: 2021-04-15.

Domestic Terrorism in 2020: a Report of the Israel Observatory on Femicide, by Shalva Weil, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Published Online: 2021-02-16.

Working Mothers during Covid-19: A peak into the Icelandic reality, by Valgerður S Bjarnadóttir, University of Iceland, & Andrea Hjalmsdóttir, University of Akureyri. Published Online: 2020-11-30.

Work and the Creation of Value in the Pandemic, by Margunn Bjørnholt, Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies. Published Online: 2020-06-14.

*** Ombretta Ingrasci published the book “Gender and Organized Crime in Italy. Women's Agency in Italian Mafias” (IB Tauris, Bloomsbury, London, 2021).

Please find below the book's abstract and Federico Varese's endorsement.
<https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/gender-and-organized-crime-in-italy-9781350150782/>

The book offers a comprehensive study of the role of women in the Italian mafias by assessing the roles and spaces of women within traditionally male, patriarchal organized crime units. The study draws on an extensive range of research, legal reports and interviews with women involved with the mafia, public officials and police. Placed within a framework of political, social, cultural and religious history, post-1945, the book provides an excellent account of women and organized crime in modern Italy.

“For very long, women were considered a passive force in Italian mafia organizations. Ombretta Ingrasci's path-breaking study brings to the fore women's agency and offers a theoretically subtle discussion of the complex role of women. Add to that a wealth of archival and oral data, and you have in your hands a definitive study of this difficult subject.” (Professor Federico Varese, University of Oxford)

Notes on seminars /webinars /conferences



***A note on the international webinar “Women's biocapital. The uses and abuses by technology and the market”, written by Consuelo Corradi. The webinar was co-

sponsored by our RN33 and the AIS-Italian Association of Sociology.

«This international workshop (held on-line on October 5 and 6, 2021) was organized by Consuelo Corradi and Daniela Bandelli (LUMSA University, Italy) under the auspices of the Research Network 33 Women's and Gender Studies of the European Sociological Association, and AIS, Italian Sociological Association. The human body has long been the object of economic use and commodification. The novelty in contemporary capitalism is that market value is created from biological body components which generate profit and are thus transformed in “biocapital”. New bio-markets are possible because technological advancements enable fragmentation, conservation, stockage and transportation of organs, cells, fluids, tissues. Female bodies are particularly interesting lands of investment for bio-markets: genetic medicine needs cord blood stem-cells; advancements in reproductive technology have increased demand of gametes and gestational services; mother milk is extracted, frozen, and delivered transnationally; placenta and foetal material are used in pharmaceutical industry; women's hair is traded for cosmetic purposes.

On behalf of the coordinating team of the Research Network 33 Women's and Gender Studies of the European Sociological Association, Lise Widding Isaksen (University of Bergen, Norway) greeted participants and recalled that contemporary societies are facing new challenges in the interaction between nature and culture, between women's freedom and alienation. There is a need to engage in an open and constructive dialogue about how limits can be placed on the exploitation of women's biocapital, and how to increase the respect for the unity between bodies, feelings, and identities.

In her introduction to the webinar, Daniela Bandelli (LUMSA University, Italy) evoked

the notion of biocapital, human body as property, and the limits of a debate centered on the contrast between the notions of commodification and women's autonomy. Biocapitalism generates value from the human body, understood as an ensemble of biological components, mental, relational and affective dimensions. Organs, blood, cells, skins, biological functions, such as the gestating capacity, and even genes, represent opportunities for profit for the biotech industry, as well as a source of income for the subject who sources them.

“The public life of fetal 3D images” was the topic of the presentation by Maria Carmela Agodi (Università di Napoli Federico II, Italy), eliciting questions about “surfacing the body interior” to use Janelle Taylor's expression. How has ultrasound imaging surfaced the fetal body into public view? This is not simply a matter of technology, but of fetuses becoming public, socially and culturally. How do different forms of practice work together to stabilize or unsettle the fixity of bodily surfaces? Once we conceptualize the body as materializing in and through social practices, new perspectives open up. We can recognize bodies as having contours and boundaries that are not simply given by nature but are accomplished through histories of collective human activity and power struggles. The dis-embedding of the fetus from the mother's body becomes a performative result of sociotechnical dispositifs while it enforces the possibility of thinking of it as a commodity in a newborn bio-market.

In her talk, Julie Smith (Australian National University, Australia) analyzed “Trade and exchange of human milk: policy and regulation to ensure it helps not harms?”. She recalled that in 2015, a company called Ambrosia Milk began purchasing and exporting human milk from Cambodia to the United States. In 2017 the Australian government approved importation of donated human milk from India for sale to

Australian hospitals. Such emerging markets in human milk have both promise and problems for women and children. Trade and exchange of human milk might exploit and disempower women and displace mothers' breastfeeding of children. Alternatively, paid lactation work could improve women's economic autonomy, extend breastfeeding, and assist advocacy for greater recognition of the value of women's unpaid household production. Showing how markets for human milk and cows' milk formula products are interrelated, she argued for more integrated and gender equitable regulatory approaches to emerging markets and global trade in human milk.

Consuelo Corradi (Lumsa University, Italy) gave a presentation on “Reflections on women's biocapital as open access flesh: the nature-culture dualism revisited”. She argued that environmental awareness and, more recently, the Covid-19 pandemic, have shown how wrong it is to continue to conceive of the human body as completely unrelated to nature. She revisited the relationship of power and signification between women's bodies and the forces of technology and market, by reflecting within a non-dualistic nature-culture framework. Medical and genetic research tend today to transform women's biocapital in open access flesh, a resource subject to relentless exploitation. Just as we are seeking a balance between, on the one hand, the need to use natural resources to improve human life and, on the other, the need to preserve nature from unlimited exploitation, in the same way (albeit in different forms) we must actively reflect on a balance between women's freedom to dispose of themselves and defense against alienation.

In her presentation Firouzeh Nahavandy (Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium) analyzed the connection between “Hair trade and poverty, as the extraction of a new type of resource from the Global

South". For many, hair is a badge of beauty. Both wealthy consumers and people from less affluent classes from all over the world are eager to pay high prices for wigs or hair extensions to fulfil their dreams of beauty. A modern trend is to use natural hair, which comes mostly from developing countries, where women are poor enough to consider selling a treasured possession. The demand has turned the hair trade into a profitable business whereas it has also given to all sorts of trafficking.

Sheela Suryanarayanan (Saravanan) (University of Hyderabad, India) presented her work on surrogacy, and in particular on the "Transnational Surrogacy Bazaar in India: Impacts on Surrogate Mothers and their Agency". The surrogacy practice in India had indeed become a bazaar where all kinds of biomaterial were on sale. Problems began when women lost their lives (both surrogate mothers and egg donors), children were abandoned, and long legal battles left children without any citizenship. The 2015 Regulation Bill began putting an end to commercial surrogacy, but it is still pending in the Indian Parliament. She examined the physical, economic and emotional impact on surrogate mothers and their children. Her empirical data collection revealed that poor households had to do at least two surrogacies to emerge from poverty, but the poor remained poor and some even slipped deeper into poverty. The physical and emotional impacts of surrogacy on the women and their children were multiple.)

Call for conferences

***Biographic, Narrative and Lifecourse Research Group (BNLR) of the Sociological Association of Ireland (SAI) is organizing First Biennial Conference Online – 12th March 2022.

Reimagining Voices and Identities in Uncertain Times: Social Transformation, Fragmentation and Post-Pandemic Futures

Overview

The Biographic, Narrative and Lifecourse Research Group (BNLR) of the Sociological Association of Ireland (SAI) was established in 2019 as a forum for critical discussion and debate among Irish, European and international social scientists on the multidimensionality of narrative, biographic and life course inquiry, to address methodological questions and challenges and advance scholarship in these interlinking fields. Our first biennial conference engages critically with national and international biographic, narrative and life course scholarship on the theme of voice in uncertain times; how voice is conceptualised, why and how some voices are accorded greater or lesser social legitimacy depending on context and how the voices of some social groups that have traditionally been marginalised from social debates, might be given more primacy in contemporary social and political debates. We are also interested in the interplay between voice and visibility, i.e. how voices may become noticeable and seize public spaces.

The Covid-19 pandemic has wrought unprecedented changes in global societies, irrevocably transforming governance and social relationships, everyday interactions, touch practices, and emotional displays. At the same time, international debates rage about climate justice, inequitable impacts of environmental degradation in majority and minority world contexts, while major transformations take place globally and locally in how society is organised and governed. The social and cultural effects of these events on people's lived experiences are long-lasting affecting how we talk, touch, move, and interact in private and public spaces. In contemporary society, voices are continually repositioned and their legitimacy is reimagined due to profound cultural transformation with regards to rights, freedoms, membership of online communities, political protests and the

impact of non-human actors (e.g. viruses, animals) on human worlds (and vice versa).

For this first biennial conference, we invite abstracts for papers and proposed conference roundtables and panels from narrative, life course and biographical researchers which engage with one or more of the following themes/topics relating to voice and social transformation:

- The meaning of voice in contemporary societies; positionalities, legitimation and de-legitimation of particular voices;
- Methodological innovations, challenges and novel solutions to capturing, analysing and interpreting voices and lived experiences in times of unprecedented social and cultural transformation;
- Research with groups often considered to be 'marginalised' and/or 'hard to reach';
- Effects of recent social transformations on lived lives and everyday social experiences, including concealed and unspoken aspects of daily living;
- Interdisciplinary or Transdisciplinary research which incorporates distinctively biographic, narrative or life course research focus;
- Research on socially fragmented professional and working lives (e.g. working arrangements, emotions, social isolation, innovative technological responses; 'blurred' boundaries of professional and personal living arrangements, impacts on particular professional groups;
- Voices of young people in contemporary education systems and novel challenges of learning and teaching online;
- Societal perceptions of Covid-19, risk, trust and governance;
- Research on built space, urban/rural environments and our relationships with non-humans;

•Reflexivity and research impacts upon individual researchers and/or research teams.

Submission of Abstracts

Abstracts for papers should be 200-250 words approximately and must also contain an indicative title, list of authors' names, institutional affiliation and 2-3 keywords.

Proposals for individual panels, roundtables or workshops should be approximately 700 words in length and must contain a title, list of convenors, outline of the key focus, and description of workshop/panel activities (if appropriate).

Please submit all abstracts and panel/workshop proposals to bnlrgroup@gmail.com. Deadline for submissions: 10th December 2021

Authors will be notified of the outcome of their submission by email on/by 8th February 2021.

***We are very pleased to announce the Call for Papers of our Mid-Term Conference to be held in Milan, June 13th-14th, 2022 under the title: **"New challenges to feminism and gender research"**. You all received the Call for Papers by e-mail.

The deadline for abstract submissions is February 15, 2022. We invite abstracts in English.

<https://www.europeansociology.org/research-networks/rn33-womens-and-gender-studies>



***We are also happy to mention the 11th European Feminist Research Conference that will be held in Milan (at the same University) between June 15th-18th, with whom several colleagues from our network are collaborating and which is very much linked to ours. More details here: <https://11efrc.unimib.it/>

Miscellaneous

This section is for you. If you would like to share something with the others, you are more than welcome.

Two of our members, Lena Näre (in the RN 33 board) and Lise Widding Isaksen have written a blog text related to a Special Thematic Issue they made for Journal for European Social Policy. The Official Blog of the Journal of European Social Policy (jesp.eu)

<https://jesp.eu/2021/11/11/care-loops-and-everyday-mobilities-in-pandemic-times/#more-367>