Collective editorial on the neoliberal university

This collective editorial on the neoliberal university follows eight days of strike action at sixty UK universities called by the University and College Union (UCU) in two separate legal disputes, one on pensions and one on pay and working conditions. Anticipating the recent labor strike after previous industrial disputes in 2018 at UK universities, the work included here emanates from two dialogues at the Nordic Geographers Meeting (NGM) in summer 2019, a public meeting called Protest Pub and a conference session on the neoliberal subject and the neoliberal academy. After an opening statement by the editors, this collective endeavor begins with the urgent collaborative action of graduate students and early-career academics and is followed by reflections on life in the neoliberal academy from those involved in the dialogues at the NGM 2019 in Trondheim. Additionally, the editorial introduces the content of the present issue.

Keywords: collective action, neoliberalism, university, academia, knowledge, industrial dispute, casualization, labor strike, trade union

Opening statement on collective action

In the immediate aftermath of eight days of strike action at sixty UK universities concerning legal disputes regarding pensions, pay and working conditions, we offer a collective editorial on the fight for the soul of the university campus. Pay, equality, casualization and workloads are key battlegrounds and talking points on the picket line, and beyond the UK we hear from voices railing against the increasing marketization and neoliberalization of universities, staff and students, which is affecting collegiality, and collaborative and collective endeavor. For in the neoliberal university, the academic subject is an individual profile with a portfolio of research, highly mobile and online, rendering the place in which one resides and the people one shares a corridor with redundant as the platform university comes into view.

Anticipating the recent collective action after previous industrial disputes about the decimation of pensions for staff at UK universities in 2018, the work included here emanates from two dialogues at the Nordic Geographers Meeting in 2019 (NGM). One was arranged around a public meeting called Protest Pub, and was organized by local scholars and students involved in the initiative of *New University Norway* (responsible organizers Hilde Refstie and Thomas Sætre Jakobsen). The collective invited four panelists – conference participants at the NGM in 2019 – to discuss the market bureaucratization of universities from a grassroots perspective (Lawrence D. Berg, Eli Smeplass, Don Mitchell and Kirsi Pauliina Kallio). The other discussion was organized by Lawrence D. Berg as part of the conference program on the theme of the neoliberal subject and the neoliberal academy, with six invited panelists (David Butz, Mike Evans, Henrik Gutzon Larsen, Edward Huijbens, Kirsi Pauliina Kallio, Noora Pyyry). As part of the session, panelists and audience members were asked to relay their ideas and experiences in the form of this collective editorial in order to continue a critical debate on the neoliberal academy and academic publishing. We welcome further contributions to our *Reflections* section from anyone willing to participate in this discussion on the neoliberalization of academia, and to reflect upon industrial action at UK universities and the changes to working conditions and knowledge production at universities globally.

URN:NBN:fi:tsv-oa 88578
DOI: 10.11143/fennia. 88578

To begin, we prioritize those who are the most precarious, those who are expected to work part-time, hourly-paid, short-term contracts, and to relocate leaving behind family and friends at the drop of a hat, and indeed those who are about to embark on a career in a working environment unrecognizable to some of the tenured senior staff of universities past. Those for whom the university provides a comfortable and secure working life, those who entered this working landscape on a permanent contract while completing their thesis, and those who may not always grasp the fundamental systemic changes that their early-career colleagues face on a daily basis.

To compare conventional academic positions with the profile of an early-career academic today is largely a pointless exercise – so much has changed, not only in academic working life but also more broadly in labor and working conditions. While appearing in somewhat specific forms in different countries, the developments follow a similar neoliberal pattern where people from different generational positions are increasingly juxtaposed, regarding workers' rights and employers' obligations, dividing younger and older generations in terms of (in)security – not to mention parallel unequal developments related to class and race for example.

And yet the cycle continues: the lack of secure jobs persists for highly-skilled often widely-published academics while concurrently a desire for speed and quantity is leading to the homogenization of research outputs with certain disciplines, themes, regions and academics marginalized as perhaps obscure and unfashionable yet nevertheless significant academic knowledge – small, singular, slow and quiet – is underappreciated.

The urgent and timely collective action of graduate students and early-career academics leads here, followed by reflections on life in the neoliberal academy from those involved in the dialogues at the NGM 2019 in Trondheim. May these discussions continue on various forums and at forthcoming events.

KIRJOITTAJA JAMES RIDING
FENNIA REFLECTIONS SECTION EDITOR

KIRSI PAULIINA KALLIO
FENNIA EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Homo academicus: the graduate student experience in the neoliberal academy

Originally an economic philosophy defined by free market capitalism and competition, neoliberalism has left the realm of the purely economic and has permeated all layers of society. It has, in the famous words of Wendy Brown, created "a peculiar form of reason that configures all aspects of existence in economic terms" (Brown 2015, 17). Unsurprisingly, universities have not been spared from neoliberalism's economizing mindset, and competition has become a defining factor within the academic experience. Many of the effects of neoliberalism on academia have been studied, including the creation of precarity among academic staff and the reformulation of time (e.g. Castree *et al*. 2006; Meyerhoff *et al*. 2011; Berg *et al*. 2016). As graduate students within a neoliberalizing university, we have chosen to focus on our experience at the University of British Columbia's Okanagan Campus (UBCO), in Canada. Specifically, we use the concept of *Homo academicus* (the student as human capital) to explore how competition defines this experience, and how perpetual competition has detrimental implications for students and their mental health (cf. on issues of mental health, see also Taylor 2019 in this issue).

Contrary to liberalism's laissez-faire approach to market regulation, neoliberalism actively regulates the market by creating competition (Larner 2000). Just as neoliberalism reduces people to mere human capital (Berg *et al*. 2016), the neoliberalizing university transforms students into a specific type of human capital – *Homo academicus*. Unlike *Homo economicus* – the theoretical concept of a purely

rational economic actor (Yamagishi *et al*. 2014) – *Homo academicus* is the concept of an entirely capitalized graduate student, one who has been transformed from autonomous actor into a unit of capital for the service of the university.

Following the neoliberal rationale, UBCO inserts competition into the graduate student experience in a variety of ways. The graduate student's first experience of competition occurs during the application process, where they are evaluated on the basis of grades, reference letters, extra-curricular achievements and voluntary work. Once accepted, students compete against each other for grades, paid positions, publication opportunities and funding – which for many graduate students constitutes a substantial source of indispensable income. In addition, resources within the university such as supervisors, technical equipment, and course openings are equally competitive. This confers real academic advantages to students who excel in outdoing their peers. At the same time, this form of near-constant competition negatively affects student relationships as it impedes collaboration and cooperation, which are beneficial for producing good scholarship and a positive work environment (Henriksen 2018). Some academics have begun to protest the demand for constant publication by establishing the "slow scholarship" movement (Mountz *et al*. 2015), but students are rarely in a position to challenge the university's demands regarding their academic output.

Additionally, the graduate student has been recognized by the university as a primary source of capital. Through tuition fees, residence fees, mandatory meal plans, or even simply through university-branded merchandise and clothing, students have become a source of income. Limited funding as well as increasing costs associated with attending universities force students into financially vulnerable situations. This reality is especially problematic for international students, whom the university exploits for a substantial portion of its capital; tuition for international graduate students at UBCO is (depending on the degree program) as much as several multiples higher than for domestic students (The University of British Columbia 2019).

It comes as little surprise that the pressure of competition coupled with financial precarity has a detrimental effect on students' mental health. In a 2019 survey of over 55,000 Canadian students, 68.9% stated they had "felt overwhelming anxiety" and 51.6% "felt so depressed that it was difficult to function" (American College Health Association 2019, 15). These numbers are even more concerning when considering the limited nature of counselling services – effectively creating yet another layer of competition. Combined, the effects of competition reconfigure the student experience from one of personal and academic growth, social formation, and societal benefit, to one where success is the only merit for *Homo academicus*.

The central irony within the neoliberalization of universities – and the creation of Homo academicus – is that a highly competitive environment does not produce better results. Student performances deteriorate as a consequence of stress and anxiety and the extensive amounts of time spent competing for resources instead of studying or researching. Furthermore, academic knowledge production suffers as competition impedes the collaboration and mutual assistance processes necessary for academic projects. The supposed role of the university – as a site of knowledge production and social betterment – is therefore undermined by the capitalist drive for profit and the neoliberal production of the competitive student. The university thus replicates the central irony of capitalism; that it endlessly creates the means for its own destruction, yet obstinately persists.

UBCO URBAN AND REGIONAL DYNAMICS COLLECTIVE[1]

Young scholars as neoliberal subjects

Young scholars are often on the receiving end of the most brutal consequences of the neoliberal university. According to a survey conducted by the Young Academy of Norway (2016), only half of today's young researchers in Norway would recommend a research career to young people, and

women to a lesser extent than men. Uncertainty, stress, loneliness, the inability to combine work and family life features as some of the reasons why.

In a situation of job uncertainty, the pressure to perform according to set indicators is intense. This reduces the space for so-called 'slow scholarship' as the neoliberal university requires high productivity in compressed time frames (Mountz *et al*. 2015). Our response to this pressure, representing a new generation in academia, has been to organize ourselves as a collective, challenging the form and pace of the neoliberal academy. Through *New University Norway* based at NTNU in Trondheim, we are mobilizing against the market bureaucratization of our universities. We do this through writing, engaging, and organizing public meetings called *Protest Pubs*.

We champion principles in academia such as solidarity between staff groups and a generous work environment. By generosity, we refer to the "non-competitive and collaborative investment in the success of many" (Phillips 2018). Such principles resonates with inclusive values in the welfare states, including university democracy and worker rights but are increasingly being regarded as non-competitive, and therefore ignored as universities are thought of as generic economical organizations. In our work we want to bring awareness to how individualizing structures within academia arise within particular political and institutional frameworks, and lift the challenges we experience up to a collective and political level to address the conditions under which universities are operating.

The slogan for our Protest Pubs is "make noise". We separate here 'voice', as having a say within existing structures and frameworks, and 'noise', which refers to challenging discourses and the status quo. It is a form of behavior interpreted as 'noise' by decision makers since it tends to be loud, unpleasant, and causing disturbance (Marchart 2007; Swyngedouw 2014).

Our aim is to take the discussions on what a good university is, back to the grassroots. Through this work, we have come to appreciate the power of community, and the collective that authors of this editorial in *Fennia* represent.

HILDE REFSTIE

IDA MARIE HENRIKSEN

THOMAS SÆTRE JAKOBSEN

ELI SMEPLASS

RAGNE ØWRE THORSHAUG

Comments on the neoliberal university

The panel presenters argue that critique of the neoliberal university needs to be combined with work by scholars to change the everyday practices that maintain it. One problem is that in the neoliberal university protest and critique tend to be internalized. Employees are allowed to express their criticism and to protest (up to a point). This allows managers to claim that procedures of consultation and participation have been adhered to. However, there is no guarantee that the points of criticism will be followed up.

It is important that solutions are not sought that result in an extension of neoliberal practices rather than leading to radical reform. This can be illustrated by the system of publication points that has been instituted in the Norwegian university system and copied by other countries. Publication points are awarded for peer-reviewed articles in international journals. This is unfair in relation to other

types of scholarly activity that are essential for the publication of articles, such as peer reviewing and editing, which are not awarded points. Furthermore, other types of publication, such as book reviews, popular science, commentaries, translations, and textbooks, are not awarded points. However, the solution is not to extend the points system to these types of work. An administrative argument against doing this is that this would demand resources that are in short supply. Yet a more fundamental argument is that it would perpetuate a practice whereby it is assumed that quality can be assessed by quantitative measures. It is illogical and contradictory to assess quality through quantitative indicators. Quality can in its essence only be assessed by qualitative, discursive reasoning (Jones 2017).

As opposed to top-down consultation and quasi-market numerical indicators premised on individualized academic competition, a radical retreat from the neoliberal university requires a functioning university workplace democracy. One important aspect of this workplace democracy is academic freedom, in which scholars influence their work situation by determining the content of their research and teaching through discussion and collaboration within their closest collegial unit – a form of participatory democracy. A second important aspect of workplace democracy is for scholars to influence their work situation through the election of organs and leaders at all levels of the university – a representative democracy in which the elected organs should have decision-making power and are not just consultative organs merely serving to 'rubber-stamp' decisions made by managers at higher levels. A third important aspect of workplace democracy is the promotion of collective activity that is infused with a care ethic (ethics of care also taken up in Taylor 2019, this issue). This involves finding ways of ensuring high-quality research and teaching through mutual discussion and inclusivity. This discourse requires that all groups in the collective are given a say regardless of gender, ethnicity or social status, while paying particular care and attention to the inclusion of those who for various reasons are at risk of being excluded or discriminated against (Andresen *et al*. 2019). Scholarly activities such as teaching, research, different types of publishing, reviewing, editing, and popular-scientific communication are in their essence discursive. Discursive practices and deliberations informed by the care ethic may be time-consuming but are potentially a productive means of seeking attainment of academic quality without resorting to the number-based, individualistic, competitive and hegemonic characteristics of the neoliberal university.

MICHAEL JONES

Enchantment and academia

In the past few years, I have done research with teenagers on hanging out. I bring this up because I want to use this opportunity to promote what could be labeled as 'academic hanging out': playful openness with ideas, with colleagues, with scholarly life (Pyyry, forthcoming). The potential of hanging out lies in its non-instrumentality and openness toward the world that encourages dwelling and thinking with whatever is going on, there and then. This potential connects to the ever-fleeting, difficult-to-verbalize, sudden event of *enchantment* (Bennett 2001). Enchantment is a highly affectual, surprising experience of being moved by the world: a felt disruption that opens up space for new perspectives. In this unspecific transitory moment, everything becomes the most unusual. Enchantment is then not about curiosity of the new, but wonder in front of the very ordinary (Pyyry 2019). It is worthwhile to ask whether the speed, constant competition and instrumentality linked to our contemporary academic system allows for the moment of hesitation that lies at the core of enchantment. This uncertainty before the already-known is crucial, as there erupts, in this temporary 'freeze', a capacity for a rearrangement of possibilities. This links to what Massumi (2015) refers to as *thinking-feeling* or Dewsbury (2010) as *thinking as experience*, and what I have somewhat playfully, yet purposefully, come to call *hanging-out-knowing* in the context of young people's urban life (Pyyry 2015).

In the current system, it often seems that we are supposed to be sure of what we are doing: to know where the research is going and to get the results out quickly, or better yet to make them applicable to the world of business. This pushes us to re-produce (and publish) the same outputs in a desperate attempt to stay in the game. While I am encouraging an attitude of openness here, any change surely needs to be a systemic one, because in the current academic climate it has become a luxury to read a whole book, to have a full conversation, to be genuinely open toward the other, l*et a*lone to just hang out and wonder. Often practices of relaxation, such as mindfulness or quiet retreats, function to make us more productive and turn attention towards the self-optimizing individual. Instead I hope for an academic community that does not 'just do it' but hesitates, is unsure, and takes pleasure in not-knowing. It is from this creative space that new thinking can emerge.

NOORA PYYRY

Collective editorial on the neoliberal academy

A bad day: we are in a pickle! Not only in academia, but in workplaces more generally. Our gadgets, software and technologies are working wonders, but are used to squeeze ever more from each passing minute. We are bombarded by e-mails, hundreds a day. We have to fill in any number of forms online in a range of different systems, all of which we have to log in to separately. Each form is supposed to make life easier but ever more forms are made and ever more boxes are created to tick. An endless procession of e-mails and forms, tasks to complete, a review of a review, and a review of the process of the review process and a review of that, and each review has a form attached. Each form is regularly changed, because those making the forms always find new ways to improve them and to address issues that remain obscure to the end user. The form changes for no apparent reason just like when Microsoft moves buttons around in the latest version of Office, a program we all have to use of course.

I sit in my office chair and I feel like I am playing the famous arcade game Whac-A-Mole. I desperately try to keep the moles in their holes in order to have an unobstructed view of the horizon for some thinking time and creative work. But the e-mails keep appearing, the requests to fill, tick, stamp, confirm all needs to carry on, or someone else on the 'flow line' gets stuck. So my clear crisp horizon is pushed into the evenings, the weekends. And all of a sudden you find yourself on a Sunday morning sat at a computer, attempting to put together a coherent thought for an approaching deadline for the next paper, chapter or contribution which I had to promise to deliver because we are all comrades trying to advance science. A science we have devoted so much energy to and so much of ourselves to through our postgraduate training and work, that we have long since moved beyond the point of no return. This is all we want to do, know how to do, and therefore Sunday mornings at the computer have become normalized and make for a sense of relief and satisfaction, a respite from whacking moles.

A good day: finally some balance, a rested mind and all of the projects, deadlines, writing and e-mails have been lined up or taken care of. I see the crisp clear horizon and it is a little brighter. All of the moles have been whacked. I am in control and I foresee the time to take care of all of the things which I have promised to do and to deliver. I even have time for a casual conversation with a colleague, a coffee break and a lunch break that is not simply eating a sandwich and staring blankly at a wall trying to calm your mind. Today I can taste my sandwich. Reading an article, reviewing a thesis and reviewing some of my own writing I can embroider my arguments and examples. I have time to think! Was that not the initial plan when building the academy, as a bastion of creativity and critical thought? Should thinking not be our primary role and what occupies most of our time? The sense of satisfaction derived from putting together a coherent thought is wonderful, the trick is not to look too far ahead to e-mails and instantaneous work assignments.

To ensure a good day: it is hard to ensure these good days. More and more things that dictate our time are moving beyond our control. Management is taking over so many aspects of my work. We

attend team building exercises and reflection sessions on generalized topics and issues that are deemed by someone else of relevance to you and your research. You have to sit in a chair in your office, otherwise the next office occupancy survey might lead you to lose it, thereby becoming a mobile worker.

We need to regain control of our own time. As experts in the research we undertake and the teaching we deliver, we should reclaim our say in what needs to be done and how by returning power to the faculty units. A decentralised democracy running the university is a necessity and this remains a large structural issue in the current neoliberal academy. Added to this structural issue there are individual issues, such as how to manage your time in an academic world that resembles a game of Whac-A-Mole. It will not be achieved by a new gadget, or adding to already packed calendars. We have to take control of ourselves. I do not go into work at the evenings or the weekends, no matter what. Home is supposed to be home. I do not send e-mails at the weekends. I incorporate physical exercise into my working day. One hour of exercise in the morning to have time to think. No music, nothing in my ears, simply an hour reserved for thinking about the day ahead whilst breathing, stretching, bending and making sure that my body does not collapse under the weight of stress. The challenge is to build a daily routine that includes exercise and a healthy social life. To be able to establish that routine, we have to take control and collectively refuse to work beyond our contracted hours.

EDWARD H. HUIJBENS

Academic knowledge production, neoliberalization and the falling rate of use values in the academy

It is now commonly accepted that university systems around the world are being deeply affected by processes of neoliberalization (Castree *et al*. 2006; Gill 2009; Brown 2015; Berg *et al*. 2016; Cupples 2019). The impacts have been widespread and significant, but mostly they involve transforming the university to a space that is understood through "a peculiar form of reason that configures all aspects of [academic] existence in economic terms" (Brown 2015, 17). Configured according to such neoliberal economic rationality, universities have become more competitive; academic scholarship is valued according to market metrics; the academy is subjected to audit and accounting systems to ensure 'value-for-money'; policy gets transferred from 'centers' to 'margins' in ever faster vectors of circulation; and local, national and international scales of knowledge production get reconfigured according to economic rationalities (see Castree *et al*. 2006; Berg *et al*. 2016). As me and my colleagues have argued elsewhere (Berg *et al*. 2016), these wider shifts have been accompanied by the instantiation of audit and assessment systems that both *index and produce* three key shifts in working lives in the academy: 1. the shift from exchange to competition; 2. the shift from equality to inequality; and 3. the shift from labor to human capital. I want to argue in this short intervention that these three shifts can be seen as a distillation of what Debord (1967 [1983], thesis #47) in *The Society of the Spectacle* called "the tendency of use values to fall".

Use value is not a thing, but rather a *rate*, and thus a *force* (Mitchell 2018). The falling rate of use value is a *necessity* for capital, but exists as only a *tendency*, and thus "it sometimes doesn't fall fast enough and has to be helped along" (Mitchell 2018, 5). We can see the tendency for the rate of use value to fall operating in the academy, which has under neoliberalization, begun to operate just like capital. In this regard, the neoliberal university also needs, often times, to help along the falling rate of use value in knowledge production. It does so in order to ensure that the competition that operates as a proxy for a 'market' under neoliberalism is maintained, and indeed, intensified. It operationalizes this falling rate of use values through a wide range of processes designed to ensure competition between scholars: merit reviews, 'output' audits, research assessments (both mock and 'real'), the economic valuation of scholarship, and the quantitative understanding of value and 'impact' of research.

Debord (1967 [1983], thesis #34) argued that "The spectacle is capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image". I want to suggest that we are seeing similar kinds of spectacularization of academic knowledge. What I mean is that processes of competition in the academy designed to make us operate like capitalism have forced us to produce more and more outputs (papers, books, reports, etc.) to the point where the use values of such outputs are no longer found in the ideas presented by any particular scholar (e.g. a better understanding of the world). Instead, the real use value of contemporary academic knowledge has become mere *image*. That image is both a complex combination and distillation of a number of processes that have been reified as numbers: number of papers, number of citations, h-index, i10-index, *et cetera*. Moreover, once the use values of academic knowledge become number-commodities like the h-index and/or citation counts, with very few exceptions (such as the slow scholarship movement, see Mountz *et al*. 2015), there is always pressure for these numbers to increase. Eventually, this pressure to always increase outputs, citations, h-indexes, *et cetera* reaches the point of saturation — that point when images are fully commodified in Debord's (1967 [1983]) terms.

Riffing on Debord, Mitchell (2018, 5; emphasis added) argues: "when the phenomenal form of *capital* is image — when images are fully commodified — the use value of other commodities… *are* their images, whose own use value also continues to fall. *More and more commodity-images must be produced, endlessly*". This corresponds to the spectacle, that "moment when the commodity has attained the total occupation of social life. Not only is the relation to the commodity visible but it is all one sees: the world one sees is its world" (Debord 1967 [1983], thesis #42). I want to argue that we are entering a phase of academic knowledge production that looks an awful lot like the society of the spectacle. This is a phase where academic knowledge has been completely colonized by the commodity and the knowledge we thus produce has no value beyond (re)producing commodity relations in the academy.

What evidence is there for such a contention? Perhaps we need look no further than the rise of what Ionedes, Klavans and Boyack (2018) have called 'hyperprolific' authors in the academy. They searched the SCOPUS database for authors that had published more than 72 'full papers' (not comments, editorials, or letters to the editor) in a calendar year during the period 2000 to 2016; *they found 9000 such individuals* (Ionedes *et al*. 2018, 167). In other words, more than 9,000 academics have published an article every five days (for at least one year). Moreover, after tightening some parameters as part of their analysis (e.g. excluding high energy and particle physicists, who tend to publish at exceptionally high rates in very large teams of researchers), Ionedes and his colleagues found that the number of hyperprolific authors "grew about 20-fold between 2001 and 2014" (Ionedes *et al*. 2018, 168). The total number of scholarly authors grew 2.5-fold during this same period. Surely this is indicative of the falling rate of use values of scholarly publications. At the same time it is indicative of the upward pressures on rates of publication being exerted by neoliberalization of the academy. Surely there is a relationship between these two forces. Indeed, the falling rates of use values and rising rates of publication are directly linked, each reinforcing the other. The falling rate of use values means more publication-commodities must be produced whilst the resultant increasing rate of publication ensures the falling rate of use values.

Of course, there are few (if any) hyperprolific publishers in geography, but that is not the point. The fact that over 9,000 of these authors exist in the academy is enough to put pressure on all the other disciplines to produce more outputs, thus increasing the falling rate of use values even more, and putting ever greater pressures on academics to produce more (almost meaningless) knowledge.

LAWRENCE D. BERG

Content of the issue

This issue of *Fennia* includes eight articles; five original research papers and three review articles. As most of them are 'fruits of the summer' and were processed during the autumn, the commentaries from open review processes (Taylor, Lilius and Hewidy, Thorshaug and Brun, Lagerqvist, Bowman) will be published over the winter in our forthcoming section and included in the next issue. This opens the opportunity for the readers of *Fennia* to participate in the discussions: if you would like to publish a commentary on any of the articles in the present issue (also thematic commentaries on more than one paper are welcome), or as continuation of the discussion in the collective editorial, please get in touch with the editors.

The first original article is by Stephen Taylor (2019), titled *The long shadows cast by the field: violence, trauma, and the ethnographic researcher*. It connects directly with the theme of the collective editorial, focusing on ethics of fieldwork and particularly the precarity of young scholars carrying out ethnographic research in hazardous and unpredictable empirical contexts with insufficient training and support. Drawing from his personal experience – based on a PhD study in a UK university including fieldwork in underserved urban areas of Cape Town, South Africa – Taylor describes a research process far too demanding for a young scholar to deal with (if not for anyone), involving heightened emotional and psychological burden and leading to the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (mental health issues raised also by the UBCO Urban And Regional Dynamics Collective, see above). The article calls for the promotion of an ethic of collective care for field researchers, including practical and financial support from universities for training and professional debriefing (care ethic discussed by Michael Jones as well, see above). Taylor's article went through a double-blind review process that was opened upon acceptance. We are expecting to publish commentaries from the reviewers over the next months, to open a debate on the issues raised in the paper.

In the second research paper, *Lesbian nightlife in Amsterdam: an explorative study of the shift from 'queer-only' to 'queer-friendly' spaces*, Marieke Ekenhorst and Irina van Aalst (2019) shed light on why lesbian space has gradually declined in Amsterdam – the queer capital – by exploring young lesbians' lived experiences of inclusion and exclusion in the city's urban nightlife. Two findings grew central in their study. On one hand, straight and queer spaces have become fluidly mixed as a result of increasing open-mindedness towards sexual plurality among (young) urban Europeans. At the same time, the growing diversity among lesbian clubbers has led to a widening range of nightlife venues and ways of enjoying free time. Together these developments – involving cultural but also strong economic elements – have produced new kinds of urban spaces, some of which are not found safe by lesbian clubbers, a notion many of the service providers confirm. Hence, Ekenhorst and van Aalst argue that, along with mixed spaces, lesbian venues continue to have an important place in urban nightlife.

The third original article in this issue, by Johanna Lilius and Hossam Hewidy (2019), is titled *Serving whom? Immigrant entrepreneurs in a new local context*. The paper focuses on ethnic retail in Helsinki, Finland, where entrepreneurship is not as commonplace among immigrants as in many other urban contexts. Approaching it from the perspective of people who experience their entrepreneurship rather positively, Lilius and Hewidy find that both maintenance of cultural practices and integration can be productively supported by entrepreneurial opportunities. Through identifying different strategies from their participants' working lives (growth orientation, investment interests, status building, aspirations for freedom and stability), the authors conclude that by acknowledging such different perspectives to entrepreneurship, cities can provide better opportunities for immigrants to establish their own business in ways beneficial to themselves as well as to the development of more equal multicultural cities. The paper went through an open review process based on which we are hoping to publish commentaries later this winter.

The fourth full article continues with the theme of migration, specifically asylum seeking and refugeeness, in the context of Norwegian asylum centers. In their contribution *Temporal injustice and re-orientations in asylum reception centres in Norway: towards a critical geographies of architecture in the institution*, Ragne Øwre Thorshaug and Cathrine Brun (2019) set out to develop a conceptual framework, drawing from geographies of architecture and migration studies, for understanding the temporalities of asylum in this particular spatial site. Grounded in humanistic methodology, they adopt the idea of

'orientation' to explore the reception centre as a coming together of asylum seekers' lived experiences, institutional governance and the buildings as material constellations. The paper argues that while temporal strategies are used by the migration governance, asylum seekers too are able to make use of certain temporal tactics that allow them to reorient themselves towards meaningful life.

The last research paper, *GIS and land cover-based assessment of ecosystem services in the North Karelia Biosphere Reserve, Finland*, co-authored by Laura Poikolainen, Guilherme Pinto, Petteri Vihervaara, Benjamin Burkhard, Franziska Wolff, Reima Hyytiäinen and Timo Kumpula (2019), provides results from a study assessing and mapping ecosystem services in the North Karelia Biosphere Reserve, in Eastern Finland, with the aim of producing knowledge for sustainable land use planning. Highlighting ambiguity in the use of ecosystem services, from both stakeholder and substantial expert perspectives, the paper present as results from a matrix method analysis two major outcomes: first, old-growth forests and undrained open and forested mires have potential to provide different ecosystem services where water and urban areas form important cultural services, second, areas with high capacity for ecosystem services provision include high biodiversity.

Of the three review articles included, the one by Katarina Haugen and Kerstin Westin (2019), *From pragmatism to meritocracy? Views on in-house family ties on the Swedish labour market*, introduces insights from a study that set out to identify human resource management strategies and practices in the Swedish labor market, concerning specifically familial relations. They found two opposing approaches, one more traditional emphasizing acceptance of familial connections and the other more meritocratic with a disapproving view towards such affiliations. While the previous is, at large, being challenged by the latter in the current Swedish society, differences between large-scale urban settings and smaller communities and rural areas are notable. Familial ties thus remain a contested issue in the discussed labour market.

The second article in the Reviews and Essays section by Maja Lagerqvist (2019), *To crash on the bus (or sit on needles and pins)? – buses and subways in teenage everyday geographies*, presents results from a study in urban Sweden, focusing on young people's experiences and use of public transportation. Approached as 'mobile places', the bus and the subway are explored from the perspective of the everyday, giving space to the young mobile subjects' own interpretations regarding their urban lives. When successful, these places can offer what she calls 'relieving' urban spaces for youths, yet as well as enabling interaction and retreat, in the opposite case stress, fear and other barriers to the use of public transport occurs – especially among girls and young women. Based on her findings Lagerqvist argues for inclusive and safe public transportation that values young people as particular *and* equal urban dwellers.

The final review article focuses on young people's climate activism, building on a recent research report 'Protest for a Future: Composition, Mobilization and Motives of the Participants in Fridays For Future Climate Protests on 15 March, 2019 in 13 European Cities', by Mattias Wahlström and 20 colleagues from a variety of countries (Wahlström *et al*. 2019). In *Imagining future worlds alongside young climate activists: a new framework for research*, Benjamin Bowman (2019) presents an appreciative yet critical reading of the survey and interview findings, with the purpose of making visible the complexity and plurality of young climate activists' agency. Such political agency has recently gained plenty of attention in transnational media and in policy agendas, however Bowman suggests, often from too narrow a perspective that could (and should!) be widened through scholarly understanding of youthful political agency. The article was processed through open peer review and a discussion based on it will be published in *Fennia* and on the *Versus* forum in the upcoming months.

KIRSI PAULIINA KALLIO
FENNIA EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Notes

[1] To contest the atomization of neoliberal academia, we have chosen to collectively author this paper. Members of the collective include Heather Magusin, Alexander Brackebusch, Pegah Behroozi, Jodine Ducs, Murray Derksen, Ariele Parker, Adriane Peak, and Hongyang Tao.

References

American College Health Association (2019) Canadian Consortium Executive Summary Spring 2019. <*https://www.acha.org/documents/ncha/NCHA-II_SPRING_2019_CANADIAN_REFERENCE_GROUP_EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY.pdf*>

Andresen, S. A., Henriksen, I. M., Jakobsen, T. S., Jones, M. & Røkkum, N. H. A. (2019) Medvirkning, makt og avmakt – hva betyr et svekket universitetsdemokrati? In Tjora, A. (ed.) *Universitetskamp*, 261–291. Scandinavian Academic Press and Spartacus Forlag AS, Oslo.

Bennett, J. (2001) *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400884537

Berg, L. D., Huijbens, E. H. & Larsen, H. G. (2016) Producing anxiety in the neoliberal university. *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe Canadien* 60(2) 168–180. https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12261

Bowman, B. (2019) Imagining future worlds alongside young climate activists: a new framework for research. *Fennia* 197(2) 295–305. https://doi.org/10.11143/fennia.85151

Brown, W. (2015) *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. Zone Books, New York, NY.

Castree, N., Aspinall, R., Berg, L. D., Bohle, H-G., Hoggart, K., Kitchin, R., Kleine, D., Kulke, E., Munton, R., Pawson, E., Powell, J., Sheppard, E. & van Weesep, J. (2006) Research assessment and the production of geographical knowledge. *Progress in Human Geography* 30(6) 747–782. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132506071518

Cupples, J. (2019) No sense of place: geoscientisation and the epistemic erasure of human geography. *New Zealand Geographer* [online Nov 11 2019] https://doi.org/10.1111/nzg.12231

Debord, G. (1967 [1983]) *The Society of the Spectacle*. Black and Red Books, Detroit.

Dewsbury, J-D. (2010) Language and the event: the unthought of appearing worlds. In Anderson, B. & Harrison, P. (eds.) *Taking-Place: Non-Representational Theories and Geography*, 147–160. Farnham, Ashgate.

Ekenhorst, M. & van Aalst, I. (2019) Lesbian nightlife in Amsterdam: an explorative study of the shift from 'queer-only' to 'queer-friendly' spaces. *Fennia* 197(2) 200–214. https://doi.org/10.11143/fennia.83696

Gill, R. (2009) Breaking the silence: the hidden injuries of neo-liberal academia. In Flood, R. & Gill, R. (eds.) *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflections*, 228–244. Routledge, London.

Haugen, K. & Westin, K. (2019) From pragmatism to meritocracy? Views on in-house family ties on the Swedish labour market. *Fennia* 197(2) 268–279. https://doi.org/10.11143/fennia.73001

Henriksen, D. (2018) *Research collaboration and co-authorship in the social sciences*. Dissertations in Department of Political Science, Aarhus University. <*https://politica.dk/fileadmin/politica/Dokumenter/ph.d.-afhandlinger/dorte_henriksen.pdf*>

Ionedes, J. P., Klavans, R. & Boyack, K. W. (2018) The scientists who publish a paper every five days. *Nature* 561(7772) 167–169. https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-018-06185-8

Jones, M. (2017) Can research quality be measured quantitatively? On quality of scholarship, numerical research indicators and academic publishing – experiences from Norway. *Fennia* 195(2) 164–174. https://doi.org/10.11143/fennia.66602

Lagerqvist, M. (2019) To crash on the bus (or sit on needles and pins?) – buses and subways in teenage everyday geographies. *Fennia* 197(2) 280–294. https://doi.org/10.11143/fennia.83665

Larner, W. (2000) Neo-liberalism: policy, ideology, governmentality. *Studies in Political Economy* 63(1) 5–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/19187033.2000.11675231

Lilius, J. & Hewidy, H. (2019) Serving whom? Immigrant entrepreneurs in a new local context. *Fennia* 197(2) 215–231. https://doi.org/10.11143/fennia.82821

Marchart, O. (2007) *Post-Foundational Political Thought*. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh. https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9780748624973.001.0001

Massumi, B. (2015) *Politics of Affect*. Polity Press, Cambridge, UK.

Meyerhoff, E., Johnson, E. & Braun, B. (2011) Time and the University. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 10(3) 483–507. <*https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/908*>

Mitchell, D. (2018) Revolution and the critique of human geography: prospects for the right to the city after 50 years. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 100(1) 2–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/04353684.2018.1445478

Mountz, A., Bonds, A., Mansfield, B., Loyd, J., Hyndman, J., Walton-Roberts, M., Basu, R., Whitson, R., Hawkins, R., Hamilton, T. & Curran, W. (2015) For slow scholarship: a feminist politics of resistance through collective action in the neoliberal university. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 14 1235–1259. <*https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/1058*>

Phillips, M. J. (2018) Toward a more generous future. <*https://connect.mla.hcommons.org/toward-a-more-generous-future/*> 29.10.2019.

Poikolainen, L., Pinto, G., Vihervaara, P., Burkhard, B., Wolff, F., Hyytiäinen, R. & Kumpula, T. (2019) GIS and land cover-based assessment of ecosystem services in the North Karelia Biosphere Reserve, Finland. *Fennia* 197(2) 249–267. https://dx.doi.org/10.11143/fennia.80331

Pyyry, N. (2015) *Hanging out with young people, urban spaces and ideas: Openings to dwelling, participation and thinking*. Research Report 374. University of Helsinki, Department of Teacher Education.

Pyyry, N. (2019) From psychogeography to hanging-out-knowing: situationist *dérive* in nonrepresentational urban research. *Area* 51(2) 315–323. https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12466

Pyyry, N. (2019) Akateeminen hengailu: Lumoutumisen tiloja ja radikaalin ajattelun mahdollisuuksia [Academic hanging out: spaces of enchantment and openings for radical thinking]. *Terra* 131(4) 223-233.

Swyngedouw, E. (2014) Where is the political? Insurgent mobilisations and the incipient 'return of the political'. *Space and Polity* 18(2) 122–136. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562576.2013.879774

Taylor, S. (2019) The long shadows cast by the field: violence, trauma, and the ethnographic researcher. *Fennia* 197(2) 183–199. https://doi.org/10.11143/ fennia.84792

The University of British Columbia (2019) UBC Okanagan Tuition Fees. <*http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=14,339,1032,1272*>. 24.11.2019.

Thorshaug, R. Ø. & Brun, C. (2019) Temporal injustice and re-orientations in asylum reception centres in Norway: towards critical geographies of architecture in the institution. *Fennia* 197(2) 232–248. https://doi.org/10.11143/fennia.84758

Wahlström, M., Kocyba, P., De Vydt, M., de Moor, J., Wouters, R., Wennerhag, M., van Stekelenburg, J., Uba, K., Saunders, C., Rucht, D., Mikecz, D., Zamponi, L., Lorenzini, J., Kołczyńska, M., Haunss, S., Giugni, M., Gaidyte, T., Doherty, B. & Buzogany, A. (2019) *Protest for a Future: Composition, Mobilization and Motives of the Participants in Fridays For Future Climate Protests on 15 March, 2019 in 13 European Cities*. Keele University e-Prints, Keele, UK.

Yamagishi, T., Li, Y. & Takagishi, H. (2014) In search of Homo economicus. *Psychological Science* 25(9) 1699–1711. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797614538065

Young Academy of Norway (2016) Når usikkerheten rår – forskningsledelse og karriereveier for yngre forskere. <*https://akademietforyngreforskere.no/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Na%CC%8Ar-usikkerheten-ra%CC%8Ar-Et-oppspill-til-debatt-av-Akademiet-for-yngre-forskere-2016.pdf*>. 29.10.2019.