

**RN14 of the European Sociological Association**  
**Gender relations in the labour market and the welfare state**

Mid Term meeting at Newcastle University **on 24 and 25 August 2020**

Call For Papers

(Please submit your abstracts before April 30<sup>th</sup>)

**Intersectionality, the welfare state and women's work**

The analysis of women's occupations and participation in the labour market often reflects a variety of social divisions and social differences. For some, such divisions imply privilege and prestige; for others they imply vulnerability and exposure to market principles. Among other processes, such divisions reflect gender segregation, both horizontal, across occupations, and vertical, across hierarchical positions. Policy making may respond to feminist activism and promote women's entry to less vulnerable positions or it may reproduce the persistence of divisions. For example, public service employment, which in the past represented women's access to quality jobs, may now mean that many women are particularly vulnerable to the ongoing neo-liberal retrenchment and restructuring of the welfare state. Indeed, recent years have seen an intriguing institutional ambiguity around the question of social divisions and occupations. On the one hand, research indicates that barriers to the entry of less traditional social categories into occupations are waning and being increasingly challenged. On the other hand, research on resistance to diversity initiatives (at an organisational and inter-personal level) documents how intersectional barriers to resources that facilitate social boundary crossing and entry to occupations are still in place. To what extent does the welfare state take part in reproducing such inequalities during times in which families strive to have two breadwinners, but occupational segregation still operates?

What are the processes involved in the current duality where social divisions persist and are concurrently challenged? Social divisions and social differences do not operate separately, but in intersectional ways. However, diversity and intersectionality have contested and plural meanings. The concept of diversity tends to be used descriptively to refer to the diverse range of social categories in a given occupation or organization. The term intersectionality may simply

refer to intersections between categories, social divisions or social differences. However, it has been used in many different ways – between relatively fixed social categories, in the making of such categories, in their mutual constitution, and in transcending or negotiating categories.

And what does this ambiguous situation mean for the development of Feminist agendas in the twenty-first century? How can feminist scholars address the calls for gender justice and rise to the occasion? Can Feminist agendas help us to rethink what constitutes occupational struggles and how can they enhance solidarity among women and between women in prestigious occupations and those remaining on the margins of the labour market?

We embrace a broad definition of intersectionality and diversity and invite papers examining the relationship between women's occupations, management and policy. We welcome papers that consider theoretical and empirical research on gender relations in the labour market and the Welfare State from any of the following or other perspectives:

- 'The family'
- Marriage
- Childcare
- Health (including fertility, abortion, contraception)
- Migration
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Ageing
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Organising and solidarity
- economic/governmental policy

**Please submit your abstract before April 30<sup>th</sup>**

**To:**

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**Please write in the subject line of your e-mail: RN14 2020 midterm meeting Newcastle**

**Please make sure that before your abstract you include your name, e-mail address, affiliation, and whether you already are a paying member of RN14 – We invite non-members to submit their papers as well.**

**We are looking forward to receiving your abstract!**

