

Illuminating, Eliminating, Inequality Regimes

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Stream outline:

This stream will discuss the theoretical concept of inequality regimes within organisational contexts. Inequality regimes are patterns of relationships which extend systems of power inequalities. Inequality regimes are fluid and changing (Acker, (2006) yet are remarkably resistance to overturning. Although the concept has been around some time- emanating from Kanter's (1977) notion of opportunity structures, it has been given new energy through two more recent texts: Acker's (2006) 'Inequality regimes: Gender, class and race in organizations' in *Gender and Society* and Connell's ongoing work summarised (2002) as 'Gender relations' in the book *Gender Relations*.

Acker focuses on interactions between gender and class, defining inequality regimes within organizations as: "systematic disparities between participants in power and control over resources, and outcomes" (2006, p.443). Workplace outcomes can include: how to organize work, opportunities for promotion, security in employment, pay and other monetary rewards, respect and pleasures in work and work relations. Connell deconstructs gender relations through the multiple inter-linked lens of: power relations, productive relations, emotional relations and symbolic relations (2002, p.58-65). There are, of course, additional sources of inspiration for conceptualising regimes in of inequality of power that participants may wish to draw on, for example, Bourdieu's theory of social practice, Walby (1997) and socialist feminist analyses.

Papers accepted into the discussion of this stream will need to state clearly their theoretical underpinning of inequality. We also invite empirically based papers from a range of disciplines that explore the inequality regimes however they are constructed. Gender, race, class, sexuality etc, are enacted within micro-political relations shaped by the institutions and the social environments within which they function. As these regimes are linked to inequality in the surrounding society and its politics, history and culture; any submission needs to note the key contextual factors (e.g. nation, region) within which the paper is positioned.

Possible themes may include (but are not limited to):

- Applying Acker's inequality regimes to a specific organizational situation
- Applying Connell's four dimensions of gender (to gender or other social identities) to a specific organizational dynamic
- Leveraging moments of change to reduce or overturn inequality

- Considering the recession as a time to create a shift in inequality regimes
- Using Bourdieu's multiple constructions of capitals to map inequality regimes
- Discuss the theoretical construct as a mechanism to strategise changes to organisational inequality regimes
- Explore the effect of globalisation processes on established inequality regimes in different national and local organisational contexts

Keywords:

Inequality regimes, gender, ethnicity, power, organisational change,

Publication plans:

If there is a degree of coherency in the submissions we would propose a special issue topic to one of: *Gender and Society, Equal Opportunities International, Gender, Work and Organization*.

References

Acker, J. Inequality regimes: gender, class, and race in organizations. *Gender & Society*, 20 (4), 441-464.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Connell, R. W. (2002) *Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Walby, S. (1997) *Gender transformations*. London: Routledge.