Call for papers for an online workshop and journal special issue - Names and gender

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Dear colleagues,

We invite you to submit an abstract of 150 words on personal names and gender for inclusion in an online workshop to be held on 22 September 2023. Selected papers will be published in a special issue of a Scopus-listed journal in 2024.

Dis/continuity in the representation of gender in names across languages

Editors: Ivona Barešová (Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic) and Jane Pilcher (Nottingham Trent University, UK)

Personal (or given) names in many countries are typically sex-specific, whether this is legally enforced or completely unregulated, and gender-neutral names are rather rare. In some languages, such as English and Japanese, names are not linguistically obligated to indicate a person’s sex category suggesting that the representation of sex and gender in names in these languages is socially motivated. Previous research on name selection in the United States pointed out that gender-neutral names tend to evolve from masculine names, and are seen as more advantageous for girls than boys, to whom sex stereotyping is more rigidly applied (Lieberson et al, 2000). However, recent developments suggest that such tendencies change over time and vary across cultures. For example, parenting and baby name websites report and reflect an increasing interest in names which do not indicate a child’s sex or gender. In Japan, not only are gender-neutral names on the rise but a number of them were originally used only for girls. In other languages, such as Czech, gender markings are linguistically obligatory, meaning that choosing to use gender-neutral names may have a larger impact on the language long-term.

Our main goal in this special issue is to advance the present state of knowledge about gender-related personal naming practices especially in contexts, observed in many countries, of recent shifts around gender equality and in conceptualizations of gender as non-binary. We aim to bring together a collection of studies dealing with gender in personal or given names across a range of languages and cultures. Contributions will incorporate the latest findings about current preferences for expressing gender in names, identifying regional and cultural
specifics, and their interactions with more general trends.

We welcome contributions exploring recent trends in name selection with respect to gender in any language culture and from a variety of perspectives, and grounded in a range of disciplines – anthropology, linguistics, psychology, sociology, and other fields. Topics might include:

- transitions in gender marking on names
- the emergence of new gender-neutral names
- linguistic expressions of gender in names
- the nature and characteristics of current gender-specific and gender-neutral names
- current gender-related naming practices and their background
- motivations for the bestowal of gender-neutral names
- the influence of a gender-neutral name on the young person's self-perception
- the perception of gender-neutral names bestowed upon girls/boys

Submissions must be in English and should be original research or general review papers about these topics.

Important dates:

Online workshop abstract deadline: 31 January 2023

Acceptance announcement: 31 March 2023

The date of the online workshop: 22 September 2023

Manuscript submission deadline: 30 November 2023

Abstracts should be e-mailed to ivona.baresova@upol.cz

Contact Info:

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