

ICHEM seminar
Wednesday 10 May
14.00-15.30
The Edge' Management suite, Level 1, Room 1.04.

All welcome but please email r.naidoo@bath.ac.uk if you wish to attend.

Big Data-Visuals, Desire and Shame: On the Affective Economy of Transnational Higher Education

Katja Brøgger, Aarhus University, Denmark

Abstract

In this presentation, I explore the affective impact of performance measurement technologies such as publication and grant graphs measuring the performance of individual researchers and scorecards measuring the performance of nation states. I take inspiration in Barad's distributed notion of agency and include both human and non-human (graphs and scorecards) agents. I will focus on the monitoring and comparative instruments used as part of the Bologna Process. In particular, I examine the ways in which the Bologna stocktaking scorecards' extended use of visuals to display big data has the capacity to transgress nation states and establish transnational policy processes since it no longer depends on text. The scorecards are affectively wired. They seem to mobilize and recruit certain affects. The color coding works as an alert system that calibrates the signatory states to peer pressure by modulating the affective register of shame. The fear of shame makes the governance feasible because it ignites a mimetic, competitive desire for 'better performance'. The intra-action of scorecards, shame and desire prove to be powerful agencies and part of the secret of how 48 nations are mobilized and governed without passing any laws.

Biography

Katja Brøgger, PhD, is associate professor at the Department of Education Science, the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University. Katja is head of a research unit for Education Policy, Governance and Administration part of a working group working on 'new materialisms and organizational experiments in the context of contemporary political and economic crises'. The New Materialist scholars network comprises members from all over Europe and is an EU funded project. They use 'matter' as their focal point and searchlight. Zooming in on matter of ecology, economy, politics, technology and art, these scholars move away from a framework of representation towards materiality. In her research, Katja Brøgger explores new modes of governance within higher education. Her research is informed by new materialism and the affective turn.

