**Gender, Work & Organization**

**11th Biennial International Interdisciplinary Conference**

**24th to 26th June 2020**

**Transforming Contexts, Transforming Selves: Gender in New Times**

**University of Kent, Canterbury, UK**

**Conference Organizers**

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**Stream Title**

**The answer lies in our humanity: research and methodologies that facilitate healing and hope.**

**Convenors**

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The headline read: You can’t copy love: why other politicans fall short of Jacinda Ardern (Hage, 26 March, 2019). It was written in the aftermath of an unprecendented event in this locale, where on the 15th March 2019, 51 people were killed or fatally wounded during Friday Prayer at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. The New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, seemingly stunned the world with her response.

*“What could have become an ugly slugfest of recrimination and blame, fuelling hatred as the attacker hoped, became instead a moment when a nation came together, honoured its differences, accepted its failings and united behind a future vision of a land where bigotry and racism are not welcome. “The answer lies in our humanity,” Ardern said. “We each hold the power – in our words, in our actions, in our daily acts of kindness. Let that be the legacy of the 15th of March.” (Hage, 2019)*

In her words and actions since March 15, Jacinda Ardern has not just called out white nationalist racism, but also structural racism and the numerous inequalities that pervade, polarise and paralyse our social, economic and political landscape. Hage (2019) suggests that Jacinda Ardern has demonstrated a different way of leading, a “special kind of love”, that crosses boundaries and has the power to heal and restore.

We, too, are heartened to see a reorientation away from recent politics of fear and division (Wodak, 2015), often aligned with heteronormative masculinity and the ‘normalization of exclusion’ (Wodak, 2015, p. 205). The possibilities are indeed exciting, and beyond the political sphere, hold potential for progress to be made by researchers concerned with issues of equity and social justice. Indeed, the notion of a relational ethic or ethic of care is one which is familiar to many feminist researchers (e.g. Eagley, Gartzia & Carli, 2014; Harre, Grant, Locke & Sturm, 2017).

However, we also add a note of caution. Too often the position, progress or profile of one woman has been used as liberal justification of meritocracy and individual achievement, thus silencing a collective need for change. Through the metaphor of an ‘infinite game’, Harre et al (2017, p.5) point to the neo-liberal university as an exemplar of the opposite i.e. the ‘finite game’ where research can often be “misaligned, harmful or a distraction from what really matters”. Such a context focuses our efforts on what ‘counts’ and ‘records’. This approach arguably lacks an ethic of care and produces an academic politic of fear and exclusion.

Nevertheless, we remain inspired by the collective global response to the potential of a politics of love and hope exemplified through the actions of Jacinda Arden. In this call for papers, we wish to encourage work that may be seen as representing the ‘infinite game’, a game that speaks to “our potential as people living together to be open and inclusive, and to promote the life and growth that helps us flourish as individuals and communities” (Harre et al., 2017, p.5).

To illustrate our desire to play the ‘infinite game’ we have observed many innovative methodologies being used such as intersectionality and participatory action research and more are emerging, especially within qualitative and non-positivist genres (e.g. Booysen, Bendl & Pringle, 2018). Using participants’ own words has been particularly significant, providing the opportunity for a variety of methodological approaches such as autobiography, autoethnography, biography, case history/study, ethnography, life story and oral history to record, interpret and present individual stories. These stories often go beyond the traditional ‘tidy’ and sanitised accounts encouraged in traditional academic studies, oftentimes encompassing the personal, embodied and reflexive (Boncori & Smith, 2018). More recently researchers are looking to embrace methodological creativity as apparent in multimodality, ‘arts-informed inquiry’, poetry, song writing and the presentation of these in a performative context (Kress, 2010; Leggo, 2008; Kendall and Murray, 2004; Douglas 2012). Such efforts share an interest in the human(e) and lead the way for researchers to further explore an ethic of care in their research practices.

However, our efforts towards the infinite game also may go beyond the methodologies we use. The act of presenting our research differently has also been highlighted as a form of praxis. Indeed, for Kiriakos and Tienari (2018), conceptualising ‘writing as love’ formed a direct challenge to the masculinity of the finite game.

**We encourage conceptual, theoretical, and empirical papers from all researchers (doctoral, early career, mid-career and senior academics) that engage with innovative methodologies that speak to the ‘infinite game’.** As feminist researchers focussed on gender in organizations, we question the extent to which our research is “changing contours of inequality” (Calas, Smircich and Holvino, 2014, p.44). We invite others to join us in challenging the academic politic of fear and exclusion manifest in the ‘finite’ game. Praxis requires this to be our legacy, in fighting bigotry, inequalities and racism, and facilitating research spaces for healing, hope and humanity.

**Abstracts of approximately 500 words** (submitted direct to stream leaders Barbara Myers and Irene Ryan per email, ONE page, WORD NOT PDF, single spaced, excluding any references, no headers, footers or track changes) are invited by **Friday 1stNovember 2019**. Decisions on acceptance of abstracts will be made by stream leaders within one month and communicated to authors by Monday 2nd December 2019.  All contributions will be independently refereed.  Abstracts should include FULL contact details, including name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, and e-mail address.

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*Barbara Myers* is a Senior Research Lecturer in the Management Department at Auckland University of Technology. Barbara’s research and teaching philosophy centres on narrative storytelling methodologies. She believes there is real value in personal and organisational story telling to support wider business strategy, incorporating history and change into the way we look at a changing world of work. Critical core research interests include gender and diversity, ageing, careers and life development. Through a recent study on older women who have worked and travelled abroad, Barbara has identified changing views on what becoming ‘older’ means and the possibilities and opportunities for how older people might live their lives differently.

*Irene Ryan* has had a range of career transitions prior to joining academia and AUT University in 2004 as a Senior Lecturer in Sport and Recreation moving to the Management Department, Faculty of Business, Economics and Law in 2009. Irene’s research interests are reflective of her life experiences. Her research interests exemplify the tendency of critical diversity and feminist scholars to initiate wide ranging, interdisciplinary projects in different contexts using a variety of qualitative methods. She is one of the co-leaders of the Gender and Diversity Research Group at AUT.

*Fiona Hurd* is a Lecturer in the Department of International Business, Strategy & Entrepreneurship at Auckland University of Technology.  Fiona’s current research explores how we create, and foster, collective spaces for resilience, well-being and resistance in organisations.  More broadly, Fiona’s critical management research interests surround how the changing nature and structure of global work and organisations impact individuals, families, workers and communities.  She also has a strong research interest and background in critical pedagogical approaches.

*Shelagh Mooney* is a lecturer and hospitality postgraduate program leader in the School of Hospitality and Tourism at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. Shelagh’s research explores the effects of gender and other dimensions of diversity in employment, focusing on the ways that organizational processes privilege and penalise specific groups. Her critical hospitality research also advocates for a sustainable workforce and decent work in the services sector.

*Susan Ressia* is a Lecturer within the Department of Employment Relations and Human Resources at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. Her research focuses on the job search experiences of independent non-English speaking background skilled migrants in Australia. Susan’s research interests also include the areas of work-life balance, managing diversity, intersectionality, equality and social justice issues.