International Symposium:

**Gender in/and the Public Sphere:**
**Mediated Discourses, Imaginaries & Political Practices**
December 7th & 8th 2016, Örebro University, Sweden
(Venue: Örebro University, Forumhuset F 130)

**SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME & ABSTRACTS**

**Day I: Wednesday, 07/12/2016**

09:00 – 09:30  Coffee and Registration (F130)

**09:30 – 09:45  Opening & Welcome**
*Natalia Krzyżanowska, Örebro University*

**Session I: Gender, Media and Transgressions of Public/Private**
*Chair: Natalia Krzyżanowska, Örebro University*

09:45 – 10:30  **Women Who Work: Contemporary Discourses in Sweden & the UK**
*Kristin Ewins, Örebro University*

10:30 – 11:15  **Transgressive performances:**
*Interrogations of Otherness & Selfness in Social Media*
*Sirpa Leppänen, University of Jyväskylä*

11:15 – 12:00  **Transgressive potentials of SnapChat in the Construction of Gendered & Sexual Positioning among Teenagers**
*Kristine Kohler Mortensen, University of Copenhagen*

12:00 – 13:15  Lunch (Fakultetsklubben)

**Session II: Gender & Articulation of Masculinities**
*Chair: Åsa Kroon, Örebro University*

13:15 – 14:00  **Dilemmas of Suicide:**
*Dominant Model of Masculinity in Men’s Suicide Notes.*
*Dariusz Galasiński, University of Wolverhampton*

14:00 – 14:45  **Recontextualisation of Cooking as Gendered Discourse:**
*Textual & Visual Representations of Masculinity in Swedish Cookbooks*
*Helen Andersson & Göran Eriksson, Örebro University*

14:45 – 15:15  Coffee (F130)

**Session III: Gender & Symbolic Violence**
*Chair: Kristin Ewins, Örebro University*

15:15 – 16:00  **Behind or Through the Veil? Embodying Femininity through Hijab**
*Ewa Glapka, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein*
16:00 – 16:45  **Voice and Violence – The Right to Silence (Other Voices)**  
**Johanna Stenersen, Örebro University**

16:45 – 17:30  **Journeys of Vulnerability**  
**Erzsébet Barát, Szeged University & Central European University**

19:00  Symposium Dinner / Julbord

**Day II: Thursday, 08/12/2016**

09:00 – 09:30  Coffee (F130)

**Session IV: Gender & New Trajectories of the Public Sphere**

Chair: Michał Krzyżanowski, Örebro University

09:30 – 10:15  **Right-Wing Populism, National Anthems & Gendered Body-Politics: The Austrian Case**  
**Ruth Wodak, Lancaster University / University of Vienna**

10:15 – 11:00  **Gendered Semiotics in the Discourse of UK Cancer Charities**  
**Veronika Koller, Lancaster University**

11:00 – 11:45  **The Discursive Commodification of Motherhood: A Comparison of Gendered Mediations of Consumption**  
**Natalia Krzyżanowska, Örebro University**

11:45 – 13:15  Lunch (Fakultetsklubben)

**Session V: Politics & (Mis)Articulations of Gender**

Chair: Dariusz Galasiński, University of Wolverhampton

13:15 – 14:00  **Gender and the Political Blogosphere**  
**Joachim Åström & Martin Karlsson, Örebro University**

14:00 – 14:45  **On Handshakes, Apologies, and Confessions: China/Taiwan Gendered Relations In/Between the Public Spheres**  
**Jennifer M. Wei, Soochow University**

14:45 – 15:15  **General Discussion & Closing**  
**Chair: Natalia Krzyżanowska, Örebro University**

**SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACT**

This international symposium explores multidimensional meaning of gender as a socially, politically and linguistically constructed category fundamental for re/construction of contemporary societies and public spheres. The symposium gathers leading international scholars from across the social sciences incl. sociology, media & communications, gender research, politics, or critical discourse studies.

Contributions to the symposium look at public spheres in a dual way i.e. as both ‘abstract’ constructs (formed by the media and other forms/loci of articulation and communication of gender-related political practices and discourses) as well as public (e.g. urban, physical) spaces or loci of gendered practices. Working at the intersection of those, presentations cover re/constructions of gender in both discursive and material practices and grasp the interdependence of the discursive and the material in shaping public visions and imaginaries of gender in contemporary society. But we also look into gender practices as inherently political and/or politicized in nature and locate these within various social fields where ideas of gender draw on the recontextualisation of ideas and discourses between various types and facets of social practice.
There are three central dimensions that cut across all of the topics discussed at the symposium. First, the research focuses on discourse as a form of articulation, communication and re/negotiation of contemporary and ‘traditional’ visions and conceptions and public imaginaries of gender. Secondly, the research operates at the intersection of individual and social, socio-political as well as politico-economic ontology of the studied processes and looks at how these dimensions are central in driving the dynamics and change of gender-related perceptions and practices (e.g. in such processes as commodification, politicization, intersection between gender and social class, etc.). Finally, the research presented at the symposium considers political implications of the studied practices and looks at their both public and private dimensions, incl. how the public-oriented concepts and categories such as ‘citizenship’, ‘belonging’, or ‘identity(ies)’ are increasingly influenced by private-bound ideas and dynamism of individual reflexivity.

**PAPER ABSTRACTS (in order of presentation) – Day I: Wednesday 07/12/2016**

**Women Who Work: Contemporary Discourses in Sweden & the UK**  
**Kristin Ewins, Örebro University, Sweden**  
This paper compares the contemporary presentation of women who work in a selection of UK and Swedish mainstream newspapers. The aim is to trace discursive patterns that lock in or open up for a range of affective responses from and to women who work outside of the home. These patterns will be analysed in relation to the economic conditions that encourage or prevent women's work outside of the home in the respective countries.

**Transgressive performances: Interrogations of Otherness & Selfness in Social Media**  
**Sirpa Leppänen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland**  
The focus of my presentation is on transgressive identity performances of ‘otherness’ and ‘selfness’ as an example of a burgeoning culture of political parody in social media. Drawing on sociolinguistics and semiotics of social media discourse, and with the help of examples from Finland-based YouTube parodies, I will investigate how such performances mobilize a range of playful and transgressive semiotic resources to recontextualise and resemiotize aspects of ethnic humour for the purpose of critically interrogating discourses at particular intersections of gender, ethnicity, race and nationality.

**Transgressive potentials of SnapChat in the Construction of Gendered & Sexual Positioning among Teenagers**  
**Kristine Kohler Mortensen, University of Copenhagen, Denmark**  
This paper discusses the use of SnapChat embedded in its ethnographic context as a mode of communication that ties into larger social dynamics of teenagers’ quotidian practices. Based on extensive fieldwork among teenagers at the age of 14-15 in a school in rural Denmark this paper discusses the transgressive potential of SnapChat. Data consist in a large collection of the visual messages of teenagers in two classes gathered over a period of five months. Additional data was gathered through interviews about media ideologies (Gershon 2010). In the teenagers meta-talk about SnapChat the app was framed as a platform that made room for ugliness – a platform that even required some sort of hideousness whereas Instagram in comparison required the opposite – pretty photos portraying the teenagers as good looking. In the paper, I discuss such meta-commentaries about required ugliness and compare them to collections of the teenagers’ SnapChat interaction. In the teenagers’ life at school romantic and sexual desirousness plays a crucial role in gaining social value in the peer group (Holland and
Eisenhart 1992). The ideology of required ugliness makes it possible for the teenagers to disobey such macro norms of attractiveness in the heterosexual marketplace (Eckert 2009). However, the ugliness that is constructed within the frames of Snapchat has its own set of aesthetic rules. The ugliness is a chosen ugliness that is performed in elusive moments – an ugliness that disappears shortly after it is constituted. The defining principle of the constructed ugliness is removability and disappearance. Thus being ugly in this context is not a contrast to oppressive macro norms of perfected bodies and beauty (Neely 2012), but rather complexly entrenched in such norms themselves. The ugliness is momentary, a matter of self-display put on top of a more lasting and continuous demand for beauty. Hence, this alternative set of aesthetics both appear to transgress and reinforce gendered and sexual norms in teenage life.

Dilemmas of Suicide: Dominant Model of Masculinity in Men’s Suicide Notes.
Dariusz Galasiński, University of Wolverhampton, UK

In this paper I am interested in constructions of masculinity in men’s suicide notes. I focus on one of the most common motifs in the notes: instructions for the time after the note writer’s death. Assuming a version of text-oriented critical discourse studies, I consider two kinds of instructions in the suicide notes: those which asked for actions which benefited the writers and those which benefited the addressees. I focus in particular on their linguistic form, showing that almost invariably they were issued in very direct, blunt, even impolite language. And so, I argue that the instructions are constructive of dominant masculinity and can be seen (the last) attempt to wield power and control over the reality which the men will no longer be part of. In conclusion I consider a paradox introduced by the notes. They construct suicide as dilemmatic, as much offering opportunities as taking them away. Finally, I briefly discuss contributions discourse analysis can make to suicidology and suicide prevention.

Recontextualisation of cooking as gendered discourse:
Textual & Visual Representations of Masculinity in Swedish Cookbooks
Helen Andersson & Göran Eriksson, Örebro University, Sweden

In this paper we discuss the construction of masculinity and men’s domesticity in cookbooks written for men. By treating different types of masculinity as discourse (Gill, 2003), we are interested in understanding how cooking as social practice is recontextualised as gendered discourse. Cooking literature, cooking instructions and cookbooks can be regarded as coded instructions on how to preform gender identity trough cooking practices (Brownlie and Hewer, 2007). Previous research has shown that cooking in home kitchens has become masculinized. When adapting to their new domestic duties, men have entered the kitchens as chefs, athletes, entertainers and scientists (Swenson, 2009; Kelly, 2015). Still, men’s activities in the kitchen are limited, carefully chosen and bounded to certain activity types, and they have less responsibility for regular daily cooking than women (Inness, 2001; Neuhaus, 2003). This study focuses on three cookbooks published in Sweden in 1975, 1992 and 2010. It draws on the principles of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCD) (Machin and Mayr, 2012; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014) and van Leeuwen’s (2008) notion of the recontextualization of social practice. More particularly we explore how masculinity and the practice of cooking in a domestic context are realized in texts and images in these cookbooks. The analysis shows that a personal voice and tone, realized through particular lexical, grammatical and visual features, are used to reinforce the masculinity of the intended audience. These features change to some extent over time and reflect, together with the main themes of the texts, different ideas of being
a man; we see different forms of middle class masculinity in relation to food, cooking and the domestic sphere progressing over the years.

**Behind or Through the Veil? Embodying Femininity through Hijab**

Ewa Glapka, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

For many Muslim women, hijab is an inherent part of their embodied and symbolical presence in the public space. Subject to multiple interpretations, veiling has caused many divisions, including those between and among the Muslim and non-Muslim feminists, who claim contending understandings of women’s right to decide on their bodies. These controversies are reproduced in the media, where apart from being used together or interchangeably with the pictures of armed and veiled Islamists, the images of hijab-wearing women re-appear when burkas, niqabs, headscarves, abayas, burkinis etc. are pitted against, say, bikinis, minis and corseted dresses to represent the apparent non-compatibility of Islam and the Occident. In this paper, I seek to contribute to a better understanding of the unlike codes of gendered visibility in the public space by investigating the ways in which veiling is made sense of by Muslim women themselves. In the analysis of interview data, I demonstrate that while they are informed by the man-made interpretations of Quran, and whilst they are hence implicated in the arbitrary regulation of women’s bodies, the participants’ lived understandings of veiling have their emancipatory undertones. The women’s material and verbal productions of hijab work as their personalized proxies for negotiating their subjectivities – by establishing their relationship with the Muslim and the non-Muslim spaces and discourses. Based on this, I ask if the women see the veils which enwrap their bodies and mediate their subjectivities as the material and symbolical surfaces that protect them from the world, or as ones that excessively or unjustifiably isolate them from the world, or as the surfaces through which the women inhabit the public space on their own terms, as the subjects and bodies of their own making. This is expected to show how hijab affects individuals’ perception of public space.

**Voice and Violence – The Right to Silence (Other Voices)**

Johanna Stenersen, Örebro University, Sweden

My presentation explores narratives and counter-narratives in the current public debate about norm critique and norm-critical perspectives. Departing from an analysis of the democratic values and arguments prevalent in various articles and debates, I seek to deconstruct perceptions of “voice” as a fundamental human right and the nature of public voice(s) as freedom of expression and democratic participation. Ultimately, I will argue for the importance of Tolerance as a civic virtue in a public space marked by increasing intolerance and use of voice at the expense of Others.

**Journeys of Vulnerability**

Erzsébet Barát, Szeged University & Central European University, Hungary

This talk explores the ideological work performed by the dominant xenophobic articulations of the 'migrant' figure in Hungarian part political media against which the 'nation' should gain a desirable and obvious self-same identity. The data for my presentation consists of the infamous billboard campaign by the Government promoting their referendum on October 2, 2016 against the obligatory quota proposed by the EU. In order to deconstruct the rhetoric of othering in response to the dramatic event of forced migration since last summer I shall also study the counter campaign by the Two-Tailed Dog Party and challenge the tropes and practices of stigmatization in/by the 'migrant' apparently in order to protect 'fortress Europe' and 'Hungary, its protecting shield'. I contend that the majority of the existing research on migration to Europe
from a gender perspective is mostly concerned with exploring the exclusionary dimensions of ‘Fortress Europe’ with a particular focus on women's access to citizenship as the ultimate measure of integration into the EU. This research, however, is inadequate in the current context of crisis. We need, instead, an approach that reflects on the various aspects of this global crisis through the category of toxic masculinity (Connell, 2014) I shall argue in favour of an inclusionary act of belonging that, at the same time, does not get caught in the liberal discourse of humanitarianism. I shall draw on Butler's (2014) vulnerability, Matsuda's (1993) distinction between immediate and indirect targets, and de Certou's (1986) place/space distinction to be able to come up with a transformative conceptualization of border crossings that may stand a chance of challenging toxic masculinity and allow for recognizing the alterity of the 'refuge' in 'us'.

PAPER ABSTRACTS (in order of presentation) - Day II: Thursday 08/12/2016

Right-Wing Populism, National anthems & Gendered Body-Politics: The Austrian Case
Ruth Wodak, Lancaster University, UK & University of Vienna, Austria
Almost in all European countries and in the US, we are experiencing the rise of right-wing populist parties, accompanied by a virulent (nativist) nationalism and related body and border politics. Not only are borders being closed and walls proposed or built, in order to keep specific groups of people (refugees and immigrants) out; the programs also contain many elements of a patriarchal, anachronistic gender politics (Wodak 2015, 2016). In my lecture, I will first discuss the gendered body politics which has become visible in the notorious ‘headscarf debate’, the ‘Burkini debate’, a revival of debates about abortion, and the debate about ‘unwillingness to integrate’ (Rheindorf & Wodak 2016). Then, I proceed to a qualitative case study of the attempt to change the Austrian anthem in order to include ‘women’ explicitly, and the rejection of this change (implemented by law) by the Austrian Freedom Party. Moreover, the FPÖ has now launched its own anthem which reproduces an anachronistic politics of exclusion. I will analyse the various stages of this debate, from a multimodal and discourse-historical perspective.

The Discursive Commodityfication of Motherhood:
A Comparison of Gendered Mediations of Consumption
Natalia Krzyżanowska, Örebro University, Sweden
My presentation reports findings of a multiannual project on discursive constructions of motherhood in the context of mediations of neoliberalism and gendered consumer culture. My study focuses on the process of discursive commodification of motherhood that links ‘being a mother’ to various patterns of consumption spread by celebrity culture. I examine how multimodal narratives of celebrity self-mediation through online and social media support commodification of motherhood. I show that such mediated celebrity discourse attempts to program women-mothers to become constant object-seekers under the promise of their self-transformation: from ordinary/real mothers to constructed/imagined celebrity mothers. I argue that the discursive commodification solidifies hegemony of an increasingly economic, neoliberal perception of motherhood as well as forges its cultural meanings based on social (class) and economic (wealth-based) distinctions. In the analysis, I focus specifically on Poland and Sweden and examine blogs and social media profiles of ‘celebrity-mothers’. I look in those for various discourses carrying patterns of how contemporary women (should) “inhabit” motherhood roles (Smyth 2012), especially in a consumption-driven way. My paper emphasizes that the power of mediatisation of motherhood is easily accommodated within the
neoliberal economy in the processes of social change both in post-transformation contexts (Poland) and in countries with post social-democratic, neoliberal political-economy (Sweden).

**Gendered Semiotics in the Discourse of UK Cancer Charities**  
*Veronika Koller, Lancaster University, UK*

In this talk, I will present some of my work on how UK cancer charities use multimodal features to construct femininities as well as garner support and engagement. Specifically, I ask how language and visual modes are integrated in the discourse of breast cancer charities and interrogate the functions of the charities’ specific use of semiotic modes. More broadly, I am interested in how we can account for the use of such semiotics by breast cancer charities as a cultural phenomenon. I will start by briefly outlining the size of the charity sector in the UK and then focus on charities addressing sex-specific cancers, showing how breast cancer charities are over-represented in the sector by a number of measures. To start to explain that dominance, I look at the discourse of breast cancer charities, analysing the use of colour, images and type fonts as well as metaphor mainly on the websites and Facebook pages of registered charities. Results show an apparent contradiction between images, type fonts and partly colour as creating associations of traditional femininity while other aspects of colour as well as the use of Violence metaphors evoke non-traditional femininities. Moving from the discursive to the material, I will illustrate how the hybrid gendered semiotics of breast cancer charities have been copied by other cancer and end-of-life care charities, most notably in Cancer Research UK’s Race for Life campaign, of which I will present a case study. Finally, I will discuss my preliminary findings as an example of Bakhtinian carnival as a socio-cultural practice and critically discuss how the participants’ emotions are used for commercial ends.

**Gender and the Political Blogosphere**  
*Joachim Åström & Martin Karlsson, Örebro University, Sweden*

The dominance of male voices in the political commentary and debate of traditional media is widely acknowledged. Whether or not the rapid development and dispersion of ICTs have helped to foster more egalitarian spaces for political discourse is a more contested issue. Some scholars have argued that the political blogosphere might suffice as a space where a multitude of voices could gain traction while avoiding the gatekeeper functions of established institutions and media outlets. Yet, others have depicted the blogosphere as a highly hierarchical space that renders women and men unequal opportunities to reach wide audiences and central network positions. This presentation explores this issue by way of presenting analyzes of Swedish political bloggers that illustrate (1) differences and similarities in how women and men use blogs in political communication; and (2) that women receive less influence in the political blogosphere than men. The presentation continues to discuss alternative explanations of these results drawing on other influential studies within the field of gender and political communication in social media.

**On Handshakes, Apologies, and Confessions:**  
*China/Taiwan Gendered Relations in/between Public Spheres*  
*Jennifer M. Wei, Soochow University, Taiwan*

Using the opening remarks of Mr. Xi Jinping (leader of the People’s Republic of China, PRC) and Mr. Ma Ying-Jeou (leader of Republic of China, ROC) during their historical meeting in Singapore in 2015 as a starting point, this presentation will highlight communication typified by power patterns, different polities, and (gendered) ideological positions (cf. Wodak and Koller 2008). It will look at, inter alia, the media coverage and the public reactions to the above event
and point to how the 80-second symbolic handshake between Xi and Ma eventually became an iconized depiction and a carrier of pragmatic and symbolic meanings behind the contested ‘One China’ principle (framing the speeches of both male leaders) aimed at Chinese people’s imagined community. The presentation will also relate to the polyphonic responses to the above meeting: in international media, such as CNN, where the imaginary interrogations of the closed door meeting were sketched out or in the subsequent protests in Taiwan (notably excluded from the national media coverage in PRC) where strong opposition to any further economic or cultural rapprochements from the PRC were voiced. A linguistic analysis of some of the most frequently used words and metaphorical expressions in the speeches will reveal contrasting linguistic patterns as well as the use of personification and no-naming (Flowerdew and Leong 2010) as ways of expressing ideologies yet avoiding direct confrontation and creating ambiguity.

Main Organiser / Contact Person:
Dr. Natalia Krzyżanowska, Sociology Dept., HumUs, Örebro University
natalia.krzyzanowska@oru.se / +46-19-303975