

CALL FOR PAPERS

PRIVATIZATION AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

February 17th and 18th, 2012

Emory University School of Law, Atlanta, Georgia

This workshop explores from a cross-cultural perspective how privatization impacts contemporary feminist and social justice approaches to public responsibility. Feminisms have long problematized divisions between the private and the political, partly in reaction to the unprecedented privatization of state responsibilities and public welfare over the past 30 years. Recent critical legal scholarship on vulnerability, state negligence, and resilience can complicate and deepen our understanding of the problems generated by privatization in the 21st century.

We invite papers that explore the effects of diverse forms of privatization from national and cross-national perspectives. Privatization can take the form of outsourcing public activities to private corporations, denationalizing state industries, or deregulating policy. It is evident when social service systems shift from defined benefits programs such as pensions to defined contribution plans such as IRAs. A common denominator is the shifting of social responsibility from public governmental institutions to individual families and privatized entities, such as charities and corporations. There is also a shift in what and who are regarded as the proper objects of state regulation and intervention; subsidizing private property interests or military intervention while withdrawing from broader public obligations such as education and healthcare.

Because vulnerability analysis emphasizes our interdependency within social institutions, it can illuminate how privatization relies upon often-invisible state subsidies to generate its free-market individualistic mythologies. Vulnerability highlights how neoliberalism commodifies social and bodily necessities (e.g. security, healthcare), channeling unprofitable social relationships, such as caretaking, away from state welfare programs and to the individualized realm of the family. In addition to carework, the military, penal system and police are also framed as societally preserving. But they are privatized differently within and across nations, generating distinct national discourses of public and private responsibility.

Disciplinary and interdisciplinary papers exploring the effects of these privatizations on institutions, individuals, society, welfare, education, healthcare, capitalism, government, military and law are welcomed. State regulation, particularly in the form of socioeconomic welfare, is frequently criticized for policing individual choices and perpetuating social and legal forms of violence. We are particularly interested in how a feminist or progressive analysis of state institutional involvement might mitigate these negative effects and the impact of privatization.

WORKSHOP CONTACT:

Martha Albertson Fineman, Emory University School of Law, mfineman@law.emory.edu
Ulrika Andersson, Lund University School of Law, Ulrika.Andersson@jur.lu.se
Titti Mattsson, Lund University School of Law, titti.mattsson@jur.lu.se
Katie E. Oliviero, FLT Postdoctoral Fellow, Emory School of Law, koliviero@emory.edu

SUBMISSIONS PROCEDURE:

Please email a paper proposal of 400-600 words by Thursday, December 8th to Emily Hlavaty, FLT Program Coordinator: emily.hlavaty@emory.edu

Decisions will be made prior to the holidays and working paper drafts to be duplicated and distributed prior to the Workshop will be due January 30th.

WORKSHOP DETAILS:

The Workshop begins Friday at 4PM in room 575 of Emory Law School, 1301 Clifton Road. It continues on Saturday from 9:30 AM to approximately 5PM.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- *How does the concept of “privacy” relate to privatization?
- *How do concepts, objects and systems of privatization vary across nations?
- *What is the power of privatization discourse? Weaknesses?
- *How are neoliberalism and neoconservatism, and concepts such as choice and efficiency, employed to justify privatization?
- *Which groups are benefited by privatization? Which are disadvantaged?
- *How does privatization shift collective and individual forms of risk and responsibility?
- *What are the gender implications of privatization? And how might they influence the organization and focus of social services?
- *What are the relationships between vulnerability, resilience and the privatization of social welfare?
- *How does privatization create experiences of vulnerability that vary across groups and institutions?
- *What language can be used to challenge privatization?
- *What institutional arrangements can replace or supplement privatization to improve individual & institutional resilience?