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Stream 20

Motherhood, Work and the Politics of Equality

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Since the early 1970s research on gender and organizations has theoretically and empirically discussed the relevance of studying gendering within organizations (Acker, 1990; 1992; 2000; 2012; Acker & Van Houten, 1974). In spite of several decades of a gender equality rhetoric and feminists' movements, women continue to be marginalized in the labour market, especially when they become mothers (Gatrell et al., 2017).

Research suggests various ideological, societal and individual-level dynamics that constitute particular hurdles for mothers. At the ideological level, the maternal body has been characterized as being incongruent to professionalism/managerialism due to the increased "private" demands posed on mothers. Motherhood in organizational contexts has also been viewed as a threat to social order and control. For instance, mothers face different ideological expectations such as being the primary care-taker and prioritizing their home life over their careers (Huopalainen & Satama, 2019; Ruitenberg, 2014; Schnurr et al., 2020; Stead and Elliott, 2009). The neoliberal ideology incites women to foster a happy work-life balance and views women personally responsible for organizing the competing demands (Rottenberg, 2018; Yoong, 2020). Mothers are also viewed as deviations from the masculine norms in the workplace setting (e.g. Gatrell and Cooper, 2016; Haynes, 2008; Hennekam et al., 2019; Schurr et al, 2020; van Amsterdam, 2015). At a societal level, government regulations and workplace commitments to family-friendly policies play important roles impacting mothers' career advancements (Fotaki, 2013; Gatrell and Cooper, 2016). However, family-policies continue to vary between organizations, reifying the gendered organization and therefore gendering certain managerial levels. At an individual level, mothers' personal support networks, such as spousal support, impact women's re-entry into the workforce and their career advancements (Bröckel, 2018; Hennekam et al., 2019; Huopalainen & Satama, 2019). For example, emotional support as well as spousal sharing of childcare and home duties are positively linked to women's career successes (Bröckel; 2018; Heikkinen et al., 2014). With that said, mothers continue to negotiate

conflicting identities as they navigate between work and home, professional and domestic responsibilities respectively.

The aforementioned obstacles have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic where work/home divide have interlaced with one another in unprecedented ways. Mothering/motherhood in organizational contexts has become even more complex, and questions surrounding the feminist value of reproductive work has been largely ignored (Ozkazanc-Pan & Pullen, 2020). In this stream, we are looking to have a candid discussion about motherhood in organizations. What practices have organizations developed that enable social equality for mothers? What role do organizations play in the (re)production of the current gender neutrality discourse? How can organizations create practices and set structures in place that foster inclusiveness within organizations? What opportunities can organizations find to support the sustainability of working mothers' careers and care work? How can public policy have a positive impact on gender equality? What is the role of academics in changing discursive organizational practices? How does mothering entangle with work in differing socio-cultural contexts?

In this stream, we want to engage in the discussion about the various macro-, meso- and micro barriers mothers face across the various geo-political locations and the role organizations play in this. Papers are welcome from a variety of topics related to motherhood and work with the various theoretical perspectives and methods. We welcome theoretical papers discussing conceptual debates on motherhood, empirical research at the various levels of analysis (micro/meso/macro), as well as critical essays discussing contemporary motherhood within the context of work.

Potential, but not exclusive, paper topics could address:

- The gendering of the organization and motherhood
- Organizations, care work, and motherhood
- Work-life balance and the organization
- Doing motherhood at work
- Gender norms and motherhood
- The supermom myth
- Entrepreneurship and motherhood
- 'The second shift' - revisited
- Health, organizations and motherhood
- Covid-19, work, and motherhood

Our hope is that a particularly diverse theoretical and methodological paper selection can provoke critical discussions and bring new insights into this important topic.

Submissions to the stream can be in the form of long abstracts (up to 1500 words), developmental papers (3000-5000 words, including references) or full papers (no length restrictions) by the deadline of 1 March 2021. Please process your registration and paper submission online via www.edi-conference.org.

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