

Postgraduate Seminar: Critical Methodologies for Gender and Diversity Research

Date: Thursday 17 August

Time: 10.30am to 12.00pm

Venue: Room WU524, level 5, WU Building, AUT, 42 Wakefield Street, Auckland 1010

Registration: not required

Dr Nimbus Staniland (Lecturer, Business School and a past recipient of the AUT Vice-Chancellor's Doctoral Award) will lead a panel of past and present postgraduate research students in the Gender & Diversity Research Group. Each student will present the key aspects of the methodology they used, some of the inherent challenges and some of the highlights of their research journey.

Dr Nimbus Staniland

Nimbus Staniland (Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Tūhoe) is a Lecturer in the Department of Management at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). As a recipient of a 2013 AUT Vice-Chancellors Doctoral Scholarship her PhD thesis explored the career experiences and aspirations of Māori academics in university business schools with an interest in identifying strategies to create more meaningful engagement between universities, Māori as academics and their students. Nimbus currently teaches papers in HRM, Diversity and Management. Her research interests include indigeneity and diversity in work, employment and careers, as well as Kaupapa Māori and indigenous approaches to research.

Panellists:

Lucia Davis: Interethnic Mothering

Lisa Amoa: Career Progression of Pacific Island People in Tertiary Institutions

Dr Karenina Sumeo: Land rights and empowerment of urban women, *fa'afafine* and *fakaleitī* in Samoa and Tonga

Abstracts

Land rights and empowerment of urban women, *fa'afafine* and *fakaleitī* in Samoa and Tonga Karanina Sumeo

The study asked women, *fa'afafine* and *fakaleitī* (male to female) about the significance of land, and how rights to land affected their lives and sense of empowerment. The feminine-gender lens was the common denominator.

The research was piloted in Auckland, then carried out over two week periods in Nuku'alofa and Apia.

A key finding from the study was that women in urban Tonga were less likely than *fakaleitī* to control land according to tradition and law, despite social prejudice against *fakaleitī* because they were legally men. Women and *fa'afafine* in urban Samoa, however, had equal entitlements under custom and law regarding customary land, but certain family chiefs held primary discretion over distribution. As men, *fa'afafine* often had priority to chiefly titles over women. Some urban dwellers preferred the security of freehold title, which mitigated competition from kin and loss of customary land entitlements.

Gender equality was an aspiration for some women while unnecessary to others. The absence of traditions for women to independently own or have distribution authority over land, especially in Tonga, seemed fundamental to their lower status compared with men in households, cultural hierarchies, through to leadership at national level. Land rights is a fundamental enabler of empowerment.

Interethnic Mothering

Lucia Davis

The number of interethnic relationships is growing both internationally and in New Zealand. In 2013, nearly one in four New Zealand children between the ages of 0-14 identified with more than one ethnicity, up from one in five in 2006. There are an increasing number of mothers having to negotiate the way they raise their children within an interethnic relationship. It is mothers who largely take the primary responsibility for, and carry out the daily practice of raising children and cultural transmission of both theirs and their partner's background. Traditionally, motherhood, as an institution in patriarchy, was shaped by men's expectations and structures. The scope of my research was to analyse how migrant mothers in interethnic relationships construct their mothering.

My presentation will show how the methodology used, narrative inquiry, allowed mother-participants to shape their interethnic mothering from a site of empowerment, and to create validated counter-narratives of mothering against dominant narratives of motherhood. The narrative inquiry emplotment's constitutive elements of initiating action, complicating action, climax, resolution strategies and coda structured the analysis of interethnic mothering negotiations in a congruent story. I will show how the narrative time and space dimensions affected both mothering and stories about mothering.

Career Progression of Pacific Island People in Tertiary Institutions

Lisa Amoa

Pacific Island people are generally underrepresented in senior roles across the various tertiary institutions in New Zealand. This observation is apparent for Pacific Island people employed in either an allied or academic pathway. The purpose of this research is to investigate why Pacific allied staff at a tertiary educational institution do not progress into senior roles in New Zealand. A qualitative research method was adopted using semi-structured interviews with integration of talanoa to explore the career progression of Pacific staff at a tertiary institution.

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive methodology guided by an interpretivist paradigm. The study focuses on investigating the career progression of Pacific people to senior roles at tertiary institutions by bringing together their stories, views and experiences. The methodology adopted was also guided by the researcher's ontological, epistemological framework of realities (Lincoln and Guba, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Data was collected from talanoa sessions (similar to semi-structured interviews) of Pacific Island staff and were audio-recorded. A thematic approach was used to categorise and analyse the data into identified themes. Talanoa, an upcoming cultural research method was selected for data collection as I need to engage with participants in a culturally appropriate manner that is respectful, considerate and reflective of Pacific values, culture, language, attitudes and perceptions. Talanoa is a form of communication that creates and transfers knowledge. It is about interactions, in this manner, respecting the space (va) between the participant and the researcher. As a result this "va" has enabled the researcher to collect hidden information, stories, data and lived experiences from participants speaking from their hearts with no preconceptions. This can only occur if the relationship and the space (va) between the researcher and the participant is based on mutual trust and respect.