

Professor Geraldine Healy, Queen Mary University of London, UK

‘Women and union leadership - a UK/ US comparative study’

Geraldine Healy will talk about aspects of her research on women and union leadership, a comparative study on women union leaders in the UK and the USA and outline the innovative comparative methods used in the study. In particular she draws from her book with Gill Kirton, on *Gender and Union Leadership* (Routledge, 2013) plus aspects from articles on the same project published in *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, *Human Relations* and *Work Employment and Society*:

Healy, G. & G. Kirton (2013) The early mobilisation of women trade union leaders – a comparative perspective. *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 10.1111/j.1467-8543.2012.00902.x

Kirton, G. & **G. Healy** (2012) Lift as you rise: union women's leadership. *Human Relations*, 65(8):979-99. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8543.2012.00902.x

Kirton, G. & **G. Healy** (2012) Commitment and collective identity of long-term union participation: The case of women union leaders in the UK and USA *Work Employment and Society*, doi;10.1177/0950017012460304.

Dr Jen de Vries, University of Melbourne

“Some things change, some stay the same”: Gender change processes in a STEM faculty’

Jen de Vries uses Joan Acker's four gendering processes (personal, interpersonal, cultural and structural) to re-examine recently completed research exploring the position of academic women, in a STEM Faculty within a research-intensive university. Using Acker's framework throws new light on the multiplicity of processes contributing to gender equality inertia. Rather than examine women's careers as processes of cumulative disadvantage, this approach provides a more systemic overview and prompts different insights into potential interventions to create change. The role of local research and what it can contribute more broadly to understanding gendering practices in the workplace is examined.

Jen's research report *Optimising Faculty Performance: Maximising the potential of academic women* is available at <http://www.hr.uwa.edu.au/equity/?a=2271554>

Further details of Jen's work and publications are available at www.jendevries.com.

Dr Zsuzsa Banhalmi-Zakar, Griffith University; and mother of three

“Maybe baby? An inquiry into why women have contradicting experiences when taking maternity leave and subsequently when they return to work in Australian academia?”

In this presentation I will first attempt to provide an overview of the fundamental features of maternity (including return to work) policies in general (as per Fair Work Act provisions) and academia (NTEU and enterprise bargaining arrangement) with a case study of Griffith University policies. The questions driving my inquiry are i) do maternity leave and return-to-work policies favour some women more than others and if so, why? ii) what is the role of the supervisor in the different experiences women have? iii) what is the role of union and the ‘executive’ in enforcing equity measures? Experience suggests that the attitude (support) of the immediate supervisor influences how women are treated. As a ‘newcomer’ to research in the field of ‘gender in the workplace’, I am particularly interested in a discussion around, but not limited to i) how to design and conduct a strong study in this area (qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods) ii) the potential value (or not) of research focusing on the field of ‘planning’ within the Sciences, iii) ethical issues that may be encountered in setting up the study.

Carolina Bouten Pinto, PhD candidate, Griffith University

‘The value of reflexivity in managing diversity practice’

This paper is based on a post-hoc qualitative reflexive study of a managing diversity project undertaken by the author. The study contributes to the managing diversity field by suggesting that reflexive practice can add significant value to managing diversity processes in organisations. The study proposes that (a) a reflexive stance challenges limited perspectives of organisational diversity as contained within existing managing diversity objectives; and, (b) that reflexive practice enables employee perspectives to be included in more meaningful and significant ways in managing diversity processes. The study demonstrates that reflexivity enables managers and employees to more critically examine the limited ways in which differences are apprehended and that this then leads to more in touch and embodied approaches to diversity change to emerge that are embedded within everyday practice. This in turn enables more mutually beneficial culture of dealing and action research/learning like processes to emerge and through participation and dialogue, localised, independent and shared sense-making around organisational diversity objectives is facilitated. Thus these more meaningful localised approaches position managing diversity as an embodied, inter-subjective and in-the-moment, practice based activity. In addition, the narrative accounts emerging from such embedded activities provide leadership and allow for similar fruitful processes to occur within the wider organisation. As such, through reflexive practice more innovative mutualist organisation-wide approaches to managing diversity, organised through and supported by stories, can emerge.

Karen Struthers, PhD candidate, Griffith University

‘Trade jobs - the best man for the job may well be a woman’

"I'm the only girl. The boys definitely under estimated me...until we started building...the teacher came up to me and said that's better than my third year apprentice...one of the guys was really dirty on me" (secondary student, research participant).

Girls and boys need to see that they can be free to choose from the full range of careers - not the gendered range that has been cultivated in books, media screens, toys and magazines. My research affirmed that entrenched gender stereotypes continue to be a major barrier limiting female take up of the male dominated trades. When asked, do girls want to do the male dominated trades in construction, auto, mining and energy, female students commonly said that more girls would do the trades:

- If they knew more about them.
- If they weren't seen as jobs for boys or for students who can't do academic.
- If they didn't cop flak and feel intimidated.

Educators and industry personnel reported that while effort is made to be "non-gendered" at schools in offering manual trade courses to female students, very low female enrolment was the norm across schools in this research. Adult participants stated that much more needs to be done to overcome gender stereotypes and the intimidation that is commonly felt by girls in relation to male dominated trades.

The proportion of females "on the tools" in the manual trades averages around 5% or less. This has significant economic impacts for women and the wider economy. The male dominated trades pay 20% more on average than the female dominated vocations of hairdressing and child care and they experience significant skills shortages. Young women who do not pursue the University path are at risk of a low wage return on their qualifications in female dominated, highly casualised jobs. To promote all careers to both genders, including manual trades, it is apparent that career advice in schools and beyond must be more gender aware - that is, better supported to challenge the limitations of gender stereotypes on career paths. This research examines approaches to career development and industry policy, that aim to 'chip away' at the barriers that entrench gender segregation in trade careers.

Mahan Poorhosseinzadeh, PhD candidate, Griffith University

'Women in senior positions in Australia: rigidity and stasis to flexibility and change'

Women have made advances in both academic fields (education) and employment in recent decades, but they have not moved up the career ladder with the same ease and speed as their male counterparts (Broadbridge & Hearn, 2008; Burnett, 2010; Calás, Smircich, & Bourne, 2009; Davidson & Burke, 2011; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Ely & Meyerson, 2000) and they remained underrepresented in senior positions in almost all industries worldwide (Cook & Glass, 2014; Kottke & Pelletier, 2013). An international comparison shows that Australia

has fallen behind other countries with the same corporate governance in terms of the number of female executives (WGEA, 2012). Compared with Australia (9.2%), a greater proportion of executive officers in United State (14.6%), Canada (18.1%) and South Africa (21.4%) are women (Catalyst, 2014).

This study investigates the gendering of selected organisations and the nature of management positions that reinforces the gender inequality in senior positions. Therefore, this study uses two frames of analysis. The first framework is based on the Acker and her concept of the “Disembodied Worker” or “Ideal Worker” to understand the gendering process in selected Australian organisations. The “Ideal Worker” is defined as an unencumbered worker who is totally dedicated to work and has no responsibilities for family care (Acker, 1990, 2006a, 2006b, 2012). The characteristics of the ideal worker are abstract and neutral in organisational texts, but some authors have suggested that it resembles male rather than female workers (Acker, 1990; Brink & Stobbe, 2014; Smith, 1987). Organisations have implemented various strategies to overcome and change the subtle forms of gendering processes, however, these processes have remained gendered and continued to persist as the natural and taken-for-granted elements of everyday organisational life (Benschop, Mills, Mills, & Tienari, 2012). The second framework is based on the masculinity aspect of senior management positions, which always generates challenges for women who desire such positions. Women who assume senior positions need to exhibit masculinity in order to be accepted (Broadbridge & Hearn, 2008; Charles, 2014; Collinson & Hearn, 1996; Hearn, 1998, 2004; Deborah Kerfoot & Knights, 1996; Wajcman, 1999). Despite enormous efforts to decrease the masculinity of leadership, the concept retains a masculine concept (Broadbridge & Hearn, 2008; Collinson & Hearn, 1996; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Hearn, 1998; D. Kerfoot & Knights, 1993; Deborah Kerfoot & Knights, 1996; Knights & Clarke, 2014; Koenig, Mitchell, Eagly, & Ristikari, 2011). While organisations are defined as gender-neutral, the authority structure is dominated by image of the manager as masculine (Broadbridge & Hearn, 2008; Collinson & Hearn, 1996; Kanter, 1976; Knights & Tullberg, 2012; Lewis & Simpson, 2012). The image of ideal managers reproduces the masculine norm of organisations that is valued highly and regarded as the natural norm of organisations (Brink & Stobbe, 2014).

The study uses a qualitative approach with a social constructivist worldview grounded in a critical social philosophy and feminist lens, analysing gender relations in the organisations and relies on document analysis and interviews with HR and senior managers both women and men in selected organisations in Australia.

Ainslie Meicklejohn-Griffiths, PhD candidate, School of Humanities

‘One in a hundred years’

This thesis will investigate the under-representation of women in the Queensland Parliament with the use of qualitative and quantitative data. The data will then be further analysed and

scrutinised within the terms of culture and the reproduction of work place cultures as found within the theories of Joan Acker and cultural ideas of structure as found within the work of Pierre Bourdieu. This thesis will draw on the key notions found in *The Australian Parliament: A Gendered Organisation* by Barbra Pini and Mary Crawford and *Gender and the Australian Parliament* by Mary Crawford that Acker’s work on gendered organisations can be used to explain the under-representation of women in parliament. By employing a Bourdieusian viewpoint it is anticipated the cultural reproduction found in the Queensland Parliament will become evident and indicate the ways in which gender plays a pivotal role in shaping the democratic outcomes of the Queensland Parliament. The qualitative data will indicate the under-representation of women in the Queensland parliament can be framed around theories of gender as outlined by Joan Acker and symbolic violence and capital as outlined by Pierre Bourdieu. Therefore the research will expand on these existing concepts and create an additional concept: gender capital.