11TH CRITICAL MANAGEMENT STUDIES CONFERENCE

Open University Milton Keynes, UK

June 27-29, 2019

**Stream: Reproductive life stages and intersections with work/organizations**

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

**Stream Description**

This stream seeks to explore and advance insights into how reproductive lives intersect with and relate to the experiences, demands and practices of work and organizations in the 21st century. In so doing, we invite scholars to engage with the challenges and possibilities of considering reproductive life stages as intimately related to our understanding of organizations, organizing processes, and capitalist processes more broadly.

A range of literature already provides the theoretical contours through which reproduction coalesces with labour. Silvia Federici (2004), for example, has argued that capitalism not only separates workers from the means of production, but also from the means of their reproduction. Elsewhere, Catherine Rottenberg (2017) has shown how neoliberal capitalism can demand that women foreclose partnering and reproducing during the life stage which historically has most easily supported pregnancy and birth, for the majority. Instead, women can increasingly be beholden to complex and uncertain reproductive medical procedures, such as egg freezing as an organizational benefit (Rottenberg, 2017). Such arguments demonstrate how the workplace lies at the intersection between the individual and the broader political economy, and is thus a prime site in which personal needs conflict with capitalist profit imperatives and with concomitant organizational pressures (e.g. Gottfried, 2013). This stream is concerned with exploring how such tensions manifest in working and organizational life in the broad context of reproduction, which we take to include menstruation, sexuality, pregnancy, birth, lactation, and menopause, and issues affecting men directly, such as conceptualisations of fatherhood at work, and ideas around being ever sexual, fertile/potent, and reproductive (e.g. Collinson & Hearn, 2000; Ladge, Humberd, Baskerville Watkins, & Harrington, 2015). In short: what happens when reproductive life stage experiences, needs and expectations meet jobs, careers and organizations?

Such concerns have been correspondingly researched in management and organization studies (MOS). Specifically, research into embodiment has shown how such matters have historically been marginalized and stigmatized, largely borne by women and through women’s bodies. The body turn of the 1990s saw increased attention given to sex at work (e.g. Brewis & Linstead, 2007), to the sensual at work (e.g. Riach & Warren, 2015), and to pregnancy at work (e.g. Yarwood, 2013). Recently, research on menopause at work has begun to highlight the difficulties women face in midlife (Jack *et al*, 2014, 2016; Brewis *et al*, 2017). In the growing field of menstrual research, Roberts *et al* (2002), for example, showed how women at work are judged to be less likeable and less competent if other workers find out that they are menstruating, and Sayers and Jones (2015, 2016) have reported on perceptions of menstrual leave in social media. In addition, the rise in attention to transgender, queer and nonbinary experience brings hitherto ignored issues to bear in these contexts (Brown & McElroy, 2017; Henderson, Simon & Henicheck, 2018). Such concerns may also speak to associated activism and social justice initiatives, including micro-political forms of resistance (Davies & Thomas, 2004), work-based policies, and creative projects. The steadily developing groundswell of academic interest in reproductive issues and the workplace emerging from these areas suggests a range of possible topics and perspectives to be considered and interrogated.

We are excited by the new scholarship in the field of reproductive issues at work and, more broadly, for its potential to make conceptual as well as empirical contributions. We are interested to explore these intersections and interconnections together. As such, submission to the stream may include, but is not restricted to, critical theoretical, methodological, and/or empirical papers that address the following:

* Social conceptions surrounding reproductive experience within organizations, such as attitudes to pregnancy at work and to breastfeeding at work, and fatherhood and the workplace.
* Menstruation in the workplace, such as the impact of endometriosis on working life and career trajectory.
* Workplace experience of bodily changes reflecting sexed/sexual issues, such as breast augmentation or sex reassignment surgery.
* Menopause and the experience of undergoing this transition in the workplace, including navigating medicated and/or surgical menopause.
* Sex/sexuality and the workplace.
* The relationship between reproductive issues and the larger economic context and how this is reflected in contemporary organizational practices.
* New theoretical or methodological lenses or research methods that provide insights into the intersections of reproduction and work.

**Submission procedure**

Please submit a 500 word abstract (excluding references, on a single page, Word document NOT PDF, single-spaced, with no header, footer or track changes) together with your contact information, to **Lara Owen (lara.owen@monash.edu)**. The deadline for submission of abstracts is **January 31st 2019**, and we will notify you of our decision by the end of February 2019.

**Stream structure**

Each session will be 90 minutes long, with three papers each with approximately 20 minutes per paper plus 10 minutes for questions and discussion. We may structure some sessions with a discussant and a 30 minute discussion at the end for all three.

**Stream Convenors**

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