Dynamics of Protected Spaces in Academia under the Quasi-market Logic

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12:45 – 14:00
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(Chair: Dr Hugo Horta)

Abstract:
I will draw on the institutional logics perspective to understand the creation and maintenance of protected spaces in academia in the context of governance reforms and the responses of academics when negotiating these spaces within universities where they work (Leisyte, 2016; 2014). I argue that academics respond to the institutional reform processes under quasi-market logic which threaten their professional autonomy in various ways depending on how much room for discretion they have and in which organizational unit they are embedded. Here discretion is understood as the power academics possess to assert authority over the content and methods of their work as well as the prestige they hold within the academic community (Chreim et al., 2007). Elite academics would engage at multiple levels in ensuring the reconstruction of protected spaces and extensive institutional work at the funding agencies as well as government – and they may maintain and renegotiate the order of worth of their discipline and protected spaces (Leisyte, 2016). They will act as institutional entrepreneurs propagating redefinition of their academic identities while maintaining the protected spaces and their power. In the case of peripheral disciplines and countries, or in the cases of academics less endowed in their academic and social capital, may face difficulties in re-arranging and preserving the protected spaces at different levels and would have difficulties in acting as institutional entrepreneurs. At the same time, they could find ways of going beyond their disciplinary communities and engage with broader audiences and stakeholders, or with academics from other disciplines – and in this way expand the boundaries of protected spaces (Leisyte and Hosch-Dayican, 2016; Leisyte and Sigl, 2018).

About the speaker:
Professor Liudvika Leisyte's research focuses on academic work and organizational transformation in the context of changing institutional environment. She has published five books, a number of chapters in edited books and peer-reviewed articles in Higher Education, Higher Education Policy, Public Administration, Public Management, Science and Public Policy. She holds PhD degree in Public Management from the University of Twente. Ten years’ experience at the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies at the University of Twente meant acquisition, involvement in and managing various research projects in the field of higher education and research policy, governance and management of universities and academic practices funded by the DFG, the EU, various national governments and higher education institutions. Professor Leisyte is the member of the editorial boards of Higher Education Policy, European Journal of Higher Education, Triple Helix, Acta Pedagogica Vilnensis, a chair or member of the board of various non-profit organizations (e.g. LNVH, Futura Scientia, Female Faculty Network Twente). She is the co-convener of Network 22 (Research in Higher Education) at EERA / ECER (European Educational Research Association / European Conference on Educational Research) and member of the Board of German Higher Education Research Association.

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