Emotions, objects and meaning in organizations.

July 3 – 5, Liverpool, UK

Convenors:
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For over 30 years the ideas of emotional management, emotional work and emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) have been used in organisation studies to explore how emotions are linked to power and control (Hancock and Tyler, 2001; Fineman, 1999, 2008), the body (Hassard et al, 2000) and experiences of customers, colleagues and communities, bosses and workplaces. This has been characterized as a shift from “bounded rationality” (cf. Simon, 1976) to “bounded emotionality” (Mumby and Putnam, 1992). Traditionally emotions have been studied within service interactions (see Ladhari and Bigné, 2016), where the customer appears to be driving emotional management (Hochschild, 1983), and this has been expanded into the study of aesthetic labour and bodily displays of emotion (Hassard et al, 2000). Yet, there are new possibilities for understanding emotions outside of service interactions, in particular in the knowledge economy in areas such as academia, professional industries and the creative industries. For these fields, concepts of creativity, innovation and knowledge are key and reliant on the employees’ expertise. However, the worker’s own emotions and the link to the context, in particular the objects which relate to that context, are often underexplored. Gagliardi (1990, iv) highlights how in organizations objects ‘speak, although we seldom listen, and through them we communicate and act, even if unaware’. Sensemaking explored through objects can shed light on organizational meaning since these often combine personal, emotional, aesthetic and instrumental signifiers (Rafaeli and Vilnai-Yavetz, 2004).

As a result, this stream focuses on how objects, emotions, and practices, embedded in knowledge work, are interrelated and how people make sense of these relations in the organisational context. Linking to the conference theme of ‘Crisis’, we aim to explore how objects and emotions relate to each other, as well as to times and places of change. Ahmed (2014; 2010) has argued that emotions often become ‘sticky’ as objects become associated with particular affects upon us, including pain, fear, shame, love and happiness. This stream investigates how objects and emotions relate within a range of industries, but specifically those associated with services or knowledge work. This call invites papers which explore how objects which are essential to labour might shape the experience of workers, and reflect power relations which are embedded within social relations in the workplace and wider society.

We encourage contributions on emotions in organisations from a variety of critical perspectives, looking for new directions which explore how objects in organisations become associated with emotion and affect. This may include:

- Emotions and affect: emotional objects, ‘sociability’ of emotions between objects
- Clothing: Emotions related to clothing associated with gendered, ethnic or religious social categories; clothing and power relations; clothing and the body; uniforms and office wear.
- Technology: IT, the internet, mobile devices and wearable technology; organisation of emotions, affect and the body through technology
Materiality: the relation between emotions, socio-materiality, power and control

Bodily emotional engagement with objects: touch and sensations; emotional impressions on the body

Objects, emotions, and leadership practices: the role of objects in shaping leaders, their work practices and emotions

Exploring a range of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ emotions: happiness, joy, achievement; anger, frustration, disappointment; enchantment and disenchantment; problematizing and exploring the distinction between positive and negative emotions.

References

SUBMISSION DETAILS
Please send abstracts or any questions to: Carolyn Hunter at Carolyn.Hunter@york.ac.uk
Abstracts should be 500 words, A4 paper, single spaced, 12 point font.
Abstract submission deadline: January 31st, 2017
Notification of paper acceptance: February 15th, 2017

CONTACT DETAILS:
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EXPECTED NUMBER OF SUBMISSIONS: 15

Stream convenors profiles:
Carolyn Hunter is Lecturer in Organisation Theory and Behaviour at York Management School, University of York. She has particular expertise in humour, play and fun corporate cultures; organisational space; gender, emotions and embodiment; and the creative industries. Currently she is investigating the working lives of children’s authors as an example of precarious and insecure employment. Email: Carolyn.Hunter@york.ac.uk
Lara Pecis is a lecturer in Organisation Studies at Lancaster University Management School. Her work focuses on issues of gender in innovation, knowledge intensive organisations, and emotions in relation to innovation and ICT usage. Her work is informed by a number of theoretical perspectives, including sociomaterial and practice-based approaches, agential realism, and post-structural feminism. Her most recent research investigates the role of mobile technologies in organizations and their effects on employees' behaviour and well-being. Lara’s work has been published in Human Relations. Email: l.pecis@lancaster.ac.uk

Ilaria Boncori is a Senior Lecturer in Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship at the University of Essex. Her research interests currently focus on emotions, gender and sexuality in organization, equality & diversity, and academic careers inter alia. She is particularly interested in the use of ethnographic and qualitative methods. Ilaria is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and a Fellow of the Leadership Foundation. Email: iboncori@essex.ac.uk