

Title: Ethnicity, Work and Organisation

Stream proposers:

Dr. Cynthia Forson, University Of Hertfordshire, c.a.forson@herts.ac.uk

Prof. Geraldine Healy, Queen Mary University of London, g.m.healy@qmul.ac.uk

Stream outline (rationale and key themes)

Public policy driven research on the labour market experiences of ethnic minorities has revolved around human capital approaches which are based on the assumption of a positive correlation between high human capital investment and occupational attainment. Human capital based research posits that employment is a neutral process in which the labour market sifts people in, up, down or out according to skill levels irrespective of ethnicity. However, such arguments ignore the complex nature of ethnic minorities' relationship with the labour market as mediated by social structures as well as the intersection of these structures at the individual, institutional and structural levels. More insightful work has come from a range of perspectives, including critical realist, social interactionist and ethnographic approaches. Moreover, recent work on intersectionality has enhanced our understanding of the complexity of the issue and made us question the omissions in contemporary research. This stream welcomes papers from a range of theoretical positions that address the work and career experiences of ethnic minority men and women in organisations and the labour market (including entrepreneurship). It welcomes papers that consider the relationships between structure and agency in the lives of ethnic minority people and their access to material and social resources including, social, cultural and economic capitals. Papers for this stream will address the constraints (e.g. racism, unemployment, underemployment, ethnic penalty, stereotyping, concrete ceilings, work-life balance issues) faced by, and enablements (e.g. education, family, role models, networks, critical agents, trade unions). Examples of constraints and enablements are inevitably problematic since what might be an enablement for one might be a constraint for another. Contemporary 'solutions' to ethnic minority underachievement in the management literature includes individualist strategies such as mentoring, role models, networking. Papers are invited that seek to evaluate the interface between obstacles and opportunities with respect to such organisational strategies and the impact of recession on gap between policy and practice. The stream will also address issues of the effect of the intersection of ethnicity with gender, class, sexuality, religion, disability, age, etc within these arenas. Papers will also be welcomed that focus on regulatory frameworks at the structural, as well as the institutional/organisational levels that impact the labour market experiences of ethnic minorities.

Key themes

- Gender differences between ethnic minority women's and men's work and careers experiences
- Ethnic minority women and men in entrepreneurship
- The impact of regulatory frameworks and support policies on ethnic minority men and women's work experience
- The role of family in careers and work life balance
- Intersectionality and ethnic minorities' labour market experience
- The impact of recession by ethnicity

Stream questions

1. What are the key features of the work and career experiences of ethnic minority men, women and groups?
2. What key dynamics facilitate or impede the career choice, career development, career progression and career change of ethnic minority men and women?
3. What are the similarities and differences (if any) in the work/career experiences of ethnic minority men and women, as well as between ethnic minorities and the white population?
3. How does the intersection of ethnicity with other social structures (e.g. gender, religion, class culture, sexuality, disability and age shape the work/career experiences of ethnic minority individuals and groups?
5. In what ways do legislative interventions/frameworks and organisational support impact the experiences of ethnic minority workers?
6. Does the recession impact differently on opportunities and careers of ethnic minorities?

Stream keywords

Ethnicity, gender, class, intersectionality, discrimination, career, work, recession..