

CALL FOR PAPERS

Gender, Work & Organization 2020
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24th to 26th June 2020
Transforming Contexts, Transforming Selves: Gender in New Times
University of Kent, Canterbury, UK

Stream 8:

Rural Frontiers In-between Tradition and Change: gender, work and organization in rural contexts

Stream Convenors:

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Rurality, rural identity and rural regional contexts shape working life in ways that make it different from working conditions in dense urban centres. While rurality is associated with traditions and stability, rural regions are also affected by societal changes and challenges stemming from globalization, migration, digitalization, racism and class hierarchies. The rural is not a romantic countryside frozen in time as nostalgic narrations of rurality in media portrayals might suggest (Bryant & Pini, 2010). In this stream we want to foreground rurality in an intersection with gender in relation to work and organization. This includes perspectives on (trans)gender, race, ethnicity, class, caste and sexuality in relation to how these intersections shape and organize daily life around work

Our understanding of 'rural' is not geographically or statistically defined, but we align with the socially constructed definition (Cloke, 2006). 'Rural' means different things in different countries, however, in most countries there is an understanding of an 'urban'--'rural' divide (Buciega & Pitarch & Esparcia, 2009). Our understanding of 'rural' connects to a 'rural identity', i.e. areas which are defined as 'non-urban', in the national or regional context, by the people living there or by people living in the 'urban' areas.

This stream invites to discussions concerning salaried work and entrepreneurship in rural communities. What sorts of work-life balance issues are faced in specific geographies of rurality? For instance, childcare may be organised in different ways, transport to and from work may take longer (if distances are long) or shorter (if homeworking), salaried work may be combined with invisible work in contexts of agriculture or craft production. Innovation

and entrepreneurship, in particular when conducted by women, have different conditions from those in urban areas (Fhlatharta & Farrell, 2017).

Gender norms in rurality are also often assumed to be more tenacious when it comes to male and female tasks. What norms and organizations of work impact gender, race, caste, class and sexuality? How do digital media access and social media activism influence rural everyday work organization and entrepreneurial outreach to various consumer markets? Do people largely meet the same people in their working and private lives in a rural context? How might digital connectivity serve to rupture the assumptions that rurality reinforces an all-encompassing norm system? How might working at a distance for an employer in the city, or mobility between urban and rural regions, create a mix of an urban lifestyle and norm system and a rural one (Laegran, 2008; Haley, 2018).

Depending on the geographic context, the labour market has a different structure in rural regions. While in the global north contexts, alternative workplaces may be few or career options restricted, opportunities might present themselves in other ways than in urban centres and in patterns that might affect men and women in different ways. There might be regional as well as international differences in labour markets that also coincide with different degrees of horizontal gender segregation. While some rural regions are tied to industries with strong traditions or tied to natural resources in the region, other rural areas have to innovate the labour market in order to avoid depopulation. Digitalization and development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) have been associated with new opportunities and hope for reinvigorating the rural areas. ICTs have "revolutionized" working life by increasing the flexibility of where and when it is possible to perform salaried work. This flexibility, however, looks very different for different groups in society, distinguished for example by gender, occupation, and place of residence (Tietze & Musson & Scurry, 2009; Maruyama & Tietze, 2012, Wheatley, 2012).

While rurality in some regions might be constructed around "traditions" not only in work, but also in terms of family structures, gender or religion, others have found that people in rural regions are more apt to discussions and changes in their gender contracts than authorities may assume (Oliva, 2010; Forsberg & Stenbacka, 2017). Traditional rural ideals of femininity and masculinity might also be challenged and change when new jobs appear and old ones change and disappear: when agriculture becomes increasingly a desk job with paperwork, it may be amended with tourism or other small enterprising; when the population gets older and there are more work opportunities in care, some men move over to do such work; and when digitalization is introducing ICTs in new positions across industries, more women enter into work relations with ICT. Rural and sparsely populated regions might experience such societal changes differently from more densely populated regions, as human resources, in particular individuals with higher education, might be a scarcity in the rural labour markets.

Thus, there are many themes concerning working life in rural regions and rurality that are important to explore in a gender perspective. In this stream we challenge the participants to explore how rurality, work and gender affect and construct each other.

This stream invites presenters to share their research that can contribute to filling the knowledge gap of how rurality is intersecting with gender in current working life, where international trends, like migration, digitalization and globalization, are advocating change. Papers are invited to explore the intersection of rurality and gender on topics, such as (non-exhaustive list):

- How gender relations in workplaces are influenced by local community norms;
- How changes in local labour markets influence gender relations in a community;
- How work is integrated as part of a rural lifestyle and how is the tension with globalization and migration negotiated;
- What organizational values and norms, including gendered ones, are cherished and maintained in workplaces that are integrated in rural communities, and how;
- How digitalization introducing ICTs in new work settings affects gendered patterns in work and organization;
- How "rurality" affects work-life-balance;
- How do intersections of race, class, caste and religion play out in contemporary ruralities and specific geographies;
- Theoretical and methodological papers exploring rurality, work and gender.

References

- Bryant, Lia & Pini, Barbara (2011). *Gender and rurality*. New York: Routledge
- Buciega, Almudena, Pitarch, Marie Dolores & Esparcia, Javier (2009) The context of Rural–Urban relationships in Finland, France, Hungary, The Netherlands and Spain. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 11 (1) 9-27.
- Cloke, Paul (2006) Conceptualizing rurality. In P. Cloke, T. Marsden & P.H. Mooney (eds) *Handbook of Rural Studies*. London: Sage. 18-28.
- Fhlatharta, Aoife M.Ni & Farrell, Maura (2017) Unravelling the strands of 'patriarchy' in rural innovation: A study of female innovators and their contribution to rural Connemara. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 54: 15-27.
- Forsberg, Gunnel & Stenbacka, Susanne (2017) Creating and challenging gendered spatialities: How space affects gender contracts. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 99 (3) 223-237.
- Haley, Aimée (2018) Returning to rural origins after higher education: Gendered social space. *Journal of Education and Work*, 31 (4) 418-432.
- Laegran, Anne Sofie (2008) Domesticating home anchored work: Negotiating flexibility when bringing ICT based work home in rural communities. *Geoforum*, 39: 1991-1999.
- Maryama, Takao & Tietze, Susanne (2012) From anxiety to assurance: Concerns and outcomes of telework. *Personnel Review*, 41 (4) 450-469.
- Oliva, Jesús (2010) Rural melting-pots, mobilities and fragilities: Reflections on the Spanish case. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 50 (3) 277-295.
- Tietze, Susanne, Musson, Gill & Scurry, Tracy (2009) Homebased work: A review of research into themes, directions and implications. *Personnel Review*, 38 (6) 585 – 604.

Wheatley, Dan (2012) Good to be home? Time-use and satisfaction levels among home-based teleworkers. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 27 (3) 224-241.

Deadline for abstracts: Friday 1st November 2019

Abstracts of approximately 500 words (submitted direct to stream leaders, ONE page, WORD NOT PDF, single spaced, excluding any references, no headers, footers or track changes) are invited by Friday 1st November 2019. Decisions on acceptance of abstracts will be made by stream leaders within one month and communicated to authors by Monday 2nd December 2019. All contributions will be independently refereed. Abstracts should include FULL contact details, including name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, and e-mail address.

Abstracts should be emailed to Hilde G. Corneliussen: hgc@vestforsk.no.