Gender and Diversity: Critical Perspectives

Book of Abstracts

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Book of Abstracts for Gender and Diversity: Critical Perspectives

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Keynote

Professor Emeritus Glenda Strachan, Griffith University Queensland

Discovering Diversity: What does this mean for researchers?

This paper examines diversity and equity policies and programs in organisations and reflects on what constitutes managing diversity and how this expresses itself in organisational policies and practices. It outlines the development of diversity policies and the features of these policies. Using three decades of research on gender equity policies conducted by Glenda Strachan with her colleagues in Australia, the paper outlines the variety of practice and the extent of some outcomes. The challenge of insecure work is discussed. Ideas on what researching diversity entails and means for the researcher are presented, as a precursor to a wider reflection and discussion with researchers.

Professor Glenda Strachan, is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Employment Relations and Human Resources, Griffith University, Queensland, Australia. Her research focuses on women and work, in both a contemporary and historical setting, and especially on the impact of national and organisational policies. She is the co-convenor of Equity, Diversity and Gender in Employment (EDGE) research program within the Work, Organisation and Wellbeing Research Centre at Griffith University. In 2016 she was awarded the Vic Taylor Distinguished Long-Term Contribution Award by the Association of Industrial Relations Academics of Australia and New Zealand, for her contribution to the field, through cementing the place of industrial relations scholarship at Newcastle and Griffith Universities, and feminist IR research. She is author and editor (with French and Burgess) of Managing Diversity in Australia: Theory and Practice. She is also the author of numerous chapters and articles in journals including the Journal of Industrial Relations, British Journal of Industrial Relations, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, Feminist Economics, Labour History, Continuity and Change. She has been the lead or sole Chief Investigator on three Australian Research Council Grants, the most recent of which focuses on university employment: Gender and Employment Equity: Strategies for Advancement in Australian Universities. Her PhD was published in 1996 as Labour of Love: The History of the Nurses' Association in Queensland 1850 - 1950. Glenda has held senior management roles at both Griffith University and the University of Newcastle. Prior to working in universities, she worked in the Australian Trade Union Training Authority and in industry.

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The impact of cultural diversity in corporate boards on firm performance

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We examine the impact of cultural diversity in boards of directors on firm performance. We construct a measure of cultural diversity by calculating the average of cultural distances between each board member using Hofstede's culture framework. Our findings indicate that cultural diversity in boards negatively affects firm performance measured with Tobin's Q and ROA. These results hold after controlling for potential endogeneity using firm fixed effects and instrumental variables. The results are also robust to a wide range of board and firm characteristics, including various measures of 'foreignness' of the firm, and alternative culture frameworks and other measures of culture. The negative impact of cultural diversity on performance is mitigated by the complexity of the firm and the size of foreign sales and operations. In addition, we find that the negative effects of cultural diversity are concentrated among the independent directors. Finally, we find that not all aspects of cultural differences are equally important and that it is mainly the diversity in individualism and masculinity that affect the effectiveness of boards of directors.

3

The making of ethnic migrant women entrepreneurs in New Zealand

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Adopting the dual view of social environment in interaction with individuals, this article seeks to investigate ethnic migrant women's pathways to entrepreneurship in New Zealand. It also explores

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the challenges facing ethnic migrant women entrepreneurs, and various ethnic and cultural resources utilised by them to overcome such challenges. At the conceptual level, this paper will offer insights towards building a more inclusive framework to examine ethnic migrant women's entrepreneurship. In particular, exploring migrant women's entrepreneurship in ethnically diverse settings may offer both empirical and theoretical insights. Implications for future research and practice are outlined, highlighting the significance of migrant entrepreneurship in New Zealand.

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Preservation of Indigenous culture among Indigenous migrants through social media: The Igorot peoples

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The preservation of indigenous knowledge is recognized as vital to the sustainability of indigenous human societies in this age of globalisation. The primary aim of preservation is achieved through retention of culture among community members and transmission of knowledge from the present generation to the next. There have been a considerable number of significant ICT-based approaches implemented to address this cause. Yet, most of these novel works might not have fully achieved their preservation goals. The emergence of social media has become a new opportunity to better realize this aim. This work attempts to discuss the extent to which social media is used in the preservation of indigenous knowledge among indigenous peoples in the diaspora, particularly the Igorot peoples. The indigenous peoples' virtual communities intensify their connection to traditional culture and revitalize their spirit of indigeneity despite being assimilated to a different society. An analysis of Facebook groups' posts was made to identify and classify the indigenous cultural elements that are conveyed through social media. A further analysis revealed that the popular social media plays a significant role in the exchange, revitalization, continuous practice, and learning of indigenous cultures among indigenous migrants; indeed, it is considered an effective medium to leverage preservation strategies.

Perceptions of sexual harassment: Reflections from the classroom

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In New Zealand context, sexual harassment is codified in both the Human Rights Act (1993) and the Employment Relations Act (2000). These Acts protect employees from quid quo pro harassment and hostile environment sexual harassment. While many organisations have sexual harassment policies, in isolation, these have proven to be ineffective for redressing sexual harassment (McDonald, et al., 2011; Hertzog, et al., 2008). Policies requiring victims to initially confront their harasser, for example, create psychological barriers to initiating formal complaint procedures (Thacker, 1992). Moreover, organisations have been found to rarely support victims of sexual harassment or effectively sanction the behaviour of harassers (McDonald, et al., 2011; Tinkler, 2013). Others have found that male managers in particular hold narrow definitions of sexual harassment (Vijayasiri, et al., 2008; Baugh, 1997) or do not fully appreciate the consequences of sexual harassment on victims or the organisation (Thacker, 1992; McDonald, et al., 2011).

Supporting formal polices with training workshops offers one strategy for redressing these limitations (Butler & Chung-Yan, 2011; Hertzog, et al., 2008). The long-term aim of training is to effect cultural change by addressing behaviours and attitudes of employees and managers regarding sexual harassment (Hertzog, et al., 2008). Training sessions provide an avenue to declare senior management commitment to gender equality and zero tolerance for sexually harassing behaviours (O'Leary-Kelly, et al., 2004; Gutek, 1993; McCabe & Hardman, 2005) as well as equip managers with the necessary skills to investigate complaints (Martucci, 2005). Training can also reduce the ambiguity surrounding what behaviours constitute sexual harassment (Antecol, et al., 2009) and empower victims to report incidences of sexual harassment (McDonald, et al., 2011). However, from a critical feminist perspective, such programmes could be seen to reinforce neo-liberal, and liberal feminist, assumptions of individual responsibility and action. Moreover, in such programmes the reified 'organisation' is the symbolic paternal figure, charged with the mediating of moral behaviour amongst the workforce. Such a reading could therefore be seen to reinforce both patriarchal and corporate power relations.

As part of an undergraduate management paper taught from an intentionally critical feminist pedagogical position, we present an experiential session aimed at detailing the complexity of sexual harassment. The aim and content of the lecture mirrors sexual harassment training sessions that might be presented within an organisational context. Students are required to reflect on the session as part of their reflective journaling for the course.

In this seminar, we will discuss three themes to emerge in our tentative analysis of 39 undergraduate student reflections of this lecture. The aim of our research is to explore student perceptions of sexual harassment as an organisational, gendered, and individual issue. First, we

found that many students experienced a challenge to their perceptions about sexual harassment. While some were shocked by the complexity of issues involved, others drew on victim and self-blaming discourses to reconcile the gap between their own perceptions of sexual harassment and the lecture content. Second, we found that 20 students reflected on personal experiences of sexual harassment. These reflections highlighted that the students considered sexual harassment and the covering up of sexually harassing incidences as both normal(ised) and complex practices. Third, students considered what their response to incidences of sexual harassment might be. Some stated that once they achieved managerial levels, they would implement policies to help eradicate such behaviour. Those who had not experienced harassment believed they would confront the harassers, while many of those who had experienced sexual harassment stated that they had left an organisational, and would do so again. Our findings have implications for organisations, policymakers, and educators.

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What can we learn about contemporary homophobia from New Zealand's Homosexual Law Reform debate of 1985/86?

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The world in 2016 remains unpleasant and often dangerous for many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. Life in this country is easier now for members of the LGBT community, but it was only 30 years ago that Aotearoa/New Zealand passed the first significant LGBT legislation. The campaign for homosexual law reform in Aotearoa/New Zealand was protracted and polarizing. Following the defeat of Venn Young's Crimes Amendment Bill of 1974/75, Fran Wilde's Homosexual Law Reform Bill of 1985/1986 was fiercely contested, with feelings running high on both sides of the debate. The strongest opposition to the proposed legislation came from community groups – often Churches - and significantly, from the newly formed Coalition of Concerned Citizens. These law reform opponents clashed with the various Gay Task Force groups and other pro-reform activists. Intense media scrutiny focused on details from both parliamentary debate and community action. With daily news and commentary in newspapers, magazines, national radio and television, the issue was difficult to ignore.

In this paper, I present an emergent finding from my PhD research: 'Coming out later in life: An inquiry into delayed acquisition of homosexual identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand.' Given the historic and political importance of homosexual law reform for members of the gay community, it is interesting that a group of gay men report that they have 'no memory', 'no recollection' of these

events; or they had 'no interest' in the debate – the issue was 'just another piece of news'. So, given the ubiquitous coverage and the strong emotions generated by the debate of 30 years ago, precisely what was being so studiously ignored by participants in my study?

This paper seeks to explore homonegative attitudes towards same sex relations by revisiting the Hansard transcripts of three parliamentary debates. Starting with the bills of the 1970s and 1980s, then the Human Rights Bill of 1992/1993 (made particularly interesting with Katherine O'Regan's amendment) I have followed the arguments (for and against) through successive readings in order to better understand what the people's elected representatives thought about homosexuality in the late 20th century. The dialogue is revealing: the arguments in favour of reform tend to be reasoned and well structured; in stark contrast, the opponents of homosexual law reform display a marked tendency to revert to emotion rather than logic or evidence. This resulted in a homonegative discourse based on ignorance, bigotry and moral anxiety. My focus in this paper will be on the language itself – i.e. the homonegative rhetoric used to oppose the proposed legislation in each case. I will outline salient themes and identify recurrent arguments, illustrating these points with the verbatim words and phrases used by elected members of parliament. This historical discourse raises intriguing questions about the phenomenon of 'protective ignorance' and why these gay men 'ignored' such a dominant discourse. It also provides useful insights into homonegative attitudes in other parts of the world today.

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Reframing gay Asian male masculinity through Bear Art

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This heavily illustrated paper explores issues of masculinity as they are idealised in gay bear art and the culture it serves to illustrate. Drawing on the work of Fritscher (2005), and, Wright and De Cecco (1997), I consider this art genre in relation to a largely euro-centric form of gay identity and positioning. In the light of this and my positioning as a Gay Asian Bear, the paper also considers Han's (2015) concept of the 'gaysian' and the stigmatization of the gay Asian male within the gay community.

The Gay bear art construct has been popularised by artists like Hunter, DadeUrsus, Tagame and Jiraiya, who depict masculinity using certain visual tropes including facial and body hair, and physique. By drawing upon examples of historical gay male art, the paper discusses visual

differences that demarcate Asian and western socio-cultural interpretations of masculinity. Subsequently, the paper also discusses how a marginalized group mediates its masculine self-identity through gay bear art. In doing so, I refer to Daroya's (2013) concept of self-Orientalisation and Lin's (2014) study of Chinese Gay Bear Men, that suggests Asian gay bear men frame their masculinity and self-worth through a collective social experience.

The paper concludes by reflecting on how gay bear art functions as a site of cultural demarcation, and demonstrating how the genre might be negotiated by non-Euro-centric sensibilities to enrich discourse around masculinity, identity and belonging.

Keywords: Asian, gay bear art, masculinity, orientalism, self-identity

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Questioning transgender bodies: Constructions and reconstructions of the transsexual 'Other' in Bangladesh

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This research aims to examine how hijra's bodies frame gender role and sexual identity in the social sphere of Bangladesh. Hijra are one of the transsexual communities in Bangladesh. The hijras life is like a socio-cultural 'taboo's in this society. They do not have a traditional family and are often excluded from the society. Usually they live in an isolated community called 'hijra dera' or 'hijra pollly'. Serena Nanda's book Neither Men nor Women (1990) studied how the conventional culture and personality incorporate to construct their physical appearance and gender identity in India. In term of physical characteristics hijra are neither man nor woman. Within this context, the bodily distinction is the first criteria to demarcate hijra. They are not only treated as a sexual 'other' but also a marginal community in Bangladesh. The body is not only proof of physical existence but it plays crucial role in socio-cultural construction of body identity and gender practice. Primary focus of this research is to present a critical analysis of the role of body performance in determining gender and sexual orientation.

This project draws on the two prominent theorists to make sense of the treatment and construction of hijra in Bangladesh. Michel Foucault shows in Discipline and Punish (1973), how the body is trained, shaped, cultivated and invested by the discursive practice of power. This is useful for this research as hijra live in community and they represent their bodies in a very different way by which

they can frighten people to take money as fees. How the transsexual body is governed by the regulatory norm in relation to the social and structural hegemonic practices is also a central argument of this proposed research. To understating transgender identity, I will apply Foucault's concept of 'governmentality' and 'bio-politics' to analyze the role of state. Foucault thought that subject's body is not their own. Furthermore, subjects do not even control their body; they and their bodies are always governed by the state. This perception is quite relevant to the discussion of the body politics of hijra people in Bangladesh.

Furthermore, Judith Butler discussed 'performativity' concept in her Bodies That Matter (1993) and it is helpful in explaining this phenomenon. According to her, performativity is a set of norms that materialize bodies. Butler's discussion of performativity will be the key to enter the theoretical dilemma of transgender reality. Her arguments of the plurality of identity and the analyses of self through their interaction with society are very significant in this research. Moreover, her theory of 'gender melancholia' is useful for studying hijra's psycho-social condition of subordination to the power of norms and bodily ego of melancholic identification. I will do that by monitoring the social life of groups and individuals. The binary opposition of the male-female dichotomy is abandoned during the question of transgender but still there is an epistemological and ontological crisis to study the transgender sexuality.

9

Interrogating Edward Cullen: Young men talk about gendered (hetero)romantic love

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The popular romance has a prolific and contemporary position within popular culture. As such, much research has been dedicated to the themes these romance stories generate about gendered (hetero)romantic love and what readers take from these stories that form their own understandings of the world around them (Radway, 1993; McRobbie, 1991; Christian-Smith, 1993; Walker & Goldner, 1995; Firminger, 2006; Martin & Kazyak, 2009). One current manifestation of the popular romance is the film adaptation Twilight. Within this popular romance, there are dominant narratives about what constitutes a "good" (hetero)romantic relationship which have been of concern to critical feminist scholars (Bailie, 2011; Bealer, 2011; Donnelly, 2011; Groper, 2011; Happel, 2010; Miller, 2009; Mukherjea, 2011; Murphy, 2011; Petersen, 2012; Taylor, 2011; Torkelson, 2011; Wilson, 2011). These scholars have largely focussed on the girl/woman reader, exploring the complications that this love story has generated regarding the gendered performances of Bella Swan and Edward Cullen. What is missing from the literature however is how young men read these popular romances, and in turn, how their understandings speak to their views of gendered power

within romantic relationships. This paper will address these ideas by looking specifically at how young men, from a rural New Zealand high school, read the film Twilight. For the purpose of this paper, specific attention will be placed on how they understood the gendered performance of the story's hero, Edward Cullen. This interrogation will explore two complex and at times contradictory reactions that these young men had to Edward's performance. I will make suggestions about what these say about young men's understandings of (hetero)romantic relationships that they take with them throughout their daily lives.

10

'Breaking the rules'? Examining contemporary constructions of the 'cheater' in heterosexual men's and women's accounts of extra-relational sexual involvement

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Background: Extra-relational sexual involvement (ERSI) refers to engaging in sexual contact with someone other than one's exclusive romantic, sexual or monogamous partner (often referred to as sexual 'infidelity' or 'cheating'). ERSI occupies a contradictory site within western culture – it is both widespread, yet unacceptable. The un/acceptability of ERSI, and its social and cultural repercussions, are linked to dominant constructions of what constitutes appropriate relational practices and male and female heterosexuality. Despite acknowledgement that ERSI can have a life changing impact, and trigger strong emotions and reactions, there is little known about the experience of those who have engaged in it.

Aims: The aim of this project was to examine, in great depth, the experiences of

ERSI amongst heterosexuals in New Zealand in order to address the gap in current psychological literature.

Method: This paper draws on data collected for a larger social constructionist project examining ERSI. For this presentation, thirty-six in-depth responses (11 men aged 20–74; 25 women aged 21–60) to an open-ended qualitative questionnaire were collected. The data were analysed using a combined Foucauldian (Willig, 2008) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001). Here the focus is on the ways participants discussed ERSI in relation to themselves (e.g. the "cheater"), and how they exercise and deny agency. Initial results from four focus groups (2 men's and 2 women's) looking at the broader social constructions of ERSI will also be discussed.

Results: The respondents tended to draw on discourses of uncontrollability, development, transgression, regret, and sexual variety to construct versions of personhood that encompassed: psychological pathology, knowledgeability, and sexuality. Contextual discourses were taken up to construct a hierarchy of ERSI, reinforcing heteronormativity and stigmatizing the "cheater".

Conclusion: The experience of ERSI involves contractions and tensions where dominant discourses of naturalness are implicated and shape individual psychologies in specific ways.

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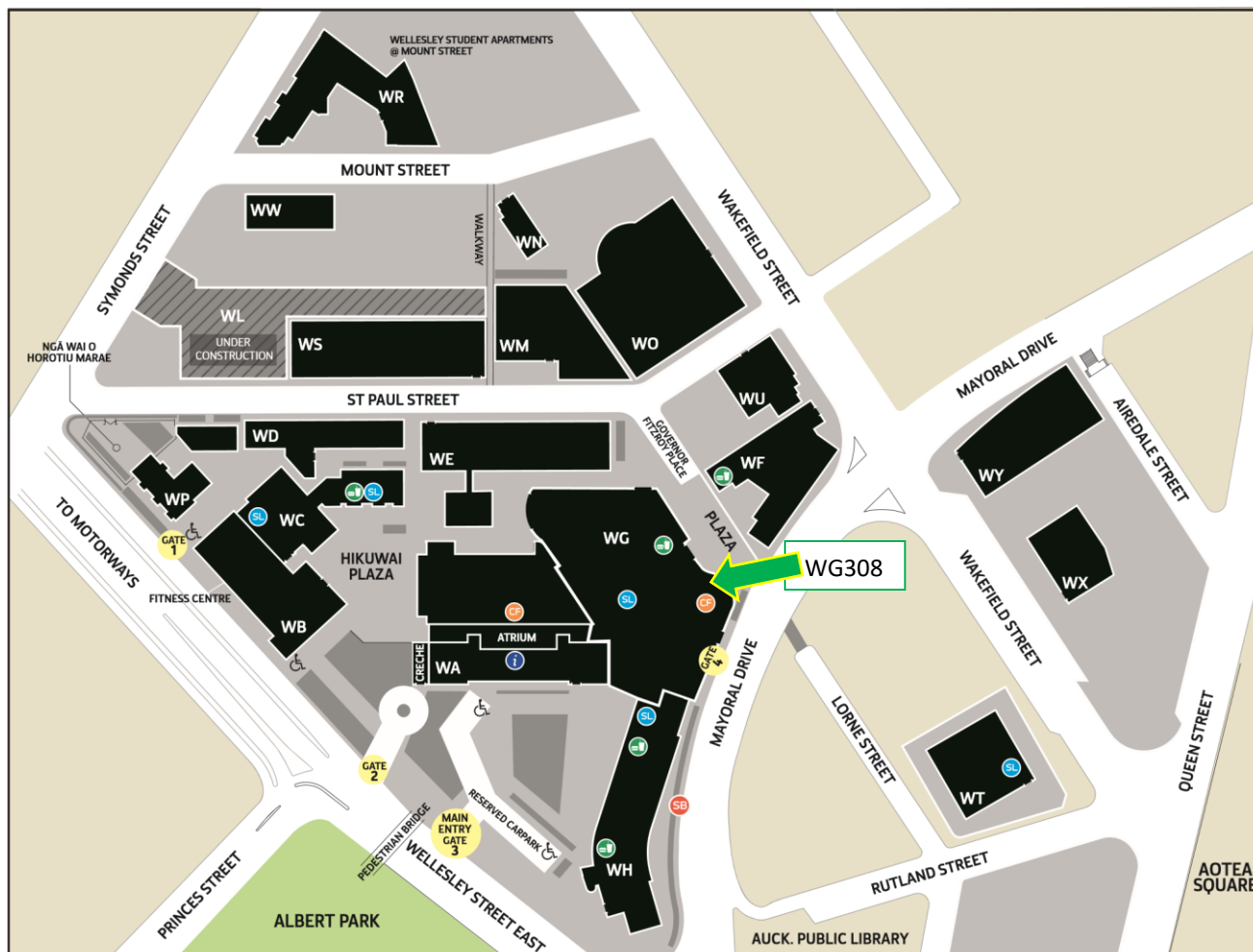
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