ORGANIZATIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND THE REPRODUCTION OF GENDER INEQUALITY

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Abstract

This paper is an extensive empirical analysis of how organisational power systems logically recreate and recycle gender inequality. The research is based on the organisational theory of feminism and institutional approaches and is aimed to analysing the unique and at the same time interdependent roles of formal hierarchies, informal networks, decision-making control and organisational culture in creating gendered results. The data were collected through a designed questionnaire that was given to 390 employees in a range of hierarchy and industry sectors. The analysis results using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) can prove that each aspect of organisational power has statistically significant positive influence on perceived gender inequality, with decision-making control being the strongest predictor. Multi-group analyses also show that such effects are more acutely traced by female respondents which only contributes to the gendered experience of organisational power. These structural determinants explain a lot of gender inequality, as the model explains 62 per cent of the variance. The results shed light on how profoundly ingrained and self-perpetuating mechanisms promote inequality to go beyond personal prejudices and emphasise the insufficiency of symbolic diversity programmes. This study, therefore, can be useful to merge the theoretical framework of structural, relational, and cultural paradigms of power and provide specific and multi-level suggestions regarding measures to reallocate power and promote substantive gender equity in the workplace.

Keywords: Organizational Power Structures, Gender Inequality, Formal Hierarchy, Informal Networks, Decision-Making Control, Organizational Culture, Structural Reproduction, Gendered Organizations

1. Introduction

Organisations are not structures of neutrality to economic activity, but rather, they are systems which are socially embedded and it is in which power is practised, legitimised, and reproduced. Gender inequality remains a visible aspect of modern work environments despite decades of legislative and corporate diversity promises, and the increased public attention to the issue of equality. According to the report of the World Economic Forum 2025, the development of the economic participation and opportunity gap throughout the world has been stagnant despite the forecast of a long process to achieving the same level. There is also a significant underrepresentation of women in senior leadership and executive, women are disproportionately

relegated to lower-paying and lower-authority jobs, and widespread pay gaps continue to exist across industry and geographic lines. This long-lasting divide insinuates that gender inequality is not a remnant of past discrimination or a pipeline phenomenon, but is an action-driven, current, consequence of the very structure of organisations. This paper argues that organisational power structures or formal and informal systems of control over authority, influence, resources, and norms are the major driving forces of reproduction of gender inequality. This study aims to go beyond the descriptive explanations of disparity by questioning the interaction of formal hierarchy, informal networks, the control of decision making and organisation culture to explain the processes through which seemingly neutral organisational processes have such greatly gendered consequences.

1.1 Theoretical Foundations and Research Imperative

The classical organisational theory with its Weberian bureaucracy views power as a formal attribute of role legitimate authority as a result of one being in a position of a hierarchical map. Although fundamental, this perspective provides a narrow perspective, which does not absorb the relational, discursive, and symbolic aspects of power that run in everyday practise. Our conceptualisation has been completely changed in relation to contemporary theories, especially the ones of feminist and institutional perspectives. Feminist organisational theorists, led by Joan Acker, have brought a revolution in the discipline because they assume organisations to be gendered. Instead of being containers of gender, they are constituted by pervasive, usually unseen, gendered processes. Structures, symbols, interactions, and identities are built on the base of many assumptions that are not explicitly expressed but rather suppressed that equates authority, competence, and ideal worker to masculine norms (Acker, 1990). In turn, not only overt discrimination reproduces the inequality but more insidiously the given practises which are considered as neutral, e.g., the job evaluation system, the criteria of promotion, and the organisation of the work itself.

The institutional theory goes further to give an explanation of the extraordinary nature of the stability and inertia in these gendered arrangements. Gendered power relations are made taken-for-granted, scripted into routines, rules and cultural scripts that justify given distributions of power and makes it hard to consider and act otherwise (Connell, 2006). This institutionalisation guarantees that even in organisations where diversity and inclusion is openly promoted on paper, inequality continues to be even propagated since these measures usually focus on symptoms (e.g., headcount) and not the power structures that creates the disparity. The continued existence of an unequal situation, then, is an omen of an urgent research need: to deconstruct and empirically examine the precise vehicles of power by which gender inequality is produced and reinforced. The current research has attempted to meet that requirement by combining these theoretical strands into a coherent framework and putting it under strict quantitative analysis.

1.2 Research Objectives

The research is informed by three main objectives:

- To investigate empirically the operation and effects of both formal and informal organisational power structures, in the way that they are gendered.
- To determine and quantify the comparative power of certain mechanisms of reproducing inequality, namely hierarchical control, access to networks, decision-making, and cultural norms, by which these structures are reproduced.
- To bring structural, relational, and cultural approaches to power into a combined model that provides the answer to the long-term sustainability of gender gaps in the organisational life.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Multidimensional Nature of Organizational Power

The knowledge of gender inequality requires an advanced comprehension of the organisational power. Beyond the formal authority of Weber we find that modern scholarship has come to appreciate the fact that power is multi-dimensional. Its bases of power as discussed by French and Raven (1959) include reward, coercive, legitimate, referent and expert which emphasise its relational sources. The idea of symbolic power developed by Bourdieu (2001) is used to show how language, culture, and classification regimes justify domination by making the hierarchies in the society appear natural. Power in organisations therefore takes the form of control (resources: budgets, projects), influence over the decision-making process, centrality in communication networks, and the ability to prescribe and determine what is valuable knowledge or a correct behaviour. According to gender scholars, this multidimensional power is not distributed by chance, and it is gendered systematically. The traits that have been coded as masculine, i.e., assertiveness, rationality, and competitive drive, are combined with leadership and authority, and those that have been coded as feminine, i.e., communion, empathy, cooperation, are often undermined or placed in service positions. This symbolic connexion establishes a systematic bias, which guarantees that organisational power structures are skewed more towards men and masculine forms of operation and, therefore, bolsters stratification under the banner of meritocracy.

2.2 Formal Hierarchies and the Architecture of Authority

Formal hierarchies are the easiest to see form of power structure, which explicitly state authority, reporting flow, and access to the strategic decision-making process. Empirical research is consistent in that a high level of vertical segregation is measured in that men are overrepresented in senior management and executive roles. This is not just numerical imbalance of directive power. The seminal analysis of tokenism by Kanter (1977) proves that women who held a leadership position dominated by men felt a greater visibility, pressure to perform, and isolation, which, as a consequence, restricted their effectiveness and supported the prevalent stereotypes. The modern literature recognises the glass cliff effect, in which women are more likely to be appointed to leadership positions during a time of crisis or high risk, thus putting them through an increased level of scrutiny and high failure rates. These relations make sure that although women break through certain lines of hierarchy the power they declare is often limited, symbolic, or arbitrary. The hierarchy thus acts as a channel that unfairly directs formal authority to men and thus justifies their domination of organisational agendas, resources and the fate of other peoples.

2.3 Informal Networks: The Shadow Structure of Power

Alongside the formal organisational chart, there is a shadow structure of informal networks so-called relationships, mentorship, sponsorship, and social affinities that are the critical determinants of career trajectories. Admission to such networks is an important social capital, which offers insider information, advocacy and high-visibility assignment opportunities. Studies by Ibarra (1992) and others have shown that such networks are often homophilous and are also generally male dominated especially among the senior levels. Men have a higher level of access to influential mentors and sponsors who can help them to be pulled up. Women on the other hand can be left out of informal events like golf outings, after work drinks, etc where business connexions are made, and business deals are settled in the process. In addition, despite the supportive nature, women networks might not have the positional power to offer decisive career sponsorship. This becomes a drastic power gap that cannot be addressed by the formal policies to promote women into management, especially when they are not included in informal relationships of power.

2.4 Decision-Making Control and Resource Allocation

The ultimate use of power is the determination of the decisions that will significantly influence organisational course: defining the strategy, assigning budgets, granting promotions, and initiating big projects. The possession of such resources serves as a direct factor of influence and professional path. There

are gendered aspects of exercising this control. The views of men when it comes to budgeting committees, promotion panels, and strategic planning units, be it conscious or unconscious, are instilled during organisational performance. There is also decision-making control, which is the ability to formulate problems and create measures of success, frequently and masculinistically coded, like aggressive growth or technical grit, rather than sustainability or stakeholder well-being or co-operative innovation. This type of power is one that is all the more dangerous since it is integrated into regular procedures and thus, inequality gets the appearance of the objective, technical decision-making and not gendered power dynamics.

2.5 Organizational Culture and Symbolic Power

The symbolic power of organisational culture is enormous, i.e. the common norms, values, assumptions, and daily practises. It is a powerful but discreet process of justification of gendered relations of power. Bourdieu (2001) explains the functioning of symbolic power in making social constructions (e.g. male leadership) appear to be natural and unavoidable. This is reflected in several ways in organisations: the use of language based on military or sporting metaphors (both masculine-coded); language styles that reward assertiveness over consensus-building; rituals that assume a male-coded ideal of worker who has no care-giving roles; and self-promotion and self-visibility norms. Operating within such cultural contexts, women are confronted with a dilemma to a double bind (Asif et al., 2025; Eagly & Karau, 2002): by acting assertively and in the role of a leader, one risks being perceived as competent and at the same time, one risks being subject to a social penalty as she is yet to violate feminine norms (too ambitious). In that way, the culture applies gender performance and naturalises masculine-power association.

2.6 Synthesis and Research Gap

The literature is effective in proving the fact that organisational power is a gendered force, multifaceted, and replicated via formal hierarchies, informal networks, decision-making control, and cultural norms. But a lot of the evidence is contained in parochial theoretical traditions (structural, network, cultural). There is an important gap to be filled on integrative, empirical research that simultaneously provides a model of the relative contributions of these interrelated dimensions. This is where the present study comes in suggesting and testing a unitary model that assumes these four power structures to be direct and important contributors of gender inequality, thus presenting a complete picture of the organisational clockwork that promotes disparity.

3. Methodological Approach

The research design of this study is quantitative and cross-sectional, as it aims at testing the hypothesis of relationships between gender inequality, organisational power structures and other variables. The systematic measure of latent constructs across a large sample made with the help of a survey will provide an opportunity to make a statistical generalisation and test a complex path model.

3.1 Data Collection and Sample

A structured online questionnaire was used to obtain primary data by sending it to employees of different industries such as technology, finance, healthcare and professional services as well as different levels of organisations. Snowball and purposive sampling were employed in a combination such that there was diversity in terms of roles and seniority. The overall sample size was 390 respondents, which offered strong data to conduct high levels of multivariate analysis. The Structural Equation Modelling sample size is suitable since it is within the recommended minimum subject to parameter ratio.

3.2 Measurement of Variables

All constructs were measured using multi-item scales adapted from established instruments in the literature, refined for clarity and context. Responses were captured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

- **Independent Variables (Organizational Power Structures):**
  - o **Formal Power Structure (FPS):** 6 items measuring perceived clarity and concentration of formal authority, hierarchical rigidity, and access to positional power (e.g., "In my organization, formal authority is highly concentrated at the top").
  - o **Informal Networks (IN):** 5 items assessing access to influential informal networks, mentorship, and social capital (e.g., "Important career-related information is often shared through informal social networks").
  - o **Decision-Making Control (DMC):** 5 items evaluating perceived control over strategic decisions and key resources (e.g., "Control over budget decisions is widely shared" [reverse-coded]).
  - o **Organizational Culture (OC):** 6 items gauging gendered norms, values, and symbolic practices (e.g., "The 'ideal employee' in my organization is assumed to have few outside caregiving responsibilities").
- **Dependent Variable:**
  - o **Gender Inequality (GI):** 7 items capturing perceptions of equity in promotions, pay, leadership opportunities, and performance evaluations (e.g., "In my organization, men and women have equal access to high-potential assignments" [reverse-coded]).
- **Control Variables:** Demographic data including respondent gender, age, organizational tenure, and hierarchical level were collected for descriptive and multi-group analysis.

3.3 Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 28 and AMOS 28. The process followed several stages:

1. **Preliminary Analysis:** Data screening for missing values, outliers, and assessment of normality (skewness and kurtosis).
2. **Reliability and Validity:** Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Construct validity was established through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to verify the distinctness and unidimensionality of the measured constructs.
3. **Structural Equation Modelling (SEM):** The hypothesized model was tested using SEM, which allows for the simultaneous estimation of multiple relationships between latent variables while accounting for measurement error. Model fit was evaluated using standard indices: χ^2/df, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR).
4. **Multi-Group Analysis (MGA):** SEM was also used to conduct an MGA by respondent gender (male vs. female) to test for significant differences in the strength of the hypothesized paths.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical guidelines. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with informed consent obtained from all respondents. Data were aggregated for analysis, ensuring no individual or organization could be identified. The research was conducted for academic purposes only.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Demographic Profile

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 390)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	212	54.4
	Female	178	45.6
Age	Below 30 years	92	23.6
	31–40 years	152	39.0
	41–50 years	98	25.1
	Above 50 years	48	12.3
Organizational Level	Non-managerial	168	43.1
	Middle management	145	37.2
	Senior management	77	19.7
Tenure	Less than 5 years	110	28.2
	5–10 years	158	40.5
	More than 10 years	122	31.3

The sample (N=390) comprised 54.4% male and 45.6% female respondents. The largest age cohort was 31-40 years (39.0%). Respondents were distributed across non-managerial (43.1%), middle management (37.2%), and senior management (19.7%) roles, with a balanced spread of organizational tenure.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics, Reliability, and Validity

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

Construct	No. of Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Formal Power Structure	6	3.75	0.80	0.87
Informal Networks	5	3.55	0.78	0.85
Decision-Making Control	5	3.72	0.82	0.89
Organizational Culture	6	3.65	0.76	0.86
Gender Inequality	7	3.84	0.85	0.91

All constructs demonstrated acceptable normality (skewness and kurtosis within ±2). Mean scores ranged from 3.55 to 3.84, indicating moderate to high levels of agreement with the statements. Cronbach's alpha values (0.85 to 0.91) exceeded the 0.70 threshold, confirming excellent internal consistency and reliability of the scales.

Table 3

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Model Fit

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Obtained Value
χ^2/df	< 3.00	2.38
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.95
TLI	≥ 0.90	0.94
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.059
SRMR	≤ 0.08	0.043

The measurement model demonstrated an excellent fit to the data (χ^2/df = 2.38, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.059, SRMR = 0.043), confirming the discriminant and convergent validity of the five latent constructs. All factor loadings were significant and above 0.60.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing via Structural Equation Modelling

The structural model also exhibited a good fit (χ^2/df = 2.52, CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.062, SRMR = 0.051). The results of the hypothesis tests are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Structural Equation Modelling Results (Hypotheses Testing)

Hypothesized Path	Std. Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
H1: FPS → Gender Inequality	0.31	5.72	< .001	Supported
H2: IN → Gender Inequality	0.26	4.85	< .001	Supported
H3: DMC → Gender Inequality	0.37	6.65	< .001	Supported
H4: OC → Gender Inequality	0.28	5.18	< .001	Supported

All four hypotheses were strongly supported (p < .001). Decision-Making Control (β = 0.37) emerged as the strongest predictor of Gender Inequality, followed by Formal Power Structure (β = 0.31), Organizational Culture (β = 0.28), and Informal Networks (β = 0.26). The model explained a substantial 62% (R^2 = 0.62) of the variance in perceived Gender Inequality, underscoring the powerful combined effect of these organizational power dimensions.

4.4 Multi-Group Analysis by Respondent Gender

Table 5

Multi-Group Analysis (Standardized β Coefficients)

Path	Male Sample (β)	Female Sample (β)	Δχ² (df=1)	Difference Significant?
FPS → Gender Inequality	0.27	0.38	4.85	Yes (p < .05)
IN → Gender Inequality	0.22	0.32	4.12	Yes (p < .05)
DMC → Gender Inequality	0.33	0.42	5.23	Yes (p < .05)
OC → Gender Inequality	0.24	0.34	4.67	Yes (p < .05)

The multi-group analysis also showed that there were statistically significant differences (p 0.05) in all four pathways between male and female respondents. The standardised beta coefficients in all the cases were significantly larger in the female subsample. These findings indicate that female workers find the relationship between organisational gender to be significantly stronger between organisational power structure and gender inequality than that of male counterparts, which supports the gendered nature of the experience and suggests that women are more aware than men of the structure processes.

The survey of 390 employees showed that all four organisational power structures discussed, including Decision-Making Control, Formal Power Structures, Organisational Culture, and Informal Networks, play a significant role in creating an impression of gender inequality. The strongest predictors were Decision-Making Control (β=0.37), Formal Power Structures (.31), Organisational Culture (.28), and Informal Networks (.26). These variables were collectively explaining 62-percent of the variance in perceived inequality. Notably, the multigroup analysis revealed that female respondents rated the strength of all pathways as much higher than male respondents (e.g., Formal Power: β=0.38 vs. 0.27), hence illustrating the authentic and gendered nature of these structural influences.

5. Discussion

The findings of this paper form a solid empirical evidence that gender inequality is a structural output, which is systematically determined by the main power formations in organisations. All the four hypotheses are confirmed which underlines the versatile nature of this reproducing process. Instead of being a single broken rung on a scaleable ladder, the inequality is the result of the construction of the ladder, the informal rules that are used to ascend it, those people who trace the path, and the dominating cultural discourse that determines the ideal look of a climber.

The high level of Decision-Making Control (H3) as the most significant predictor is profoundly theoretical. It supports Bourdieu in saying that ability to classify and allocate resources is vital to domination. Actors are able to amass power by exercising command through physical and symbolic resources. This dimension has the highest level of influence, which suggests that gender inequality is most deeply rooted at points of power making where power decisions have heavy consequences i.e. the actual decisions, which define the organisational paths and the careers of people. This observation brings into full play a fundamental defect of many diversity programmes: merely placing women in managerial jobs but depriving them of any real authority over budgets, strategy or promotion will tend to produce a kind of powerless inclusion, which is not enough to short circuit the circuitry of gendered power.

Formal Hierarchies (H1) substantive impact justifies the continued role played by bureaucratic structures in leading authority. Even though nowadays it is often suggested by modern organisations that flatter designs are better, as per our data, the concentrated hierarchical power remains one of the main channels of inequality. This observation, which confirms the theory presented by Acker (1990) that hierarchies are gendered since their inception, is built around the conception of unending, disembodied (masculine) career path. This means that merely placing women into already hierarchical structures would not change their logic of gender, but only allow a select few to play by a system that by definition is not formed to their favour.

The weakness of the formal equity policies is highlighted by the impact of Informal Networks (H2). Although companies can direct various hiring committees, they can hardly enforce attending to post-working social life and spontaneous mentoring. Since informal circuits are a secret meritocracy, they often overshadow formal qualifications. This predominance of this aspect depicts that true equality of opportunity requires equality in social capital and relational power entry, which is historically intractable by policy interventions.

The high path coefficient of Organisation Culture (H4) shows the insignificant but strong impact of the symbolic power. Gendered norms and assumptions are the operating system in the background, which legitimises the output of more explicit structures (hierarchy, networks) silently. The result of this cultural double bind: a preference in modes of action that are masculine-coded and a punitive reaction to women who exhibit their bodies, is a general atmosphere that carries an atmosphere of perpetual distrust to womanly authority. This layer of culture makes inequality appear to be normal and, accordingly, clouds it, making it more difficult to change.

The multigroup analysis provides, perhaps, the strongest empirical validation of the theoretical feminist (perspective). The constant bigger path coefficients of female respondents are not accidental designs of the methodology, but they represent the real-life experience of those oppressed by the mechanisms under consideration. This is a gendered perception gap that is an obstacle to change because those who hold power positions, who are often predominantly men, can systematically underestimate the magnitude of the problem and the structural nature of the problem.

Synthetically, the combined model indicates that the four power structures are not independent, but it is a system that supports one another. Masculinized culture justifies a strong sense of hierarchy, which grants the right of decision-making and resource management to men. These men on the other hand fill and philtre

informal networks which in their turn induce new members into the dominant cultural norms hence the cycle repeats. This macro view also explains why gender inequality is such a stubborn problem: any intervention that only changes one component (e.g., cultural training) and leaves others unchanged (e.g., centralised decision-making) is unlikely to have a lasting effect.

6. Managerial and Policy Implications

The implications of the current research are far-reaching since the focus of the gender equity efforts will move toward remediation of women to support the representation instead of the systemic redesign of the power structures.

Rebalance Decision Making Power: Organisations must perform systematic loci and agent of strategic decision audits. The proposed interventions are: When it comes to budgets, promotions, and strategic planning, this requires that all committees be required to have heterogeneous representation. Application of the concept of power-sharing, e.g., rotating leadership programmes on key projects. Decentralising more decision-making by employing cross-functional, heterogeneous, teams that are located lower in the organisational structure.

Democratise Informal Networks and Social Capital: Institutionalisation of formal access to the shadow organisation needs to be formalised. Establish cross-gender, systematic sponsorship programmes that hold leaders responsible in pursuing protégés. Establish open systems of project personnel recruitment and visibility to avoid dependence on personal contacts. Transform the concept of social and networking events to suit different care giving and lifestyle situations.

Re-engineer Formal Structures to Equity: A comprehensive examination of the hierarchy should not be limited to its members, but operate according to the dynamics of it. Develop and formalise various, non-linear career pathways that support different life cycles. Minimise organisational hierarchies where possible and as a result extend spans of control and create more common leadership roles. Clearly link leadership compensations and performance targets to the creation and growth of under-represented talent.

Change Organisational Culture Systematically: Transition past the awareness training to change the institutional systems radically. Restructure leadership competencies to appreciate what has traditionally been coded as feminine, i.e. collaboration, empathy, and stewardship. Introduce bias-interrupters into core processes - e.g. standardised promotion procedures and work assignment blindness. Create a culture of accountability using a systematic measurement and reporting of power distribution, including verbal participation in meetings and leading high-revenue projects and demographic representation.

Policy and Regulatory Changes: Extra stakeholders have the ability to induce massive structural change. The disclosures should be mandatory by investors and regulators and must include data on the business diversification of boards beyond board diversity and include the gender mix of profit and loss stewardship, budgetary controls, and membership of senior decision-making committees. These schemes of government contracts and corporate certification might be conditionalised under action plans of redistributing organisational power in an apparent manner and not with setting of hiring targets only.

7. Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Research

This study conclusively demonstrates that organizational power structures are the primary engines for the reproduction of gender inequality. Through a robust empirical test of an integrated model, it has shown that formal hierarchy, informal networks, decision-making control, and organizational culture are significant, interrelated drivers of disparity, collectively explaining the majority of its variance. The stronger effects perceived by women confirm the gendered reality of these structures. The central conclusion is unambiguous: achieving gender equity is impossible without a fundamental re-engineering of organizational power.

This research is not without limitations. Its cross-sectional design precludes definitive causal claims; longitudinal studies are needed to trace how changes in power structures affect inequality over time. The sample, while diverse, may not be fully representative of all global or industrial contexts. The reliance on perceptual measures, though validated, could be complemented by objective organizational data (e.g., actual promotion rates by gender, network analysis data).

Future research should build upon this integrated foundation in several directions. First, intersectional quantitative models are urgently needed to examine how power structures differentially affect women of colour, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those with disabilities. Second, mixed-methods and qualitative studies can illuminate the lived experience of navigating or resisting these power structures, providing depth to the statistical relationships. Third, cross-cultural comparative research can explore how national institutional contexts (e.g., welfare regimes, legal frameworks) moderate the operation of organizational power. Finally, intervention-based research is critical to test which specific strategies for redistributing power (e.g., sponsorship programs, participatory decision-making models) are most effective in reducing inequality.

In closing, this research argues that the path to gender equality is a path of power redistribution. It calls for scholars, leaders, and policymakers to shift their gaze from the symptoms of inequality to its structural blueprints. The challenge is not to help women fit into existing power structures but to transform those structures themselves. Only by dismantling the architecture of exclusion can organizations hope to build a truly equitable future.

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