EDITORIAL

Profitable margins

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The seeds of this special issue were sown at the 2006 Annual ANZAM Conference, hosted by Central Queensland University at Yeppoon. After one of the Gender and Diversity in Organizations (GDO) stream sessions, the three of us were excited about the quality of the work we were seeing presented. We considered how we could move the work from the confines of a conference stream, to reach a larger audience. With the revamped *Journal of Management & Organization* (ISSN 1833-3672) having just been launched, we thought it timely to plan for a special issue, where we could highlight the relevance of the GDO scholarship to the wider academy. Hence the theme 'Profitable margins: Gender and Diversity informing management and organizational studies'.

Our theme struck a chord. We received 25 manuscripts from authors from a dozen countries. The final seven (7) full papers we have included demonstrate a breadth of scholarship highlighting the complexity of the issues around gender and diversity, how these influence the daily practices within organizations and the performance of management, not just in Australia and New Zealand, but internationally. The variety of approaches taken by the authors demonstrates the richness of the methodologies embraced by those engaging in gender and diversity research.

We were also excited that Amanda Sinclair and Leonie Still agreed to participate in the special issue. Both women contributed substantially to the burgeoning women in management literature in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Australia, and influenced the public dialogue around women's representation in management. Their willingness to share their reflections on their work adds a valuable dimension to this special issue.

Leonie Still's groundbreaking work on women in management from the 1980s (Still 1985) made women's absence from management visible to policy makers and the public. Over the next two decades, Leonie's work continued to demonstrate women's relative disadvantage in the corporate world and their experiences in small business (Still 1985; Still, Guerin et al. 1992; Still 1993; Still 1997; Still and Timms 2000; Still and Walker 2003; Still 2004; Still and Simmons 2005; Still 2006). Based on solid empirical studies, the work was very important in mapping the terrain. It was a classic workplace analysis that focused on women and addressed the important issue of why women continued to be under-represented in management. Significantly, Leonie's work attracted an audience beyond the academy and into the popular press, and requests for investigative research came from companies in the private sec-

tor and the public sector. Her profile as a senior academic gave credibility to the issues she raised in both the Australian business and academic settings. In this issue, Leonie Still (2009) provides a summary of the major public policy shifts she observed over the decades. Judith Pringle's response (2009) to Leonie's paper provides a similarly important overview of the New Zealand context. In their signature styles, Leonie's and Judith's reviews (2009) provide a valuable resource for those seeking to better understand the context for policy making in Australia and New Zealand in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Amanda Sinclair's willingness to be interviewed by the three of us (Sheridan, Pringle and Strachan 2009) was a high point in the process of compiling this special issue. Sharing her experience through rich storytelling, Amanda prompted us to reflect on our own experiences. Amanda's success in connecting with people – through her books, her articles in academic journals and in practitioner focused media (for example *AFR Boss*) (Sinclair 1994; 1998; 2000; 2004; 2005; 2007) and in her consulting work – through challenging current thinking was evident in our interview. She wanted to know why we were doing the special issue. Why did we think it was important for gender and diversity research to influence the broader management community? Her questioning caught us by surprise – wasn't it obvious? But as we sought to respond coherently, we saw the value of her probing the unspoken. Rather than assuming our intentions were obvious, her questions prompted us to articulate that through this special issue we have our eyes on transformational change and the inclusion of those outside the hegemony. Some of the findings and insights included in this collection of papers are not commonly seen in mainstream management journals, where hypotheses are more likely to be the order of the day than self-reflection. We believe the rich and innovative research in the gender and diversity 'margins' can enliven mainstream thinking, and through bringing together diverse scholarship in this special issue, we may help to achieve this.

Two papers we believe reflect the maturity and robustness of gender scholarship, and provide a rigorous critique of organisational efforts to engage with gender more fully, are those by Joan Eveline and Carol Bacchi (2009), and by Anne Ross-Smith and Colleen Chesterman (2009). The Eveline and Bacchi paper (2009) demonstrates how the 'doing' of gender analyses enables the 'seeing' of the impediments. Through their collaborative project with public sector authorities in Western Australia and South Australia, Eveline and Bacchi's goal was to develop gender analyses guidelines appropriate to the organisational context. The strength of their approach lies in drawing together work from feminist policy studies with feminist organisational studies. Their discussion of the processes and impediments to such collaborative work provides important insights for research practice. As they found, the commitment of senior management to change may be evident in the rhetoric, but the practical constraints of working with bureaucratic, hierarchical and time-poor organisations meant those involved with gender analyses were most commonly junior women. While they were able to learn through the project and make sense of the intricacies of gender positioning, their influence was limited. Until the rules of relevance within organisations include gender, we will continue to see senior management removed from the learning that can happen when engaging with gender analyses.

As Leonie Still's overview of the Australian policy scene (2009) demonstrates, career opportunities for women have opened up over the past thirty years. Whether or not the choices are open to the 'modern day career woman' are 'primarily up to her', as Still concludes (2009), is taken up further in the paper by Anne Ross-Smith and Colleen Chesterman (2009). The ambivalence and reticence expressed by women in senior management about pursuing more 'progression' is the focus of this paper. While their research suggests some cultural change is occurring in the organisations where women are taking on more senior roles, they also highlight how women's own gender identity in shaping career decisions intersects with the contin-

ued existence of structural impediments which shape pathways to senior management. The challenge for organisations is to meaningfully engage with the interplay of persons and their context.

Identity is an emerging area of gender and diversity research and this is seen in our third paper by Inne Gremmen and Yvonne Benschop (2009). Through their exploration of the relationship between professional identities at work and the 'doing' of gender (West and Zimmerman 1987), they demonstrate how a feminist social constructivist perspective can add to management scholarship. While existing identity work in organisation studies often ignores gender, or invokes it as a dichotomous category, the work of Gremmen and Benschop (2009) furthers our understanding of how normative assumptions concerning gender develop and maintain professional identities, and in doing so, contribute to the production and reproduction of gender inequality in organisations. Their case study vividly demonstrates the fluidity of discourses of gender and work. Further, in their own self-reflection, they raise an important point for gender and diversity researchers more broadly – how do we name what we see without reifying the very stereotypes we are seeking to critique (a question which is also raised in the paper by Irene Ryan, 2009). The inclusion of Gremmen and Benschop's personal reflections adds to the richness of their arguments, and resonates with the valuing of 'inner reflection, self-questioning and narration (especially testimony and anecdote)' (Sefcovic and Bifano 2004: 56), a characteristic of feminist research which is taken up further in our interview with Amanda Sinclair.

In the next papers we see how analyses have evolved beyond the experiences of women and men to more diverse identity groups. While some critics are concerned that such a broadened focus risks a submergence of gender issues, it also highlights the fluidity and intersectionality of social identities in the complexity of our organisational lives. Irene Ryan's analysis (2009) of gender, age and sport in New Zealand explores the intersectionality of gen-

der and age and points to an emerging paradigm within feminist scholarship. In describing her choice of memory work, Ryan (2009) takes up the theme raised in Amanda Sinclair's interview (2009) about the importance to her of including 'my own voice'. This article provides insights into a novel method for examining the complex and shifting intersections of categories of difference.

Austrian researchers Regine Bendl, Alexander Fleischmann and Roswitha Hofmann (2009) suggest how we may critique diversity management from a queer perspective before going on to analyse three multi-national corporations' codes of conduct through a queer lens. Queer perspectives destabilise fixed demographic identities specifically challenging the 'heterosexual matrix' and its heteronormative assumptions asking if 'femininity and masculinity are mutually exclusive'. Consequently queer theories enable us to unveil the functions of binary categories in different contexts.

An organisational perspective is taken in the paper by Jawad Syed and Robin Kramar (2009) in which they develop a conceptual framework for 'socially responsible diversity management'. Following from Still's and Pringle's descriptive reviews of the major themes in the gender research over the past three decades, Syed and Kramar (2009) proffer a way forward which seeks to reconcile the social justice aims associated with the earlier affirmative action movement with the business benefits associated with the more recent attention to diversity management. Their multi-level approach to socially responsible diversity management seeks to cross disciplines and engage with contemporary debates.

The masculine work environment in the form of the police force is examined by Alberto Melgoza and Julie Wolfram-Cox (2009) who use a liberal feminist approach to explore how men distance themselves from women and exclude them from the dominant group, and how this is played out in behaviour and emotions. In their analysis, they utilise the concept of aversive racism to introduce the concept of aversive sexism. Their work points to rich sites

for further research concerning gender and social identity and emotional intelligence, while at the same time drawing attention to what can be done to change current practice through training.

This edition of *Journal of Management & Organization* (also released as a course reader under ISBN 978-1-921348-25-9) brings together some key subject matter and methodological issues from the gender and diversity scholarship that so often exists in specialist academic journals. We believe the articles in this issue point to the vigorous and lively scholarship surrounding gender and diversity in 2009 and flags fruitful opportunities for future research. We also hope that these articles will open new vistas of ideas and research for some readers, while keeping others informed of the latest thinking in their areas of interest.

In concluding, we want to acknowledge with sadness that Joan Eveline, a leading Australian scholar in gender and diversity, and one of the contributing authors to this special issue, passed away in July 2009, before this, her final journal article, was released. Joan's published works – books, articles, conference papers – have influenced scholars nationally and internationally. Her work in the early 1990s challenging the common framing of women's disadvantage to bring into focus men's advantage was groundbreaking, and she continued to ask the hard questions in her ongoing scholarship. Joan's warmth and generosity as a scholar was cherished by many and she will be greatly missed.

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