

## STS Conference Graz 2018

**Abstract submission deadline:** 19 January 2018

<https://conference.aau.at/event/143/call-for-abstracts/>

### **S5: „Surviving in academia“ – careers in the academic neo-feudalism**

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Producing and teaching knowledge is one of the main purposes in the professional life of people working in academia. But the circumstances for pursuing a stable and successful career in the university system have changed a lot during the last two decades. New academic management regimes (Felt 2016) and the capitalization of knowledge production (Bammé 2004) influence institutional structures and even more on the individual career level. A high amount of flexibility and mobility are demanded from scholars and that under uncertain working conditions like non-permanent contracts, lack of institutional belonging and appreciation, limited access to institutional resources and financial insecurity etc. Those alternative science careers or how Tara Fenwick (2005) called it, career avenues of ‘portfolio professionals’ are common reality and yet the situation of this group is mostly neglected in the supposedly fair academic practice. They remain outsiders within the system even though the system and the privileged people within it could not persist without them. And the high fluctuation of staff is even a wanted condition by science policy “since research would ‘freeze’ without granting the permanent inflow of young academics and new ideas” (Preis/Ulber 2017, p. 10). Additionally academics try to ‘survive’ in academia by combining several external lecture contracts at different (often geographically distant) universities to earn their living. These precarious lecturer contracts are paid poorly and constitute insecure positions, as external lecturers have to submit new lecture proposal each year and go through selection processes for each and every teaching concept. Although universities rely heavily on external lecturers, their appreciation within the system is very low, they have no professional representation at universities and cannot rely on their employer. In this session we would like to welcome theoretical and empirical papers, which contribute towards a better understanding on how structural and institutional conditions of precarious employment affect personal careers in multiple ways. We are interested in papers on the macro-level of science policy and performance evaluation (like academic excellence debate ‘Sheep with five legs’, Van den Brink & Benschop, 2011), on the meso-level of university governance and organisational effects (like ‘advanced discrimination’, Dressel, Weston Hartfield & Gooley, 1994), and on the micro-level of individual careers and psychological factors (like ‘embodied anxiety’, Sigl 2012). Beside social justice, gender, and intersectional analyses, we especially encourage queer-feminist approaches and LGBTQ+ perspectives. We would like to stimulate a discussion of papers, who dare to develop the vision of a fair, inclusive and just academic environment – what could it look like to not only survive but to live a good live in academia – and how could it be achieved?

**KEYWORDS:** social gender justice, science careers, organization, precarious jobs, queer-feminist