**Stream title: ‘Borders and the professions: getting in and getting on – the experience od ethnic minority and migrant workers**

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Professional qualifications and work experience are viewed as important personal assets that individuals acquire to develop both personally and professionally; in fact both can be seen as forms of cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu 1986) which can be utilised and developed in the world of work. Having such assets, however, does not always allow for entry into professions nor do they grant access to the top jobs; in many societies, time and again we see these dominated by white, middle class, able bodied men. What is evident is that there are actual and perceived borders around some professions which help protect them for this elite group of people (Randle et al 2014). This is despite the fact that at the macro, government, level there is (often) legislation promoting equality of opportunity and likewise at the meso, organisation, level there are policies and practices in place which in theory should ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. What the evidence suggests, however, is that there is more rhetoric than reality in organisations and that there are ‘sticky floors’ and ‘glass ceilings’ for some people trying to get in and move up the career ladder.

Borders into and within professions are often more pronounced for those from minority ethnic backgrounds (Healy et al 2010) or for those with migrant backgrounds (Pio 2005), groups that are, of course, not mutually exclusive. That is not to say that people from these backgrounds are always ‘victims’ and we do see evidence of people drawing upon their agency to progress their careers within their chosen area (Al Ariss et al 2013).

This proposed stream seeks to explore the ‘borders’ faced by people from minority ethnic and migrant backgrounds when entering professions. Possible themes for papers include, but are not restricted to, the following questions: what these borders are and why do they exist? are these borders real or perceived by people from the groups who fail to gain entry? how do people navigate these borders?

To further the discussion, we welcome papers which are theoretically and/or empirically informed from a broad variety of disciplines and geographical areas.

**References**

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