

*No 'sex' for us before research, thank you!*

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My presentation will broadly discuss the assumptions and implications of a methodological principle according to which 'sex' cannot function as a foundational category which should influence how the hypothesis are constructed or research directed. The underlining assumption is that 'sex' does not *really* have any predetermined meaning, but one (or more) that can only descriptively come out from research results. It *should* be an unpredicted result not a tested hypothesis. To make prior epistemological claims on the basis of a groundless category like 'sex' is to make groundless claims, since the content and relevance of 'sex' can be grounded only empirically. "It [sex] is something to go out and *investigate*, not something on which to found an epistemology, especially not a feminist one" (Hirschauer and Mol, 1995: 376).

I will focus on a particular case of ANT analyses made by Vicky Singleton (1993, 1995, 1996) of the Cervical Screening Programme in the UK and raise in light of this several questions. How are 'sex' and 'gender' positioned as objects of methodological agnosticism? In which way does this agnosticism produce a divide between theory and politics, between knowing and doing, between descriptive and normative, between ANT, radical constructivism (and so on) on one side and feminism on the other?