

Intersectional Analysis of the Sexed/Gendered Brain

March 2 - 6 2020 Lorentz Center @Oort

Description: Neuroscience plays a powerful role in our understanding of human differences. In recent years, scholars from the humanities have collaborated with neuroscientists to critically examine the body of neuroscientific research that purports to find essential sex/gender differences in the human brain, and have revealed conceptual and methodological flaws that hinder scientific progress. However, these critical efforts have often failed to integrate race, class, and nation (Jordan-Young, 2014, Ngubia 2014).

Attending to the interplay of various kinds of differences (i.e. to *intersectionality*) is of fundamental importance if we want to do justice to the plurality of human experience (Roy, 2008). The aim of this workshop was to advance the interdisciplinary conversation surrounding sex/gender and the brain by exploring intersectional approaches from a post-colonial, queer, trans, and black feminist perspectives, to expose biases, and to propose alternative research approaches.

Aims:

- Discuss ethical, conceptual and methodological best practices for tackling the research questions that guide this workshop;
- Make significant progress in the production of content that will ultimately be published in an edited volume of scholarship;
- Develop a roadmap for future directions of the research community.

The organizers put together plans for publishing papers based on the outcome of this workshop – one for a *Frontiers of Sociology* special issue, to be edited by organizer Hannah Fitsch and attendee/contributor Flora Lysen. This call for papers will be sent out within the next few months, and will ask for work based on workshopped projects presented during the workshop, with a special request for collaborations between senior and junior scholars that emerged from the breakout sessions. Second, plans for the Reader aimed at junior scholars and scholars-in-training were specified. This Reader will contain a combination of seminal works from senior members of the Network, articles that have been published in the *Frontiers* special issue, and new, state-of-the-art articles focusing on the future directions of feminist neuroscience. Core members of the group agreed to serve as an advisory board to guide the content of this Reader. Sarah Humphreville, the Science and Technology Studies Editor from Oxford University Press is working with the organizers to develop the proposal for this volume.

New themes that emerged from this conference were the beginnings of the integration of race and trans issues into discussions on neuroscience research. The contributions of scholars of color and trans scholars enriched and informed our discussion of the ethical, legal, and social implications of neuroscience research. Neuroscientists learned and developed strategies to apply multidimensional categorical frameworks to their own research programs. Trainees built collaborations with more senior scholars that they believe will have lasting impacts on their careers. Several scientific and philosophical collaborations amongst senior scholars were also initiated as a result of the conference. Finally, a new artistic collaboration between one of our keynotes and a longtime core member of the group, along with several junior interdisciplinary scholars, was announced. These developments will be chronicled on the Neurogenderings Network website.

Format of the workshop: The workshop format was composed of several key elements: keynote lectures (Deboleena Roy, Ash Baccus-Clark), works-in-progress presentations, tutorials, roundtables, and breakout sessions.

Other comments: Our third keynote was unable to present due to travel restrictions due to COVID-19 (Laverne Melon). We condensed the majority of parallel sessions into plenary sessions because of speakers who were unable to attend, also due to COVID-19.

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