

RINGS Conference and Annual Meeting

Forging New Solidarities: Networks of (Academic) Activism and Precarity

Budapest, October 25-26, 2021

On-site and on-line conference

Call for Papers

In the current situation of unprecedented global crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which occurred at a moment full of contradictions and challenges for all, but in particular for women and for marginalized groups across the globe, the annual 2021 RINGS conference focuses upon the question of precariousness as one that is relevant both for the times before the pandemic and the times ahead of us. Whereas the notion of precarity has gained a strong presence in feminist theory in the last decade (Butler 2004; Puar 2012; McRobbie 2016; Zheng 2018), the current global economic and social crisis due to Covid-19 and the anticipated post-pandemic social and cultural changes confirm the relevance of the concept of precarity and invite research that focuses on its further exploration.

The 2021 RINGS conference proposes to address the question of precarity on various levels, from theoretical to more experience-based research, with a focus on Covid-19. In that spirit, we propose five broad themes, with an emphasis on feminist efforts to respond actively to the social conditions that produce precarity as a highly gendered social phenomena, and to explore critically the effects of the pandemic upon the existing inequalities. Putting new solidarities in the title of the conference, we hope to give prominence to the existing forms of cooperation, to inspire new ones, and promote further a feminist ethics of solidarity. In that context, the questions we want to ask include: How to mobilize ourselves in the face of the current and looming crises? How to build networks of solidarity (Butler 2015)? What forms of collective action have been effective in the politicization of our “hidden injuries” (Gill 2009)? How can we address this moment of extreme precarity, which also exists in academia, and transform it into a moment of inclusion in which academic institutions will have space for various subaltern voices to be heard (Spivak 1999)?

In addition to the five larger themes listed below, other related topics are welcome as well.

1. Precarity in feminist theory

Following recent studies on precarious life and the ethics of precarity, we invite papers addressing a broad range of questions related to the concept of precarity in feminist theory.

2. Precarity in the labor market

Since the 2008 financial crisis, precarity is a rising presence on the labor market, and the Covid-19 pandemic threatens with a new economic crisis of a much bigger scale. The conditions of instability and uncertainty that the pandemic has created have proven to be strongly gendered. Some of the possible questions include: How is the labor market affected by precarity at present? What happens with jobs in Covid and post-Covid economies? How is this situation gendered, and what kind of responses are given by those most affected by the crisis?

3. Precarity and migration: transnational perspective

Closely connected to the previous theme are questions concerning precarity and migration. Insecurity and vulnerability are determining aspects of migrants' lives, and they are also closely connected with their ability to work in the situation of migration. Within this theme we invite papers from a transnational perspective. Some of the possible questions to address include: How has the Covid-19 pandemic worsened precarity induced by forced migration? How are newly reinforced borders and controlling mechanisms putting migrants in even more difficult situation than before? What are the strategies (networks of solidarity) for dealing with precarious livelihoods in the situation of migration?

4. Precarity in academia

Precarity has various forms in academia, where austerity measures have led to stronger competition for scarcer resources. In this situation it is the younger generation of academics who are particularly vulnerable due to a lack of jobs and/or research opportunities. Departments and research centers dealing with women/gender/sexuality studies are no exception to that rule, on the contrary. Some of the possible questions include: How is precarity experienced in academia and research? How are specifically young researchers' position worsened with Covid crisis? What are the actual or imaginable attempts and initiatives to mobilize to change the system from within?

5. Precarity in art

The culture sector has been hit much harder by the Covid-19 pandemic and its fallout than imagined. Since women hold much more precarious jobs than men and have a lower esteem and recognition in the creative industry, their current situation is of special importance. We invite presentations that explore some of the following questions: Have policy makers addressed the challenges artists and cultural professionals are facing? How can digital online technology provide alternative forms of communication with the audience? Have there been new forms of art production given the unprecedented closures of events and institutions, and the postponement of performances and exhibitions? What do cultural and art representations of our lives under the covid pandemic look like?

The Organizing Committee expects a conference that combines on-site and on-line participation. The final decision about the format will depend on the development of the Covid-19 pandemic, and eventual changes will be communicated to all participants by August 15, 2021.

Practical information

Host organizations:

Department of Gender Studies, CEU PU Vienna

TNT Gender Studies Research Group, University of Szeged

CEU Institute for Democracy, Budapest

RINGS, The International Research Association of Institutions of Advanced Gender Studies

Venue: Central European University, Nádor u. 15, 1051 Budapest, Hungary

Registration fee: A minimum of 100 euros for institutions is the usual fee; however this is variable by location. The fees gathered will support RINGS solidarity fund. Members from lower income countries can apply for funding from the solidarity fund to offset participation costs. Assistance from the solidarity fund is subject to sufficient availability of funds. Please contact conference organizers for possible assistance after June 15.

Accommodation and travel: Accommodation and travel costs are to be covered by the participants. The hosts will suggest accommodation options and arrange reduced prices.

Deadlines and important dates:

Abstracts of a maximum of 350 words as an attachment are to be **submitted by June 15, 2021** to rings2021@ceu.edu, with the subject line “**RINGS abstract 2021**”. Please indicate your name and affiliation in addition to the title of your talk.

Acceptance notifications: by June 30, 2021

Conference registration: September 1 – 30, 2021.

Contact for inquiries: rings2021@ceu.edu

Conference Committee:

Local organizing committee:

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Éva Fodor, CEU Institute for Democracy, Budapest, and Department of Gender Studies, CEU PU Vienna

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International advisory committee:

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