

Gendered Fields – summary and report on two workshops:

### **Feminists Re-Think Neo-liberalism: Work/Space and Making Difference**

These two workshops aimed to explore gender, difference and diversity in the context of spatiality, work, workplaces and neo-capitalism. We would like to thank the IAS and the Lancaster Professions Network for funding these workshops and the Centre for Gender and Women's Studies, and Jane Collins in particular, for providing administrative support.

The first event took place on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009 and centred on the work of Prof Ros Gill of the Open University with Monika Buscher from Sociology as the respondent. We had circulated some of Ros' articles prior to the event and these informed the discussion of Ros' presentation. Ros developed her analyses of neo-liberal work discourses and practices to consider the contemporary neo-liberal university. She gave a very compelling presentation of people's affective engagements with academia and some personal and very striking examples of the way in which people live through, or against, discourses of work.

The second workshop on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2009 focused on the work of Prof Liz Bondi of the University of Edinburgh and Prof Wendy Larner of the University of Bristol. Maureen McNeil of the Centre for Gender & Women's Studies acted as respondent. Liz's presentation focused on the emotions and their relation to socio-spatial practices, revisiting the work of Bourdieu to try to think through the complex relations of subjectivities and social structure. Wendy focused on the uneven and contested nature of neo-liberalism and in her discussion of female-owned businesses in New Zealand, emphasized the possibilities opened up for women. This led to a lively and productive discussion following a comprehensive response from Maureen to the two presentations.

The participants of the workshops were drawn from a wide range of departments including Management, Geography, Politics and IR, the Institute for Cultural Research, and Sociology.

Organisers: Anne Cronin (Sociology) and Elaine Swan (Management).