



## IAMCR Symposium

### (Gender and Communication Section/GEN)

#### *Call for Papers*

With a focus on intersectionality, simultaneity, and reflexivity about the self in context, confrontation of issues of power even within marginal groups, the symposium “Being Marginal-Performing Raced and Gendered Labour,” to be held online on Saturday 3 July 2021 sponsored by the *Gender and Communication Section* of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), aims to engage with the layers of being a marginal woman, asking the question of what intersectionality looks like in academia with special reference to the field of Communication. We want to turn the feminist lenses we work with back on ourselves, our practices, our contexts, our lives.

The symposium invites submissions from women in academia who are reflexive about the intersections of identity that they are located in, and prepared to critically interrogate their own privilege where relevant.

**The deadline for the submission of your 300 word abstract is 1 April 2021.** The notification of accepted abstracts will be on the 15 April and full papers are due on the 15 June. Accepted papers will be presented online at the GEN/IAMCR symposium on 3 July 2021. Participants will be e-mailed the webinar Zoom link beforehand.

Subtopics (including but not limited to):

- Prevailing discourses in different contexts that exclude or limit the work of marginal women
- Recognition and acceptance of Communication research produced by minority women scholars as bona fide and integral across the leading associations and organizations in the discipline
- Incorporation of curricula and content into the Communication discipline that speaks to diversity rather than having such content exist in silos and/or sporadically across programs
- The necessity and evolution of self-care and coping strategies
- Opportunities and limitations of diversity programs
- Alliances and oppositions in Communication academic relationships
- Straddling domestic, cultural and workspaces
- Experiments in challenging the status quo

**Discussant:** Professor Radhika Gajjala (Bowling Green State University)

**Organizers:** Dr. Maha Bashri (United Arab Emirates University) and Dr. Shobha Avadhani (National University of Singapore)

### **IAMCR Gender and Communication Section**

Wajiha Raza Rizvi, Co-chair (Film Museum Society | Beaconhouse National University)

Carolina Matos, Co-chair (City University of London)

Shweta Arpit Srivastava, Vice-chair (Monmouth College)

Patricia Núñez-Gómez, Vice-chair (Complutense University of Madrid)

Dr. Maha Bashri (United Arab Emirates University) and Dr. Shobha Avadhani (National University of Singapore) will be working toward publication of presented papers in a journal special issue in 2022. **Please send your abstracts of 300 words (max) and brief bio to both: [maha.bashri@uaeu.ac.ae](mailto:maha.bashri@uaeu.ac.ae) and [cnmsa@nus.edu.sg](mailto:cnmsa@nus.edu.sg)**

### **Being Marginal - Performing Raced and Gendered Emotional Labor**

The 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing was groundbreaking in many ways, not least because it represented a large-scale focus on the aim to achieve equality, development and peace around the world. Twenty-six years later, in 2021, when IAMCR's annual conference is hosted online by USIU-Africa in Nairobi, Kenya, it is relevant to ask how far women in the field of media and communications research have progressed. In particular, given the conference's theme "Reimagining the Digital Future: Building inclusiveness, respect and reciprocity", the important question of the state of women in the margins of the field needs to be foregrounded.

The issue of lack of representation has been a concern for scholars on the periphery. This was the focus of the 2019 ICA pre-conference titled "CommunicationSoWhite", inspired by an article with the same name published in the Journal of Communication by Chakravartty et al. (2018). The article and the pre-conference drew attention to the erasure of scholars of color, but also considered the exclusion of other marginal groups. More specifically, Black and Garvis (2018) engaged with themes related to the lives of women in academia, highlighting the need to consider past, present and future experiences. Muhs, Niemann, Gonzalez and Harris (2012) presented the lived realities of women of color, with the multiple narratives of the writers in this edited volume exposing the intersections of race, gender and class in the academic world. It is necessary to reconceptualize the intersections of race, gender, class, etc. as simultaneous processes of identity in contemporary institutions and social practice (Holovino, 2017).

Indeed, by coining the term "intersectionality", Crenshaw (1989) drew attention to the need to consider multiple complex layers to discourses of marginalization. Even where there are explicitly stated policies relating to diversity within academia, Sara Ahmed's work entitled "On Being Included" engages with the contentions of diversity as a symbolic commitment versus the actual diverse bodies that exist at the margins of the institution.

Building on this work and acknowledging that we in the media and communications field are at a defining moment 26 years after the Beijing Women's Conference, 64 years after IAMCR's beginning, 31 years after Crenshaw's coinage, and just over a year into #CommunicationSoWhite, our symposium seeks to connect to this discourse of privilege and oppression. We aim to provide a platform for marginal women to be reflexive about their intersectional identities, and how these identities overlap and position them in the flows of power and knowledge.

With regards to the role of women within their institutions, this symposium aims to ask: How do marginal academic women negotiate and navigate relationships, structures, gaps, and opportunities within their institutions and beyond? What coping strategies are available to them (e.g., communities, safe spaces, etc.)? We specifically want to explore the need to create and present a self-narrative - to take control of the narrative/discourse about diversity, experiences, topics and subject matter that we research (or never research). We see this taking control of the narrative as a way to construct the legitimacy of marginal women in academic institutions.

In the last couple of years, the Communication discipline has witnessed serious conversations about the status of minority and women scholars (e.g., ICA's #CommunicationSoWhite and the backlash the National Communication Association of the United States -NCA- encountered as a result of its selection method for the Distinguished Scholars in the discipline). The existing unequal structures in the discipline lead to the erasure of labor and its delegitimization when it is produced by minority and female scholars. The intersection and simultaneity of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc. becomes a burden on women in the discipline rather than a strength reflecting the mosaic of diversity in contemporary societies. Their research, production, and labor are heavily scrutinized and/or criticized and many a time denigrated to a lesser status than that of other colleagues. When minority groups speak out against these unequal structures they are labeled as difficult, angry, an uncouth. Consequently, this undermines the concerns of these women in their respective institutions, associations, and the discipline as whole.