



Gender, Work & Organization Conference

28-30 June 2023 | Stellenbosch | South Africa

GENDER, WORK & ORGANIZATION



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Gender, Work and Organization

13th International Interdisciplinary Conference

28-30 June 2023, Stellenbosch, South Africa

Conference theme

Marginalized gender identities - how can intellectual activism transform work and organization?

(Read more about the conference theme on the conference website).

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS/PAPER SUBMISSIONS

STREAM TITLE:

Gender and Higher Education management in times of crisis

STREAM LEADERS:

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In recent decades, higher education institutions (HEIs) across the globe have faced comprehensive change in the context of neoliberal reforms, which has been critically analysed especially from a feminist point of view (Morley, 2015; Morley & Crossouard, 2016). Additional and substantial challenges caused by the global financial crisis, the climate crisis or the COVID-19 pandemic have gendered effects (Alon et al., 2020; Power, 2020). Hence, HEIs are confronted with, and are likely to continue to be confronted with, multiple crises. We define crisis as “a difficult situation that threatens relevant organizational goals and typically calls for a quick response” (Kulich et al., 2021, p. 2). Taking a broad perspective, we might conceive of a crisis as more than a challenge that hinders established processes but as something greater in that it disrupts and obstructs progress and practice in the longer term. Looking at crises through a gendered lens, we argue, is key.

We invite papers that advance empirical evidence and theoretical debates on gendered experiences - especially in higher education (HE) management - working in HE contexts through times of crisis. We adopt a broad and inclusive definition of the term ‘crisis’, which includes the ways in which the sector or HEIs themselves are in crisis or the ways that HEIs deal with crises arising from outside the academy. Analyses of crises that span the macro, meso and micro levels are welcome. Empirical cases that might be considered include crises at the societal level (global financial crisis, austerity, pandemic, migration, terrorism and wars), institutional level (financial crisis, mergers and union disputes), department level (#metoo, conflicts and disagreements) and individual level (discrimination, exclusion and violence), though this is not an exhaustive list of examples that might be explored in this stream.

Why are we interested in crises?

Lack of women in HE leadership is a global phenomenon (Baker, 2021). Research on women and minorities in HE has shown occupational segregation and underrepresentation of women at the most senior levels in the sector. Many reasons for this have been advanced; however, it is argued that structural aspects are key in understanding the lack of women in senior positions in HE (Shepherd, 2017). Furthermore, not much is known about women leaders at times of crisis in HE nor the precise asymmetries and challenges for all women in HE (Baker, 2021). The interest in crisis also stems from the ways that such events illuminate how leadership and management in HE is performed and practised in ways that exacerbate rather than undermine gender inequalities. Experiences of those with caring responsibilities during the pandemic, for example, provide evidence of the entrenchment of gender inequalities during times of crisis.

Problematising crises in HEIs also relates to gender stereotypes and the way that men and women are stereotypically perceived to bring different strengths to leadership and management roles (Kulich et al., 2021; see also Bird et al., 2004; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Ryan et al., 2011). This is further complicated by the ways that ‘feminine components’ of leadership can be valued more while gender-based challenges remain and are even exacerbated by crisis conditions. We are interested in exploring the ways that crises play out and the extent to which they undermine, ratify or reconfigure existing gender relations in society and at work.

What kinds of theory might be drawn on?

There are a range of theoretical frameworks, concepts and models that might be appropriate to draw on to explore this topic, for example leadership styles (Bonebright et al., 2012), organisational learning and behavioural economics, globalisation and mobility, professional identities, emotion sociology and affect theory, risk and crisis, social movement theory, neoliberalism, HE as field and theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1984; Gander, 2018), the COVID-19 crisis as a career shock (Akkermans et al., 2020) and precarious careers. There are also specifically feminist concepts, such as feminist institutionalism and gender identities (Butler, 1990; 1993), intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), the glass cliff theory (Peterson, 2016), gendered organisations (Acker, 1990; see also Stainback et al., 2016) and stealth power (O’Connor et al., 2019). These examples, and other options not mentioned here, point to a

wealth of theoretical frameworks that papers in the stream might use or develop as part of an in-depth consideration of the context of crises in HE.

Broad questions to be explored include the following (list not exhaustive):

- Are the origins and consequences of crises in HE gendered?
- Is crisis management in HE gendered?
- How do crises impact on gendered practices in HE?
- How is ideal HE management in crises defined?
- How do policy and austerity discourse remake and constitute the affective orders of gender? (See Hey, 2011.)
- What happens with gender, diversity and equality policy regimes during crises in HEIs?

These questions are posed to inspire contributions from a range of participants and will act as starting points for in-depth discussion of research on gender in HE in the context of crisis. We invite papers that consider these issues in relation to all staff groups in HE (including academics and professional, technical and support staff) and from all regions and contexts in which HE operates.

For stream enquiries, please contact Sarah Barnard: S.H.Barnard@lboro.ac.uk.

Abstracts of approximately 500 words should be submitted directly to the GWO2023 conference website in a ONE-page (A4-size, single-spaced, excluding references, with no headers, footers or track changes) Word document, NOT PDF. Abstracts are invited by the end of day 7 November 2022 (Central Africa Time - CAT), with decisions on acceptance to be made by stream leaders by December 2022. Prospective contributions will be independently refereed. Abstracts should include full contact details, including your name, institutional affiliation, mailing address and e-mail address. We are hoping to circulate abstracts prior to the 2023 GWO conference to those attending the conference.

Subject to full peer review, this stream may select suitable full papers for a special issue of the *Gender, Work and Organization* journal post the conference. If your abstract is accepted for this stream, you are encouraged to submit a full paper (5 000 to 7 000 words excluding references) by 28 February 2023, which may be considered for such a GWO journal special edition.

More information about the conference can be found at:

https://www.usb.ac.za/usb_events/gender-work-organization/

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More information about the *Gender, Work and Organization* journal can be found here:

Gender, Work and Organization is a scholarly journal published by Wiley and edited by Alison Pullen and Banu Ozkazanc-Pan. The journal has an Impact Factor of 5.428 (2021) ISI Journal Citation Reports and a ranking of 2/44 (Women's Studies); 95/226 (Management).

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