Colleagues,

I hope you are all well. I have a number of announcements for October:

First, here is the link to the call for participant applications for the 2018 Women and Leadership Public Policy Colloquium that colleagues (Julia Storberg-Walker, Wendy Fox Kirk, Barbara Crosby, and Amanda Ellis) and I will be hosting at Utah Valley University on May 20-22, 2018. This free colloquium will be designed specifically for scholars and scholarly practitioners from any country that focus their work on women and leadership or related equality issues. The colloquium will be a workshop experience that will train and then catalyze individuals and groups to move theory and research into both domestic and foreign policy. It will be a “one of a kind” experience and is designed for 75-100 individuals who are committed to this work. I truly believe this can help move the field forward. Applications will be accepted until November 15, 2017.

Second, you are invited to join me and many others for the “Women Leaders, Agents of Change in Africa” conference on November 7-8, 2017 at the Graduate School of Business of the University of Cape Town in Cape Town, South Africa. This international conference will bring together influential women leaders from various countries across Africa and the globe. It is hosted by Leading Women of Africa, the University of Cape Town, and IEDC Bled School of Management.

Third, “Theorizing Women & Leadership—Different Spaces, Different Conversations: Theories and Practices for These Times” is a special issue in progress for Gender in Management: An International Journal. Paper deadline is October 29, 2017. The special issue editors are Professor Carole Elliott (Roehampton Business School), Sue Pritchard (University College London), and Dr. Valerie Stead (Lancaster University Management School).

Fourth, there is an open call for chapters for a new book “Diversity in Diversity Management,” to be published by Emerald with editors Dr. Andri Georgiadou (UCLan Cyprus, Cyprus), Prof. Maria Alejandra Gonzalez-Perez (Universidad EAFIT, Colombia), and Prof. Miguel R. Olivas-Lujan (Clarion University of Pennsylvania, United States). Chapter proposals are due by December 20, 2017. See more details regarding this call at the link above.

Fifth, the 2018 Gender, Work and Organisation 10th Biennial International Interdisciplinary Conference will be hosted in Sydney by Macquarie University from Wednesday June 13 - Saturday June 16, 2018. Abstract submissions are due on November 1, 2017. The conveners of a specific stream (“Corporate Responsibility, Gender and Feminist Organizing in a Neoliberal Age”) are seeking submissions (see attachment).

Sixth, there will be a Leadership Excellence and Gender in Organizations Research to Practice Conference on March 21-23, 2018 to be held at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. The purpose of this conference is to bridge research and evidence-based practice on the creation and sustainment of work, organizational, managerial, and occupational environments to support gender equality, leader excellence, and career success in organizations. See the call for abstracts for details (November 1st, 2017 deadline).

Finally, I keep my past monthly emails on this webpage, so you can always find past announcements. I will see a bunch of you in a week or so in Brussels at the International Leadership Conference, and I hope to see others in Africa in November!
Enjoy October!

Susan

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Stream Proposal: Corporate Responsibility, Gender and Feminist Organizing in a Neoliberal Age

Stream Convenors:
Kate Grosser, RMIT, Melbourne, AUSTRALIA
Charlotte Karam, American University of Beirut, LEBANON
Deanna Kemp, The University of Queensland, AUSTRALIA
Lauren McCarthy, Royal Holloway, University of London, ENGLAND
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The intersection of business and feminism as both theory and praxis has in recent years been the topic of ferocious debate within academic journals. Just as frequently, this debate has taken place on business and feminist blogs and social media sites where social movements are blooming. As the power of business grows both economically and politically, how can we address the gendered impacts of business on society? Should feminists work with corporations on gender equality issues to push through change, or should they protect against co-option and work against them (Kemp, Keenan & Gronow, 2010)? Or can social movements guided by feminist ideologies do both in novel and hybrid ways, leading to the erasure of the oft-assumed binary: business and society?

What is the role of businesses as they engage in ‘gendered’ corporate responsibility efforts (Karam & Jamali, 2013), and in which ways might ‘neoliberal feminism’ (Prugl, 2015) offer challenges and opportunities for feminist organizing? Within this context, which women are assembled under the notion of ‘market feminism’ (Kantola & Squires, 2012), leading to questions of liberation from what, and for what ends (McCarthy, forthcoming)? How do these ‘empowerment’ and ‘liberation’ aims relate to feminist social movement agendas in local contexts, or SME markets? In this stream, we expand upon previous streams on ‘corporate responsibility and gendered organizations’ (GWO, 2014) and ‘the rise of moderate feminisms’ (GWO, 2016) to further scrutinize the fascinating, yet always contentious relationship between business and feminisms, in their various forms.

In many countries CSR has emerged alongside the rise of neo-liberal economics and has partly been used to legitimize the transition to market-based economies through structural reforms (Özkazanç-Pan, 2017). We are guided by critical scholarship derived from feminist work at the intersection of gender and organization studies to suggest that CSR has resulted in gendered and unequal outcomes for many women rather than the harbinger of empowerment or better working conditions (Grosser and Moon, 2017). As Hayhurst suggests, CSR can function to replicate existing forms of patriarchy while holding individual women responsible for their own economic welfare as governments are released from their obligations to citizens under corporate-led responsibility efforts (2013). Relatedly, feminist political economy scholarship has also analyzed CSR with hostility, with Fraser (2013) lamenting that feminism has simply become ‘capitalism’s handmaiden’. Yet research on gender and business needs feminist theory more than ever (Grosser and Moon 2017; Karam & Jamali, 2015) to examine the extant structural
arrangement in the realms of the economic, political and social that are not being changed or challenged by CSR scholarship or practice.

We contend that the rise of the neoliberal era- and CSR- offers both opportunities and challenges for feminist movements. We seek to better theorize the role of corporate responsibility efforts and practices in addressing gender inequality in different context. CSR has developed from its philanthropic foundations and broadened from its narrow association with instrumental interests and PR. New political theories of CSR particularly in relation to transnational and multinational corporations, for example, view it as a process of contested governance involving business, government and civil society organizations (Moon, 2002). Here CSR is conceived of as ‘a multi-actor and multi-level system of rules, standards, norms, and expectations’ (Levy and Kaplan, 2008:438), involving ‘a political deliberation process that aims at setting and resetting the standards of global business behavior’ (Scherer and Palazzo, 2008:426). The importance of critically exploring the intersections between business and governance may be particularly important where the national business systems are unstable, changing or failing (Jamali and Karam, 2016). Here the “responsibility free space” (Donaldson and Dunfee 1994) simultaneously heightens the potential risk and/or the positive agentic role that different business actors can play in local feminist movements.

Since the 2014 GWO stream we have seen an explosion in attention to gender inequality on corporate social responsibility (CSR) agendas (ICRW, 2016). Increasingly businesses work alongside government, civil society and corporate partners on gender equality issues, opening up questions around new configurations of global governance (Bexell, 2012; Grosser, 2016). This is not just confined to traditional workplaces in the form of diversity policies and practices, but has reached corporate value chains in the global South in the form of ‘women’s empowerment’ programmes (Prugl, 2015) and non-traditional contexts such as mining communities (Keenan, Kemp & Ramsey, 2016; Lauwo, 2016) and post-conflict development zones (Karam & Jamali, 2015). A growing number of multi-stakeholder initiatives, such as the Women’s Empowerment Principles have also grown in strength: and hailed as new leverage for promoting gender equality (Kilgour, 2013), or lamented as a sanitized vision of a previously critical social movement (Bexell, 2012).

In this context, our steam focuses on what role feminisms plays in CSR, and what CSR might offer feminisms? We seek insights into the dangers, opportunities, strategies, framings and constellations of feminist activity related to promoting gender equality within businesses- and out into the societies, communities and households intrinsically linked with business activity. Indeed, one of the benefits of exploring business and CSR through feminist lenses is that this enables, indeed requires, us to examine gender and diversity issues not just with respect to the workplace, but with regard to a whole range of stakeholders including customers, consumers, suppliers, workers, families, and the ecological environment - indeed throughout corporate value chains (Grosser, McCarthy & Kilgour, 2016).

Thus, we encourage theoretical, conceptual and empirical contributions that draw upon various strands in the GOS, diversity or intersectionality literatures, including post-colonial, transnational, political economy and other feminist frameworks that attend to the intersections of business, society and gender broadly. Themes to be addressed include, but are not limited to:
• Feminist strategies for change ‘with’ or ‘against’ business
• Social movements and feminisms in the context of transitions economies and CSR programs
• Feminist theories, gendered organizations and CSR
• Gender, CSR and the marketisation of feminism
• Gender, CSR and new configurations of global governance
• Gender in multi-stakeholder CSR initiatives
• The intersections of gender, class and race in the field of corporate responsibility
• Gender and CSR in specific sector contexts
• Gender, CSR and the ecological environment
• Gender and CSR throughout business value chains

For submission details go to: www.mq.edu.au/events/gwosydney Abstracts are due November 1, 2017.

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References


