

Possibilities of Feminist Regulation

Final Report

Submitted by Kathryn Henne and Benjamin Authers

Stated Objectives

The Feminist Regulation Project aims to develop experimental collaborations at the intersection of regulation, gender, and academic discipline.

Regulatory scholarship provides a potentially rich resource for expanding the ways in which we promote and achieve feminist agendas. While there are regulatory scholars who are feminists, to date there has not been much focused analysis of how the insights of regulatory theory can be employed by feminists. Regulatory theory provides powerful and evidence based tools for achieving change – for example, by enrolling change agents, by rewarding and publicising positive incremental changes, and by focusing on successes. This project is designed to tap into and exploit the resources provided by regulatory theory in the interests of feminism.

Overview of 2015-2016 Activities

- ***Call for Participation***
Circulated from November 2015 to January 2016. We had planned to leverage College funds to support the original activities proposed under the funding request to the Gender Institute. Unfortunately, the College of Asia & The Pacific delayed its usual call for funding applications, which resulted in a delay in planning and a scaled-down plan of activities from the original proposal.
- ***February Meet-and-Greet: Planning Workshop hosted by RegNet***
This planning event and gathering, hosted by RegNet and supported by funding provided by the Gender Institute, was open to postgraduate students, early career researchers and senior faculty interested in participating in an interdisciplinary dialogue around how different feminisms might engage regulation and regulatory debates. We also drew in members of the ACT government and the human rights NGO Disability Action.

We spoke with participants about their interests in asking questions about feminism and regulation: What, for example, are the pressing and emergent challenges for feminist agendas in the contemporary moment? How can regulation respond, and what are its limits and alternatives? In what ways might different strands of feminist thought prompt us to reconsider the dimensions and power of regulation? What could feminist approaches to regulation look like, and how might they vary across contexts, regions, and domains of social activity?

A total of 20 participants attended. An additional 16 members of the campus community indicated that they could not attend, but wanted to receive information about future events.

- ***June Writing and Planning Retreat***
Since we had limited interest in a public event in mid-June, the organisers instead held a short writing and planning retreat from 10 to 11 June at [St Clement's Retreat and Conference Centre](#) to focus attention on discussing and writing about issues raised by the prompt to consider the possibilities of feminist regulation.



Figure 1. St Clements Retreat and Conference Centre



Figure 2. Participants documenting the writing/planning retreat.

The event was attended by 7 participants, and included PhDs, ECRs, and established colleagues. They were: Dr Benjamin Authers, Dr Shelley Bielefeld, Ms Joyce Das, Dr Kathryn Henne, Assoc Prof Julie Smith, Mr Daniel Reeders, and Mr Christoph Sperfeldt.

In addition to plotting a course of action for future activities (below), all the participants reported accomplishing a significant amount of work in the course of the two days. Discussions about the ideas raised by each other's writing and the project more generally were held between writing sessions. Subject to the venue ultimately chosen for publication, the participants expressed interest in contributing to a collection.

Future Activities

- Possibilities of Feminist Sociology Workshop Participation***

We are delighted to see that other ANU researchers have adopted a similarly critical approach to a different area of feminist knowledge production. We have corresponded with organisers about having at least one representative from our group attend this upcoming workshop in late September.
- Call for Future Participation***

Formal plans at this stage are to pursue a special issue of a journal that is open to publishing interdisciplinary work. We are targeting [*Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*](#) but may approach other journals after we receive initial abstracts. We intend to develop the description around the core interests of the group who attended the planning meeting, but also plan to circulate a call for abstracts in late 2016.