

Equality, Diversity and Industrial Relations

Stream Organisers;

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Stream Outline

Internationally industrial relations has been debated by scholars and practitioners since the formalisation of work employment. However, recent turbulence in market economics has highlighted the importance of industrial relations in representing employees and negotiating with employers. However, there is an acknowledgement from diversity and equality researchers internationally that voices and practice about discriminatory issues such as gender, ethnicity, sexuality within the wider academic industrial relations community can become diluted by other research on employment, work relationships and leadership. This stream therefore wants to address this shortfall and improve our understanding of disadvantaged groupings experiences within industrial Relations and analyse how a focus on inclusion and equality can help combat this significant problem.

Another aspect that makes this issue more relevant is that currently UK scholars are considering 'what's the point of industrial relations' (2008) in light of reducing their support for departments and courses that promote studies of work and employment relationships and examine how these have been shaped by political policies, international trade and capital. However, while this contemporary debate does acknowledge issues of equality and diversity it does not place them as central to the development of future thinking in connection to industrial relations. Thus the aim behind this strand is to create a supportive international forum where activists, practitioners and academics can usefully come together to help influence how equality and diversity are theorised and debated, to help us consider not only how discriminatory issues in the workplace and within the bodies associated with representing workers may be culturally constrained but also how the academic and political discussions themselves may also reflect these constraints.

We would also like to encourage contribution from **practitioners** in this field. To this end we would like to invite them to submit more empirical papers, case studies of practice in equality and inclusion particularly if these illustrate an

innovative approach or development of interesting practices and discuss these developments within a supportive political environment.

Possible themes include:

The future direction of IR as an academic discipline
Industrial Relations' discourse and discrimination
IR as practice in Academia
IR and gender leadership
Trade unions and discrimination
Models of diversity within industrial relations
Diversity within organising
The development of community unionism
Diversity and Social Movements, a new way forward
Equality and conflict in employment relationships
Mainstreaming equality in industrial relations

- We also aim to investigate the possibility of linking the stream to a special edition journal of industrial relations such as IRJ