



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:

Intersectional equality in academia: Voice and silence

STREAM LEADERS:

Kurt April, University of Cape Town, South Africa
Shlomit Aharoni Lir, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel
Mustafa Ozbilgin, Brunel University London, UK

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

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Academia has evolved into a battleground for social justice on gender, ethnicity, class, disability and sexual orientation equality. In fact, modest gains of intersectional equality and demands for social justice are targeted and dismissed as woke turn in academia, as if being woke, i.e. demanding social justice, is not what academics should do. While there is recognition of the need for ending inequalities in academia, structural and systemic forms of inequality and resistance to reform prove hard to shift. In this stream, we explore how different forms of privilege and disadvantage manifest as voice and silence behaviours in academia.

Through the perspective of silence and voice, it is possible to expand the calls of Haraway (2006) and Cixous (2009) to women to write themselves into history and into the world that marked them as others, into additional marginalized groups. However, the question remains: how much of this is possible within the academic world?

Bowen and Blackmon (2003) highlight what is known as “the spirals of silence: (a) pressures that the threat of isolation and corresponding fear of isolation exert to keep people, particularly for members of invisible minorities such as gay and lesbian employees, from being open and honest about their opinions, particularly opinions that were previously ignored or caused conflict; and (b) the inability to fully express one’s personal identity within the workgroup because of a negative climate of opinion towards a particular aspect of one’s identity. The authors further claim that revealing a potentially disruptive identity might impair social cohesion: concealing it, however, can inhibit social exchange and task exchange and reduce self-efficacy, leading to organizational silence” (p. 1393).

We are interested in probing into questions regarding voice and silence as metaphors for the ability of social movements and institutional actors of equality to stand up for their rights, promote diversity, equality, and inclusion (Ozbilgin and Erbil 2021), while looking into the silencing mechanisms that instill the status quo within the academic world (Bordo, 2004).

Across multiple stakeholders of academia, there is emergence of intersectional solidarity between gender, ethnic, sexual orientation, and class inequalities. However, the rise of intersectional tensions where women, minority ethnic individuals, LGBT+ individuals, individuals with disabilities, and working-class individuals are pitted against each other and feel left behind by the current structures of inequality and struggles for equality (Bell et al., 2022). Some research identifies tensions, and pecking orders among equality struggles.

Current structures of equality are under considerable threat from both populist backlash (Faludi, 1991) and new tensions arising within and outside feminist, anti-racist, and LGBT+ activism that shape and sustain these equality structures (DeVault, 1999). This is also evident in knowledge structures that are seemingly open to all (Aharoni Lir, 2020). In these circumstances, and in view of the highly hierarchical structures of the academic world, the questions regarding voice, silence, and silencing become salient. Often ‘champions’ for alienated and marginalized individuals are needed, if the voicing of concerns is continuously falling on deaf personal- and organizational ears - their inside knowledge, understanding, concern and advocacy are needed (April, Dharani & April, 2023 forthcoming).

To what extent can we consider academic pursuit to be a liberating force, enhancing the voices of women, LGBT+, and ethnic minorities, and to what extent is it a place where self-silencing occurs in the face of hegemonic voices in power and as a result of not wanting to deviate from what is considered acceptable and “normal” (Bell et al., 2011).

We invite exploration of these tensions, competing and contested demands for equality, diversity, and inclusion in academia and in organizations, movements, and venues related to academic life.

Questions that might be addressed by papers in this stream include:

- What are the setbacks in making the academic world inclusive and diverse?
- What are the means of promoting the voices of women and marginalized groups within the academic world that work outside it, through civic movements, online efforts, governmental mechanisms, etc., and how do they promote change?
- Academia in numbers - a review of reports on women and minority groups in academic life, such as She-figures.
- How and in which way do intersectional power systems influence the participation of women and marginalized groups in positions of power within academia?
- Which covert phenomena exist that contribute to the ongoing power relations within the academic world staying the same?
- A question of canon - women, LGBTQ+ and marginalized groups within the curriculum?
- The effect of gendered languages on silencing and un-silencing within the academic world.
- Exploring the use of silencing and voicing strategies within intellectual activism, on both marginalized and dominant positioning.
- The role of champions for marginalized and silenced perspectives and lived experiences.

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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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