

“Are you talking to me?”: Macho industries, power relations and structural barriers to equality, diversity and inclusion at work

Stream Organisers:

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Stream outline:

Many industries such as I.T., Engineering, Mining, Manufacturing, etc. have been labelled as ‘macho industries’ that are male dominated, structured to enable discriminatory practices in policies and procedures and where women often feel powerless under masculine management (Kwesiga and Bell, 2004).

Following Giddens (1984), we argue that social structures are virtual and they exist not in the practice itself but outside as the rules that guide the action. People would be aware of these rules and be inspired by them in their actions and relations in situated contexts. Thus structures do not exist in their own right and they do not have reality other than the properties they bestow. Although social structures are often seen as a stable, constraining phenomenon like walls of a building, they are defined as both outcome and resource for people’s action. They are always constraining and enabling. Thus, we claim that organizational structures only exist in people’s minds and in their actions.

Giddens (1984) argues that individuals are not the slaves of the structure, but have the power to act otherwise, hence power can be described as ‘transformative capacity’ or ‘capacity to make a difference, since the loss of the capacity to make a difference is also powerlessness (Rose, 2000). If organizational structures are simply the figments of our imagination and if we have the capacity to make a difference, are we the only concrete barriers to equality, diversity and inclusion at work?

This stream invites theoretically informed papers as well as empirically based ones from a range of disciplines that explore the complex relations between individual and groups at work with specific focus on the power relations in diverse organizational structures. Papers are encouraged to explore the phenomena in a variety of organizational settings such as public, private and voluntary sector organizations at international, national and local levels.

Possible themes include:

Power relations between individuals and groups in organizations, issues of masculinity and femininity, widening inclusion and/or career development for organizational minorities such as lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) workers, ethnic and religious minorities, etc. Comparisons between different industries and different organization types, international and regional comparisons.

Keywords:

Macho industries, power relations, organizational structures, structural barriers

Publication plans:

A special issue in the journal, Equality Diversity and Inclusion (Emerald Press).