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**9th Biennial International Interdisciplinary conference, 29th June-1st July, 2016
Keele University, UK**

GWO2016 Call for Abstracts

**Foreign Workers:
On The Other Side of Gendered, Political and Ethical Borders**

Stream Convenors

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What does it mean to be a foreign worker in today's global economy and amidst the current refugee debate? How does being foreign intersect with norms and assumptions about gender and sexuality? What are the ethical ramifications of this foreignness as it plays out in organizations and in labour markets? The questions we wish to explore in this stream are borne out in a long history of the exclusion, abuse and discrimination of foreign workers, especially those who are women and sexual minorities. The conditions of the contemporary economy and conflict all but exacerbate this situation as the intersection of technology and the neoliberalisation of the global economy has ushered in a vast expansion of labour mobility across the world.

We are interested in examining the ethical status and treatment of foreign workers and in particular how legal regulations and work practices are influenced by assumptions and norms about sexuality, gender, race, (refugee) status and nationality. This interest is buttressed by how the notion of foreignness serves to construct specific categories of workers and establish ethical hierarchies between them. Centrally such categories relate to differences in how people are treated, the rights they are granted, the forms of discrimination they face, and the freedoms that are open to them. That hierarchies are organized on both sexual and gendered grounds, risks situations where as foreign workers, women and LGBTI people can be exposed to ethical subjugation on account of their foreignness, and a dissolution of their rights on account of them being deemed secondary to their male or heterosexual counterparts.

To be a foreigner is to have crossed an ethical as well as a political border. Beyond being a national of a different state, to be a foreigner is often associated with being a stranger, an outlander and an alien, without access to the rights granted to locals. This is especially the case when one's foreignness is located in the postcolonial move from east to west, and south to north. By way of example, nowhere is this seen more starkly than in the long held conflation of control of access to work, control of migration and control of women's bodies. This is not a new phenomenon. In the late 1800s, the Page Act in the United States targeted Asian women migrating for sex work. The act restricted Chinese women from entering the United States by effectively conflating Chinese women's migration with enslaved prostitution. Some hundred years later in the 1970s similar practices were in place in Britain. Government policy stipulated that to enter marriage a South Asian woman had to be a virgin. Enforcing this, British immigration officers subjected prospective Indian brides to virginity tests at the border. These are but a few examples, but they serve to illustrate how foreign workers are unequal as concerns employment, legal status, social standing, and labour market equality. Cast as a double 'other', the foreign workers who do not fit with white male heteronormative expectations occupy a special ethical position, one where they are, as the etymological trace back to the Latin *foranus* suggests, on the outside. As has long been the case foreigners, slaves, non-heterosexuals and women are excluded from the public space of the polis, not worthy of the same rights as others.

Care needs to be taken not to generalise, and so we are calling for papers that consider individual differences, context specific locations and dynamic processes through which the sexed and gendered

category of the foreign worker is constructed. We are also interested in how the category of the foreign worker varies historically both due to the changes in law and government policy, as well as in culture and society. In addition, we wish to explore the ways in which changes in law and culture impact organisations and their work and employment practices. Finally, we welcome investigations of how social imaginary and immigration regulations are incorporated into worker's perception of the self and constitutive of labouring subjectivities. In the context of the social imaginary and historical practices in which the category of the foreign worker is rooted, we are also interested in examining instances of exclusion, discrimination, incorporation and resistance that this intersection produces in relation to the possibility and experience of work. Papers might consider, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Historical account of sexed and gendered distinctions applied in labour markets
- Intersections of nationality, (refugee) status, race, and gender as related to workplace discrimination
- Changes to labour market and immigration laws and their effects on men and women individual workers and/or organization's work and employment relations
- Modes of resistance and subversion by foreign workers to gender and sexual discrimination
- Country specific gender and sexuality issues for foreign workers as they relate to legal rights and cultural norms
- Political asylum and the rights of foreigners in the labour market
- Gendered distinctions of wage discrimination amongst foreign workers
- Social status and legal protection of migrant domestic workers
- Transgender workers and the limits of employment rights
- Gendered divisions of labour amongst foreign workers
- Gender and the work of illegal immigrants
- Human Resource Management, gender, sexual identity and foreign workers
- Gendered dimensions of the relationship between multiple generations of foreign workers
- The implications of national difference in ethical and cultural norms regarding gender and sexuality for foreign workers
- Gendered wage differentials between foreign workers
- Forced labour as a mode of gendered work
- The female and LGBTI expatriate as foreign worker
- The experience of female and LGBTI professionals doing foreign work
- Trade unionism and labour organization of foreign workers

Abstracts of approximately 500 words (ONE page, Word document NOT PDF, single spaced, excluding references, no header, footers or track changes) are invited by 1st November 2015 with decisions on acceptance to be made by stream leaders within one month. All abstracts will be peer reviewed. New and young scholars with 'work in progress' papers are welcomed. Papers can be theoretical or theoretically informed empirical work. In the case of co-authored papers, ONE person should be identified as the corresponding author. Note that due to restrictions of space, multiple submissions by the same author will not be timetabled. Abstracts should be emailed to: carl.rhodes@mq.edu.au. Abstracts should include FULL contact details, including your name, department, institutional affiliation, mailing address, and e-mail address. *State the title of the stream to which you are submitting your abstract.* *Note that no funding, fee waiver, travel or other bursaries are offered for attendance at GWO2016*.