8th Biennial International Interdisciplinary conference, 24th – 26th June, 2014  
Keele University, UK

Call for abstracts

Crafting the Graft: women’s agency in the workplace

Stream Convenors:
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This stream focuses on women’s experiences, sense of empowerment and collectiveness at work. This focus responds in part to the difficult conditions that both transcend and pertain to nation states in which many work organisations have operated, and more particularly the global financial crisis since 2008, political conservatism, and associated austerity measures and work organisation developments. It recognizes that, in such circumstances, women’s access to and advancement in the workplace has not improved in a linear fashion, but rather, has been slow, unspectacular, and in some cases, even regressed (e.g. New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2012, 2010; Cooper and Parker, 2012; Donnelly and Proctor-Thomson, 2012). These shifts are also intricately intertwined with women’s circumstances and gender relations in the union/collective bargaining, domestic, public and other spheres of endeavour in all too often marginalized work and workplaces (e.g. Healy, Hansen, Ledwith 2006; Parker, Nemani, Arrowsmith and Douglas, 2011; Cooper and Baird, 2009).

The stream concentrates on the character and scope of initiatives undertaken by women, their workplaces and other parties to improve women’s workplace situation in recent times. More particularly, it will seek to examine the extent to which women themselves, both collectively and individually, feel that they are the architects or agents of their own workplace situation, and what experiences they draw upon to reach this conclusion. At the macro-level, the stream would seek to highlight key synergies and differences between women’s experiences and perceived level of empowerment at work across different nation states, given particular institutional, regulatory and political arrangements (e.g. see Connolly, Rooney and Whitehouse, 2012; Kirton and Greene, 2011). At other levels of analysis, it will investigate how women articulate their own agency in terms of their workplace progress and influence given their personal and immediate environmental and gender dynamics e.g. on women’s work-life balance arrangements (see Gregory and Milner, 2009; Ravenswood and Markey, 2011), their intersectional identities (e.g. as young ethnic women); their industry/sectoral and occupational location in the workplace) and gendered and ethnic inequality regimes in the workplace (Acker, 2006).

As well as emphasizing multiple levels of analysis, we welcome papers involving quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodological approaches, and cross-disciplinary and theoretical papers and presentations. We particularly welcome research that draws attention to the nexus between women’s characteristics, the workplace and their wider circumstances. Papers on the following themes are encouraged:

• **women and representation of ‘intersectional’ interests** (representation of women’s diversity/intersectional interests, inclusivity of sub-groups of women and/or minority groups);
• women in unorganised workplaces and NGOs (‘voice’, processes, and outcomes at work in unorganized workplaces, jobs and industries; and the role of NGOs in representing and advocating for women and women’s workplace experiences with, and instead of, unions);

• collective regulation and women’s working conditions and pay (e.g. minimum standards, awards and industry agreements, national systems);

• political economy and women and work (e.g. political and electoral change, and its workplace impact for women);

• women and unions, and women in unions (women in/and union leadership, women and union policies, roles and structures, women’s self-organising, women and union organizing, women’s ‘voice’ in unions);

• problems and possibilities in the construction of a women worker’s collective in small workplaces, informal work, and when working in private homes and/or for agencies

• emerging developments in work and employment for women (e.g. increased casualization, non-standard and precarious work (e.g. the precariat class – Standing, 2011), the use of IT in the workplace).

Abstracts of approximately 500 words (ONE page, Word document NOT PDF, single spaced, excluding references, no header, footers or track changes) are invited by 1st November 2013 with decisions on acceptance to be made by stream leaders within one month. All abstracts will be peer reviewed. New and young scholars with ‘work in progress’ papers are welcomed. Papers can be theoretical or theoretically informed empirical work. In the case of co-authored papers, ONE person should be identified as the corresponding author. Note that due to restrictions of space, multiple submissions by the same author will not be timetabled. Abstracts should be emailed to: julie.douglas@aut.ac.nz. Abstracts should include FULL contact details, including your name, department, institutional affiliation, mailing address, and e-mail address. State the title of the stream to which you are submitting your abstract. Note that no funding, fee waiver, travel or other bursaries are offered for attendance at GWO2014.

References


