



## VERENIGING VOOR POLITIEKE WETENSCHAPPEN

The **Vereniging voor Politieke Wetenschappen (VPW)** proudly introduces a new thematic **workgroup on 'Identity, Diversity and Equality'**.

In order to celebrate its launch, the workgroup organizes a

### **Research Seminar on the Challenges of Qualitative Research**

with **Prof. Lea Sgier** (Central European University)

on **Friday December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013.**

#### **Bio**

Lea Sgier is an assistant professor at the Department of Political Science at Central European University (CEU) in Budapest, Hungary, as well as a lecturer at the University of Geneva, Switzerland and at the Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis and Collection in the UK. She has an extensive experience in teaching qualitative research and in supervising/mentoring doctoral research in a variety of contexts in- and outside Europe.



Her main fields of teaching and research are qualitative methodology (with an emphasis on interpretive approaches), gender and politics, and social policy. She has worked mainly on gender quotas in politics, gender equality policies, and old age (elder people's political citizenship, dementia policy). She currently works on innovations in dementia policy in Scotland, and on a book on qualitative data analysis.

## Lecture on 'Challenges in Qualitative Research'

The aim of this lecture is to open up a space for critical reflection on the nature, the specificities and the difficulties of qualitative research. It will be structured around three types of key issues that every qualitative researcher sooner or later has to confront: firstly, *practical* issues such as distance, proximity and power relations in the field, or concrete issues of research design and process (how and when to deal with large amounts of data, for instance); secondly, *conceptual* and *theoretical* issues inherent in the labelling and delimitation of our research object and subjects (for example when dealing with gender or ethnic categories), or the issue of "neutrality"; and thirdly, *epistemological* issues related to validation criteria and procedures, and more generally to epistemological assumptions and self-positioning on the part of the researcher (including for example in engaged research or action research).

These kinds of issues will be discussed through the lenses of two research projects that Professor Sgier carried out recently: one about elder people's understanding of political involvement and citizenship (based on a series of interviews and observations in elder care homes in Geneva), and the other one, of a more reconstructive nature, about innovations in dementia policy in Scotland (based on a large documentary analysis and on expert interviews, and done as part of wider comparative project).

Examples drawn from these two projects will serve to illustrate and substantiate the above-mentioned key issues, on the one hand, and to propose a *way of thinking* about such issues that helps finding solutions to similar issues in different contexts.

## Programme

10u-10u05: Welcome by the convenors

10u05-12u: Lecture 'Challenges of Qualitative Research' by Professor Lea Sgier

12u-12u30: Introduction of new VPW workgroup on 'Identity, Diversity and Equality' by Eline Severs (VUB/UA) and Silvia Erzeel (UCL).

12u30-13u30: Sandwich lunch

13u30-16u: Closed research seminar: paper presentations and discussion by Professor Sgier

## Details

The lecture and the adjoined research seminar will take place at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Campus "Etterbeek", Pleinlaan 5 – 1050 Brussels. The lecture will be held in room 'Lisbon' (the -1 level). The research seminar will be held in room 'Bruges' (the -1 level).

Further information on how to reach the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) – Campus Etterbeek may be found [here](#).

Participation is free but registration is required. Please confirm your participation by sending an email to [silvia.erzeel@uclouvain.be](mailto:silvia.erzeel@uclouvain.be) **by November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013**. Also indicate whether you will attend the lecture by Lea Sgier in the morning and/or the closed research seminar in the afternoon.

Participants in the closed research seminar are asked to submit a short abstract (max. 300 words) by November 15<sup>th</sup> and a research note (max. 6000 words) by December 1<sup>st</sup>. The research note should contain the main arguments of the research paper/research proposal; including the theory from which builds, the methodology from which it draws, the data used, as well as (preliminary or envisaged) findings.

Because space in the closed research seminar is limited, we operate on a 'first come, first served' principle. Although the research seminar is open to everyone, we give priority to PhD candidates.

Please contact Silvia Erzeel ([silvia.erzeel@uclouvain.be](mailto:silvia.erzeel@uclouvain.be)) or Eline Severs ([eline.severs@vub.ac.be](mailto:eline.severs@vub.ac.be)) for more information on paper topics or format.