

## **Relational Managing and Leading: The Role of Gender**

### **Stream Organisers:**

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### **Stream outline:**

Leadership for equality, diversity and inclusion at work could be thought to include the characteristics of relational management and leadership as opposed to heroic models of leadership. According to Fletcher's (2001) model of relational practice, which underlines the qualities of empathy, connectedness, and emotional sensitivity, leading should be approached as a relational practice including among others caring for colleagues, enabling others to act, and being emotionally authentic (Binns, 2008). In today's dynamic environment, organizations must capitalize fully on the capabilities of relational leading and reflective practice, skills that enable managers and leaders to rethink and rework their own identities, values and assumptions. Self-reflective practice allows managers and leaders to recognise if and how certain ways of organizing, reasoning and representing the world constrains imagination, autonomy and decision making, especially when they relate to issues of equality, diversity and inclusion at work. This stream therefore, explores the gendered nature of leadership and management, in order to better understand the emergence and acceptance of female leaders in work organizations. More specifically it explores the strength, the content and the form of the relationship between relational leading and managing and gender. It adopts a critical analysis of the way work is organised, exploring the degree of subordination of relational types of leading, which has profound implications for the nature of managerial work and the positions of power and influence. Are women who adopt a relational approach to leadership accepted as legitimate leaders? Which are the obstacles they face in terms of being recognized and accepted as legitimate leaders? If women are not accepted as legitimate leaders, then their effectiveness across all types of leadership, both formal and informal, will be constrained, making gender bias a practical and significant problem for organizations.

This stream invites theoretically informed papers as well as empirically based ones from a range of disciplines that explore the relational between relational management (as opposed to or in comparison to heroic management) and gender. Moreover, papers could explore the gendered nature of leadership at the intraindividual level of analysis (i.e. self view and skills), the inter-individual level of analysis (i.e. cognitive and affective processes) and the organizational level of analysis (i.e. culture, network of multilevel relationships). Finally, papers could explore the effect of processes of globalisation on established gender relations in different national and local organisational contexts.

### **Possible themes include:**

The relationship between relational management and gender; does the construct "relational management" devalues the feminine construct as opposed to the more traditional management and leadership constructs that favour the masculine? The gender structuring of management and organisations in terms of relational and heroic management; leadership issues; gendered discourses

of management and leadership; gender and managerial identity; issues in managerial career development and career trajectories of women in organizations; the role of gender in the way managers conduct themselves; alternative forms of working at managerial levels; the phenomenon of “glass escalator”; gender mainstreaming, and the presence, absence and development of policies on gender; bias and the content of gender-role stereotypes in leadership across the world: international comparisons; the effect of globalisation on established gender relations and the possible deterioration of gender inequality; international organizations, gender and management; the ethics of relational management and gender.

**Keywords:**

Relational management, gender, leadership, power relations.

**Publication plans:**

A special issue in the journal, Equality Diversity and Inclusion (Emerald Press) and an edited book proposal for Edward Elgar Press.

**References**

- Binns, J. (2008). The Ethics of Relational Leading: Gender Matters. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 15, 6, 600-620.
- Fletcher, J. (2001). *Disappearing Acts: Gender, Power and Relational Practice at Work*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.