



PUBLIC POLICY, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVOLUTION
Seminar 3: Mainstreaming equality and diversity in particular settings and contexts

ABSTRACTS

Cultural tensions in the education of the children of Travellers
Gwynedd Lloyd , University of Edinburgh

In this paper we explore some contradictions and tensions in educational and other policy and practice developments for Gypsies/Travellers in Britain. We argue that by examining recent relevant research in the context of New Labour's approach to social justice, there are revealed powerful contradictions at national, local government levels and at school levels and these contradictions undermine current positive policy directions



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Organisation Carescapes: Policies and Practices of Care in Business Organisations

Linda McKie, Glasgow Caledonian University

In this paper I introduce the concept of *organisation carescapes* and subsequently consider data from an on-going project on the interlinked domains of work and family for women working in unskilled and semi skilled jobs in food retail companies.

Organisation carescapes offers a framework for research and policy work. It adopts the metaphor of a map to posit that people and companies plot routes through a changing, multidimensional terrain that comprises their experience and anticipation of care and relevant legislation and policies. The concept offers potential to theorise and empirically examine the manner in which people and organisations try to realise particular aims and goals by actively selecting their paths through a carescape. That may include legislation, socio-economic context, company finances and goals, and the changing needs of employers and employees over the lifecourse.

From the study *Work-Life Balance in the Scottish Food Retail Sector*¹ I report on findings from twenty-one semi-structured interviews conducted with women aged 21 to 64. Here I identify and reflect upon the experiences of women employees. The day-to-day management of care, and disruptions in arrangements, takes place among all workers, supervisors, relatives and friends, with limited knowledge of, and no recourse to, company policies and relevant legislation. A notional form of reciprocity underpins all these processes as care work is bartered across a range of relationships. Supervisors have a pivotal role maintaining staffing levels, often incurring personal and financial costs as a consequence. Thus the hierarchical nature of organisational structures places particular tensions upon supervisors in particular, with regards to balancing work and care.

Drawing upon the concept of organisation carescapes, and empirical data, I offer the possibility of a *care ceiling*. By that I posit that women will not actively seek promotion, training or education for fear of further responsibilities that could inhibit their potential to remain as flexible as possible in seeking to combine caring and working. It would seem that public policies have limited relevance to the lives of women in low paid jobs and, as a consequence, mainstreaming equality remains illusive.

¹ Data are drawn from the study entitled *Work-life Balance in the Scottish Food Retail Sector*. Funded by the European Social Fund the project team comprises: Laura Airey, Linda McKie and Laura Rankine, all Glasgow Caledonian University, Kathryn Milburn, University of Edinburgh and Gill Hogg, University of Strathclyde.



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The HE sector and the challenge of equality as an employment issue
Rosemary Deem (University of Bristol) and Louise Morley (University of Sussex)

The paper is based on recent research involving qualitative case studies of staff experiences of equality policies in six English, Scottish and Welsh higher educational institutions. We note that although the past record of UK higher education on equality issues has been relatively undistinguished, except for individual initiatives taken by pressure groups and teachers/researchers, recent changes to UK legislation (eg on 'race' and disability) and a series of EU employment directives (including on religion and sexual orientation) have caused more attention to be paid to equality policies and their implementation in higher education in the UK. The wider context for equality policies has also changed in other ways, from a predominant focus on individuals and redistributive equality policies to viewing inequality as a generic and relative concept which can be policy-mainstreamed, with greater concentration on organisational cultures and diversity and a focus on recognitional rather than redistributive approaches to inequality.

This paper uses the authors' recent research findings to consider how higher education institution employees who participated in the study understood notions of equality and diversity. Staff ranging from cleaners to academics and senior managers, were interviewed, to ascertain how they perceived and experienced their institutions' equality policies. There is a particular focus on whether different forms of inequality are seen to be intersected, the potential tensions and conflicts between equality policies applying to students and those concerned with staff (notably in respect of quality regimes, student markets and the impact of widening participation policies) and the kinds of visions of the equitable higher education institution of the future held by senior managers. There appears to be a shift away from redistributive notions of inequality (except in respect of occupational inequality) towards greater emphasis on recognitional forms, the tensions between student and staff equality issues and the pursuit of organisational diversity may reflect a relative depoliticisation of the staff equality agenda in higher education.



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Transcendence over Diversity: Black & Minority Ethnic Women in the Academy
Heidi Safia Mirza, Centre for Racial Equality Studies, Middlesex University

“Diversity is the new Equality”..... but unlike equality which is underpinned by a goal of achieving ‘sameness’, diversity rests on the notion of ‘celebrating difference’. Universities, like many major public institutions have embraced the notion of diversity virtually uncritically- it is seen as a moral ‘good in itself’. But what happens to those who come to represent ‘diversity’- the black and minority ethnic groups targeted to increase the institutions thirst for global markets and aversion to monoculturalism and institutional racism? This paper will begin by exploring the individual costs to the few black and female academics who have become an ‘object’ of diversity policy – how is the discourse on difference and diversity subjectively experienced? – how is desire for ‘institutional otherness’ inscribed on their bodies and in their minds? However there are two sides to every story – and while the individual institutional experience is specific to the privileged few minority women who enter the academy – black and minority ethnic women, like many marginalised and excluded groups, display an overwhelming collective desire for education- both for themselves and their children. Despite racial, gender and class barriers black and minority ethnic women are entering higher education in relatively large numbers as students and scholars. Such ‘grassroots’ educational urgency transcends the dominant discourse on diversity and challenges presumptions inherent in top down initiatives such as ‘Widening Participation’. Such a collective movement from the bottom makes possible a reclaiming of higher education from creeping instrumentalism and reinstates it as a radical site of resistance and refutation.



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Some Lessons on Equality from the Americans with Disabilities Act
Robert L. Burgdorf Jr, University of the District of Columbia,
David A. Clarke School of Law

Many of the strengths and weaknesses of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) have manifested themselves in the fifteen years since the law's enactment. In other publications, the author -- drafter of the original version of the legislation -- has examined some of the legal, technical interpretations various provisions of the Act have received. In this paper, he traces some of the more general insights and lessons that can be derived from the drafting, implementation, and enforcement of the ADA. These involve observations regarding the overall objectives of a legal prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability; the issue of how broadly the category of persons to be granted equality rights should be defined; the existence of essential prerequisites, including an accessible public and governmental infrastructure, for a disability nondiscrimination mandate to succeed; the scope of entities that ought to be subject to such a law; some suggestions regarding standards and criteria applied under an equality mandate; and reflections on the overall value and impact of such legislation. While all laws need to reflect the unique cultures, traditions, and legal systems of the particular countries that enact them, the American experience with the ADA may highlight some of the promising paths and pitfalls that lie on the route to an effective guarantee of equality on the basis of disability.