

Abstract for Challenge the past/Diversify the future 19-21 March 2015

*Within, against and beyond time and space: Feminist coalitions*

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Nationally and internationally, Sweden is represented as one of the most gender equal countries in the world. Simultaneously, there is an ongoing debate within Sweden, pointing at the links between the production of this success narrative and a white, culturally homogenous struggle for women's rights. Currently, there are many feminist activists who embrace these criticisms, and agree with the analysis of the problematic processes of inclusion and exclusion in this narrative of a feminist success. The wide popularity for these criticisms, however, has also created a number of tensions and insecurities in contemporary feminist activism, awakening questions such as 'who is allowed to speak for whom?' or 'who can take which position?' In this paper, we wanted to departure from these questions, to study the multiple time/s and space/s that feminist activism in Sweden acts within, and against.

Drawing on ethnographic material (fieldnotes, interviews and social media postings) from an ongoing research project about feminist activism, we analyse in this paper feminist activists' representations of feminism, subjective positionings in relation to these representations, and the drawing of boundaries within and between these representations, to study the construction of feminist coalitions across time and space, and in relation to the contested narrative about a feminist success in Sweden. By focusing on the temporal and spatial aspects of feminism, we want to use this presentation to share our reflections around the multiple feminist pasts and feminist futures that take shape in these representations, positionings and drawing of boundaries. We also want to think carefully about what feminist possibilities, political agencies and responsibilities they shape and what they can learn us about the feminist struggle today.