



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:

The impact of algorithmic decision making on marginalized gender identities

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The turn to algorithmic decision making in people management (PM) operations, processes and practices (Cheng & Hackett, 2019) has been the subject of an emergent body of research within work and organisation studies. At times articulated through arguments surrounding a lack of regulatory measures (Ajunwa & Green, 2019) or ‘good’ employment data (Citron & Pasquale, 2014), what connects this research is the rise of a problematic yet powerful discourse on the blind faith placed in the use of algorithms in PM. Critical research has considered the implications of algorithmic decision making for the various aspects of PM including employee control, surveillance, ethics and discrimination (Ajunwa, 2020; Beer, 2017; Parry, Cohen, & Bhattacharya, 2016; Mittelstadt, Allo, Taddeo, Wachter, & Floridi, 2016). Research also draws attention to how human biases can be inscribed into the code of the PM algorithms embedding and maintaining inequalities against marginalised gender identities while assuming a veneer of objectivity (Raghavan, Barocas, Kleinberg, & Levy, 2020; Vassilopoulou et al., 2021). The case of algorithmic pre-employment assessment illustrates vividly such inscription. Algorithms built on historical employment data, for example where mostly non-marginalised individuals hold management and leadership positions, may lead recruiters to the conclusion that individuals with marginalised gender identities do not seek such positions and therefore may create inbuilt bias against these groups while reinforcing and reproducing biased recruitment job posts for managerial roles through social media. In such circumstances, the original biases against marginalised identities will be reified due to the biased data that ‘trained’ the recruitment algorithm (Devlin, 2017).

Evolving from this body of work, critical scholars have called for additional theorising of the ramifications of algorithmic decision making in organisations (Lindebaum, Vessa, & Den Hond, 2019) exploring especially the processes through which PM algorithms may mask inequality and discrimination against marginalised gender identities, replicating social and organisational inequalities and in some instances even amplifying human bias (Hmoud & Laszlo, 2019). The overall purpose, therefore, of this stream is to advance knowledge about the impact of algorithmic decision making on marginalised gender identities in organisations. In particular, the first aim of the stream is to invite research studies that develop new theoretical and empirical insights on how algorithmic decision making affects fundamental employment results, such as employment opportunities and wages, and pathways for career development and promotions, for individuals with marginalised gender identities.

Moreover, the rapid change of organisational forms and boundaries demands an in-depth exploration of the interrelationship between algorithmic decision making and the current arrangements of employee mobility, the rise of new business models, such as platform companies, that characterise the gig economy (Vallas & Schor, 2020), as well as new management models whereby algorithms deliver a wide range of managerial tasks. It is such processes, systems and tasks that have provoked a controversy around the appropriate regulation of algorithmic decision making, coordination and control (Healy & Pekarek, 2020). The second aim of this stream is, therefore, to explore how such technological developments in algorithmic decision making create new forms of social and economic inequality and exclusion for individuals with marginalised gender identities. Such an exploration not only advances organisational and management theory and research, enriching insights into gender work and organisations, but it also has practical implications for employees, managers, organisations, communities and society as a whole.

Finally, even less is known about the impact of algorithmic decision making and algorithmic biases on employees’ and relevant stakeholders’ cognitions, emotions and behaviours. An urgent question pertains to whether (or not) and how discrimination, inequality and disadvantage prompt employee mobilisation, solidarity, advocacy and resistance as the explosive rise of the platform economy and algorithmic management takes worker exploitation and control to new levels (Healy, Nicholson, & Pekarek, 2017). The third aim of this stream then is to explore and understand the consequences and impact of algorithmic decision making for employee sentiments and whether (or not) and how these sentiments affect how inequality is challenged.

An indicative but not exhaustive list of questions that could be addressed by papers in this stream includes the following:

- What are the (un)intended consequences of algorithmic decision making, especially as it advantages certain individuals or social identity groups while restricting opportunities and excluding individuals with marginalised gender identities inside and outside organisations?
- How does algorithmic decision making in recruitment and selection, career development, performance management and reward systems, training and development, among other organisational processes, affect employees' careers and lived experiences in the workplace, especially those with marginalised gender identities?
- Furthermore, how are such processes shaped by algorithmic decision making, resulting in different outcomes for different groups of workers with a negative impact on already marginalised groups of workers?
- How do emergent technologies, such as machine learning, predictive and prescriptive algorithms, online platforms, and so forth influence candidate screening and hiring, the allocation of tasks and jobs to employees, and therefore individual outcomes at work and especially for those with marginalised gender identities?
- How do new organisational forms, such as online platforms and network-based firms, that are based on emergent artificial intelligence technologies have an impact on the distribution of power in organisations and labour markets, shaping inequality in the workplace?
- How do organisations and decision makers address and adjust to algorithmic decision making and the future of work? How do algorithms affect decision makers and their behaviour in organisations, especially in the context of PM decision making?
- How do the myths associated with globalisation, meritocracy and/or efficiency interplay with algorithmic decision making, define work practices and deepen systemic inequalities for individuals with marginalised gender identities in organisations?
- How does algorithmic decision making change or reshape existing norms and institutions? How does this affect individuals with marginalised gender identities?
- How is the emergence of algorithmic decision making experienced by individuals with marginalised gender identities? How does algorithmic bias demonstrate itself in the day-to-day and mundane employee experiences at work, and how does it affect individuals' life outside work? How do individuals with marginalised gender identities navigate algorithmic decision making?
- How are identities rooted in and outside of the workplace activated to perpetuate or disrupt algorithmic biases in organisations through, for instance, solidarity, advocacy and resistance?
- What strategies have proved successful in disrupting algorithmic biases in organisations? How does algorithmic decision making help to reach an inclusive society? How can we regulate algorithmic decision making?

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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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