



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:

Vibrant Matter for un-doing marginalization

STREAM LEADERS:

Lynne Baxter, University of York, UK
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GWO 2023



GWO2023-Conference

Thinking through privilege and marginalization,
facing global inequalities and injustices produced anew

Who is ‘this’ world organized and organizing for,
and what contributes to its production?

Un-doing the done through tinkering, knitting and poetic plays,
placing power in ideas that materialize differently

With this poem and stream, we seek to engage with the organizers’ call for centralizing the conditions of marginalization with an emphasis on materiality, and the vibrancy of matter (Bennett, 2010). We create a space that invites critical scholars and activists to think with us about how matter comes to matter in the marginalizing of ‘others’ as well as how it may co-generate affirmative values for radical transformation (Braidotti, 2016) through advocacy and activism.



Embracing the productive potential of materiality can allow for a greater understanding of how unequal conditions and relations materialize in situated ways, which is relevant for understanding how marginalization is ‘done’ (and can be ‘un-done’) locally, globally and across identities and relations.

“To create meaningful space for unheard voices that speak of embodied experiences that matter, we need to challenge standardized norms of knowledge production in their different dimensions”

(Jammulamadaka et al., 2021 in Mandalaki, et al., 2022)

Bennett herself poses a ‘guiding question: How would political responses to public problems change were we to take seriously the vitality of non-human bodies? By ‘vitality’ I mean the capacity of things - edibles, commodities, storms, metals - not only to impede or block the will and design of humans but also to act a quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own (2010: viii).

Feminist materialist approaches (Calás and Smircich, forthcoming) and affective, embodied methodologies and forms of intra-activity (Gherardi, 2019; Jääskeläinen and Helin, 2021) can promote novel, experimental and creative forms of engaging with materiality (van Eck and van Amsterdam, 2021; van Eck et al., 2021) in research on activism by further foregrounding its material, vibrant, and affective becoming (e.g., Baxter, 2021; Vachhani and Pullen, 2019).

We think the responses that embrace differing materialities offer powerful ways to counter gendered marginalization, through the intensities of vibrant non-human matter and the possibilities that more-than-humanity affords (Haraway, 2003).

By focusing on the unfolding entanglements between bodies, discourses, and materialities - in contrast to, for instance, solely the purpose/organization of an activism movement - we seek to provide space for researchers to explore how activism and activist engagements can be nurtured, sustained, sparked and/or disrupted to further combat local and global inequalities and processes of marginalization.

For this stream we focus upon four areas

- (1) craftwork for affective bonding
- (2) digital materialities
- (3) affective methodologies, and
- (4) embodied intra-activities with Others (humans, more-than-humans, non-humans)

(1) Craftwork for affective bonding

Craftwork stands as a mesh of vibrant materialities that can be an accessible way of building affective solidarity to resist oppression or centre marginalized viewpoints through entanglements of human and non-human materialities (Baxter, 2021; May, 2020). Minahan and Cox (2007) describe how crafting is the preserve of the underclass yet used when women come together to voice political concerns over the centuries. May (2020) traces the Pussyhat Protest, showing how a vibrant texture of human and non-human materialities is created to resist gendered oppression. Through crafts it is possible to respect intersectional subjectivities (Baxter, 2021), something that failing to do has ruptured feminist activist movements in the past (Hemmings, 2012). This stream investigates craft advocacy techniques. The requirement and expectation for advocacy are important to research, academic, and, increasingly, teaching practises. Effective advocacy activities that draw attention to professional practice and improve well-being depend on techniques that convey persuasive messaging. Access to and participation in crafting is a quasi approach for capturing meaningful actions that can be utilised to advocate for each other in professional settings. Craftivism makes use of digital technologies to bond and share information, which brings us to our next area of vibrancy.

(2) Digital materiality

We would like to explore 'digital materiality' conceived as an emergent process that generates empathetic encounters (Gherardi and Cozza, forthcoming) between humans and other than humans. Digital materialities do not correspond to an end product or finished object (Pink et al. 2017) but rather to the entanglements of objects (in particular digital technologies), experiences, routines and feelings. Digital materialities may contribute to (feminist) activism and advocacy to contrast inequalities by enabling experiences other than marginalizing by turning technological affordances into opportunities for encounters, critical thinking, collaborative organizing, and creative interventions.

(3) Affective Methodologies

Some of the most creative interventions lie in affective methodologies, that help us discuss some of the ways that poetry, artwork, moving images, or barely discernible feelings help uncover meaning. For example, Blackman (2007) explores the ethics of experimentation when discussing queer embodied hauntologies. "Affective methods can further enable us to reverse the tendency to reduce difference into sameness and, instead, allow us to account for the multiple and ambiguous, and how this is expressed through various productive assemblages (Wickström, 2021)". Affective methods offer many

possibilities for recentring the marginalized as well as the orders that contribute to sustaining unequal power dynamics.

(4) Embodied intra-activities

This leads to our final area - that of embodied intra-activities with Others (humans, more-than-humans, non-humans). The stream should be a welcoming space where intra-actions between the differing materialities unfold in aleatory ways, as so beautifully illustrated by Meriläinen et al. (2021: 80) in their exploration of the embodied unfolding of a feminist academic community in a Finnish Hurjat, or wild and rebellious retreat. The power of considering our embodied relations with more than human materialities like rocks (Valtonen and Pullen, 2020) uncover new ways of thinking about care and ethics and how to live and become together in more-than-human worlds.

In summary our 4 guiding themes are:

- Craftwork for making cultures & vibrant affective solidarity
- Digital materialities generating opportunities
- Affective methodologies, material epistemologies, multiple ontologies and ways of ‘doing’ and undoing differently
- Embodied intra-activities with human, more-than-human and non-human materialities

With that said, we do not wish to place theoretical, methodological or expressive restrictions on possible submissions and encourage playful, crafty, disruptive and poetic explorations in and of all+ stages and dimensions.

Weave together flows and see what comes out? Let your ideas vibrate and intra-act (Barad, 2007) with one another!



We are eagerly awaiting your submissions and are happy to discuss any ideas or questions further.

Original Artwork

Ana Paula Lafaire

Craftwork

Lynne Baxter - Pattern by Patricia Roberts, Yarn by Woolly Bear Knits

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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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