CHAPTER 9

Gender and Organizations

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As the new women's movement took shape in the 1960s, feminists criticized organizational hierarchies and bureaucratic practices as masculine, undemocratic, and oppressive, and also argued that men monopolized leading positions, even in radical organizations, excluding women from positions of power and influence. Consequently, critiques of organized male power and the organizational forms in which it was expressed were integral to feminism, and feminists attempted early on to organize in nonhierarchical, nonbureaucratic ways (Ferree & Martin, 1995; Freeman, 1972–1973). Despite this early concern about organizations and male power, gender and organizations as a field of scholarly study developed considerably later than other "gender specializations." In this chapter, I review the history of the field and examine its contents, focussing on organizational structures of gender inequality, organizations as gendered processes, masculinity and sexuality in organizations, gender and organizational change, and potential contributions of this approach to understanding contemporary societal problems.

1. A HISTORY OF THE FIELD OF GENDER AND ORGANIZATIONS

Scholarly interest in women and/or sex roles and organizations began slowly in the early 1970s with criticisms of organizational theory and research for its inattention to the presence of women in work organizations and the resulting misinterpretations of research results (Acker & Van Houten, 1974). Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1975) pointed to the male dominance of almost all complex organizations and argued that the classical rational model of organization saw organizations as sex-neutral machines while, at the same time, supporting a "masculine ethic" of rationality and reason that obscured organizational

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reality and supported managerial authority. Kanter's (1977) *Men and Women of the Corporation* was a case study of (male) management and (female) clerical workers that still stands, in spite of many changes in the ensuing 20 years, as a definitive statement, valid for many different countries, about the sex structuring of organizations and the consequences for women. Kanter's central thesis was that women's organizational experiences are best explained by women's structural locations, not by their personalities and socialization. Women are, in the vast majority, confined to low-level jobs at the bottom of organizational hierarchies, where they are frustrated and alienated by lack of opportunities. The few women who reach upper organizational levels are tokens who are stereotyped and exposed to criticisms not inflicted on men, who are seen as the "natural" occupants of higher positions.

In the period following Kanter's book, feminists conducted a substantial amount of research on women in management (Powell, 1988; Terborg, 1977), but engaged in little theorizing (Martin, 1981). The primary exception was Kathy Ferguson's (1984) *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy*, a radical feminist critique of bureaucracy as a construction of male domination, mystified through a discourse on rationality and rules. Although this was a brilliant and scathing critique, for Ferguson all organizational participants are rendered powerless by bureaucracy; thus the specificity of gender and the dominance of certain men disappears (Acker, 1990). By the early 1980s, a flood of research on women and work began to appear, vastly increasing knowledge in this area. Some of this research began to illuminate the importance of the organizational context for understanding the connections between gender and work. Cynthia Cockburn (1981, 1985) described how, in struggles over technology, skill, and power in the workplace, both class and gender relations are created (see also Hacker, 1981). Arlie Hochschild (1983) showed how the management of emotions is often an aspect of work, particularly in women's jobs in certain service organizations. Ann Game and Rosemary Pringle (1983) also showed how changing technologies, along with changing organization of production and services, were accomplished partly through changing gender relations.

Such research and conceptualization contributed to the emergence of a new understanding of gender as a fundamental aspect of social processes and structures, going far beyond the earlier ideas of gender as social role, personality component, or individual attribute (Acker, 1992a). This understanding of gender was fundamental to arguments that organizations are "gendered" social constructions and that theories of gender neutral organizations are ideological formulations that obscure organizational realities, including the pervasiveness of male power. These ideas stimulated a rapid development of work on gender and organizations in the second half of the 1980s and into the 1990s. Gender and organizations as a distinct area of study can be dated from that time. Marking the emergence of this new area in sociology was a session titled "A Feminist Critique of Bureaucracy," organized by Patricia Martin at the 1987 American Sociological Association meetings. Research and theory building has progressed primarily in the English-speaking countries, although Scandinavian (Billing, 1994; Billing & Alvesson, 1994; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1994; Kvande & Rassmussen, 1974) and Italian (Gherardi, 1995) scholars have also participated. Two anthologies, *Gendering Organizational Analysis* (1992), edited by Albert Mills and Peta Tancred, and *Gender and Bureaucracy* (1992), edited by Mike Savage and Sue Witz, brought together examples of this work. A journal, *Gender, Work, and Organization*, was founded in 1994, and the most recent *Handbook of Organization Studies* (Clegg, Hardy, & Nord, 1996) has an entry on "Feminist Approaches

to Organization Studies" (Calás & Smircich, 1996). This is an interdisciplinary field that includes, in addition to sociologists, organizational theorists in schools of management and business, psychologists, political scientists, anthropologists, scholars in education, and economists. Scholars use a variety of theoretical approaches, ranging from quantitative analyses of sex roles to postmodern interpretations, but all with critical views of existing gender-neutral organizational analyses. In the 1990s, recognition that sexuality is implicated in the shaping of gendered work demands (Adkins, 1995) and gendered hierarchies (Witz, Halford, & Savage, 1996), together with the understanding that organizations are embodied processes (Acker, 1990, 1992b), have deepened the challenges to notions of organizations as abstract, gender-neutral structures.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES OF GENDER INEQUALITY

Scholars began to study gender and organizations to understand better the dimensions of and reasons for continuing inequality between women and men in the workplace and the economy. Most research on gender structures has been done in public and private employing organizations, but researchers have also examined voluntary organizations such as religious groups, charity organizations, and sports associations. Although gender patterns in organizations vary between the public and private sectors and between different sectors of the private economy, as well as between different societies, enough similarity exists to be able to make general statements about these patterns for organizations in the rich Northern nations. Work organizations are obviously stratified by sex both vertically and horizontally. Managerial positions, especially those at or near the top, are still disproportionately filled by white men (Rubin, 1997). Career mobility for women and minority men is limited by a "glass ceiling"and a "sticky floor." Jobs and occupations are sex typed and often sex segregated within employing organizations as well as in the labor market as a whole (Bielby & Baron, 1984; Burchell, 1996). Women still fill the vast majority of clerical positions; men still dominate engineering and skilled blue collar occupations. As occupational tasks and demands change, the sex typing and composition of an occupation may change (Reskin & Roos, 1990), but sex typing and sex segregation often persist (Buswell & Jenkins, 1994). The wage gap between women and men is related to the sex segregation of occupations: the relative wage disadvantage for both women and men in an occupation increases as the proportion of women in the occupation increases (England, 1992). Studies of comparable worth efforts have shown how gender wage differences are built into organizational structures (e.g., Acker, 1989; Blum, 1991). Although sex typing of occupations, horizontal sex segregation, and gender differentiated wage setting have most often been studied as aggregate phenomena at regional or national levels, organizations are the actual locations within which these patterns are created and re-created. Consequently, to understand the reproduction of these sorts of inequalities, it is necessary to look at organizations and their internal processes.

Although the original impetus for the study of gender and organizations was to improve our understanding of sex inequality and women's subordination, a gender perspective may also increase our abilities to answer other questions about organizations, including questions about organizational culture, about varieties of power and control, and about emerging changes in the global organization of economic and political power characteristic of the contemporary world.

3. ORGANIZATIONS AS GENDERED PROCESSES

One of the answers to questions about how women's subordination or secondary status in working life is perpetuated is that gender is embedded in ordinary organizational processes and that inequalities are reproduced as the mundane work of the "gendered" organization is carried out. Understanding organizations as gendered entails a shift in perspective from the conventional view of organizations as rational bounded systems to organizing as processes and practices, a perspective with a long history that informs other critical approaches to organizations (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1996). The ongoing flow of activities and interactions that constitute the living processes of organizing can be accessed from different points of entry (Acker 1990, 1992b) to discover if and how gender is part of these processes. These "points of entry" are ways of analytically managing complex processes and do not represent "analytic levels."

3.1. Procedures, activities, divisions

The first point of entry or set of processes consists of things people do to keep organizations going, including hiring; promotion; performance evaluation, allocation of work, setting salaries and wages; the actual work process; inventing and enforcing rules about hours, breaks, workplace behavior, and time off; designing and introducing new technology; and reorganizing or relocating work. As these ordinary activities are carried out, they result in organizational gender divisions, such as a gendered hierarchy, gender segregation of jobs and positions, a gendered wage gap, and practices that separate the workplace from the rest of life along gender lines. Class, race, and ethnic divisions may be created in the same processes. These activities often involve routine decisions made by employees as well as managers, who may be completely unaware that they are helping to create gender divisions. An example comes from a study I (Acker, 1989) did of state employment in Oregon: the state routinely classified 7000 women workers into four job classes, although these 7000 jobs varied greatly in task complexity and degree of responsibility. The jobs were described, again routinely, at the lowest common denominator as demanding little skill and knowledge and deserving to be in the lower pay grades. Job classifications for male-predominant jobs were much more detailed and differentiated; these jobs were assigned to a broader range of pay scales. Thus, the routine classification process contributed to low wages for the majority of women, while men were spread more evenly across the wage structure. No one doing the work of classification intended to maintain the gender wage gap. Such routine decisions may, however, be consciously made along lines of gender. For example, some Swedish banks in the 1980s established a "housewive's shift", expressly to recruit women for late afternoon hours when husbands would be at home to care for the children. This policy was a conscious creation of a gender-segregated labor force (Acker, 1994a). A great deal of research has made visible the ways in which organizational practices and routine decisions reproduce gender divisions, and these practices have often been the target of efforts to increase gender equality, such as comparable worth plans and Affirmative Action programs.

Managers in specific organizations may alter their procedures in response to outside pressures, such as Affirmative Action requirements, laws on parental leave, or—to a minimal degree in the United States—labor union demands. Barbara Reskin and Patricia Roos (1990) document the complex processes, including Affirmative Action, that have

caused the changed sex composition of certain occupations. Although their analysis is occupationally based, it is revealing about organizational processes and pressures in maintaining and changing gender divisions. Thus, evidence for specific organizations and occupations suggests that sometimes conscious equality efforts do result in positive changes for some women. At the same time, such efforts often fail because men in the organization oppose them (Cockburn, 1991). In addition, the formulation of equal opportunity policies and procedures may allow men to claim, against the evidence, that inequalities no longer exist (Buswell & Jenkins, 1994; Calvert & Ramsey, 1996) and that it is up to women to compete in terms of skill and commitment of time to the organization (Buswell & Jenkins, 1994). Thus, the issue of structural inequality becomes an an issue of individual effort.

Managers often use textual tools, such as screening tests, evaluation criteria, job design and evaluation protocols, job classification schemes, or various wage-setting procedures in making routine decisions. The use of such tools tends to objectify the processes, making them appear inevitable and disembodied. Job evaluation, as used in the Oregon study (Acker, 1989), is a very good example of the ways in which such tools can embed assumptions about gender (see also Steinberg, 1992). In this job evaluation scheme, the caring skills required in many female-typed jobs, such as nurse or daycare worker, were given few evaluated "points," while the material–technical skills required in many male-typed jobs, such as engineer or electrician, received more "points." Another feature of this scheme was that the demands of managerial jobs were assessed several times, resulting in "overcounting" of the value of these jobs. Because most managerial jobs, especially those at high levels in the hierarchy, were filled by men, this "doublecounting" added to gender wage differences. Job evaluation documents and rules are elements of what Dorothy Smith (1987) has called the abstract, intellectual, textually mediated relations of ruling. These texts and instructions in their proper use, often developed and sold by management consultants, encode social relations that are then reproduced as the same in many different sites.

Struggles for power and control are often struggles over bureaucratic tools. For example, in the state of Oregon, management and trade unions had their major conflicts over the classification system and the definition and use of the salary scales (Acker, 1989). Ordinary Oregon employees were quite sophisticated about these systems and often pursued individual wage increases through reclassification into higher wage grades for their own jobs, much to the distress of their managers. Knowledge of bureaucratic details is a resource in these struggles. Where there are trade unions, it has historically been union men who have that knowledge because, as in Sweden for example, men are the wage negotiators and union activists. Feminists have found in many cases (e.g., Acker, 1991) that challenging the male monopoly over knowledge and control of negotiations is necessary to promote the interests of women employees. Such challenges have been difficult for women to win partly because wage negotiations are an arena that men protect as their own. Women also have difficulty challenging male control because they have been prevented from gaining sufficient union experience by union organizational practices built around the time patterns of men. Meetings that occur after work when many women need to be at home cooking and caring for children, expectations that union activists will be available to go to weekend workshops far from home, and negotiation sessions that last long into the night are all problematic practices for women with families. Such practices keep women from gaining experience dealing with the bureaucratic systems of the organization, and thus often exclude them from leadership in union work.

Routine requirements of workplaces may, on the other hand, structure gender relations outside the work organization, at home and in the wider community. Work schedules, rules about time off and telephone use, and expectations that employees put the job first before the rest of life all can affect women in different ways than men (e.g., Bailyn, 1993; Hochschild, 1989, 1997). Such expectations may be impossible to meet for women, and occasionally men, with family obligations. A result has been that many women either move out of the job market or work part-time. Either solution involves the re-creation of patterns of male dominance within families and in the workplace. Women with the sole responsibility for children may be doubly disadvantaged in trying to adapt rigid workplace patterns to unpredictable family demands. Employing organizations vary widely in the degree to which their policies accommodate extraorganizational obligations of employees. When family friendly policies do exist, they can remain unimplemented when the company culture expects and rewards long working hours and few vacation days (Hochschild, 1997). Even in countries in which the state requires certain organizational accommodations to family life, the Scandinavian countries, for example, the person who uses the programs (usually a woman) is likely to have fewer career opportunities than the person who does not (usually a man) (Acker, 1994c).

In sum, wide variations exist in the clarity and pervasiveness of gender divisions and in the procedures and practices that create and change them. But the complete absence of divisions is rare. I find it striking how often similar patterns are repeated in widely separated locations, and how universally the power of men and the masculine is confirmed, in spite of the obvious improvement of the work situations of many women in industrial countries during the last 25 years.

3.2. Images, Symbols, Forms of Consciousness

People in organizations create images, symbols, and forms of consciousness that justify, legitimate, and even glamorize the persistent gender divisions. This is a second point of entry for examining gendered processes. Images and understandings are integral to the practices, described previously, that create an organization and its divisions. Images, symbols, and forms of consciousness function ideologically to help to naturalize relations of power. For example, organizational consultants I observed in my study of comparable worth (Acker, 1989) often appealed to "common sense" and "what everyone knows" to create a sense that hierarchy is natural. Beliefs that certain knowledge and skills are innate to women, while real skill, that which men have, comes through long training; that typical women's skills require only a basic education; that skilled, technology-based work is masculine and unskilled, routine and caring work is feminine, all naturalize male advantage. (See, e.g., Acker, 1989; Cockburn, 1983, 1985; Game & Pringle, 1983; Phillips & Taylor, 1980). Such beliefs influence hiring, promotion, and wage- setting, as do beliefs that women are suited only to particular kinds of jobs because of their competing home responsibilities (Jones & Causer, 1995).

The image of the organization as a gender-neutral, abstract hierarchy of jobs and positions, articulated in organization theory and in management thinking, plays an ideological role in both obscuring gender and in embedding an image of a male worker or manager in assumptions about how organizations should be put together (Acker, 1990, 1992b). Beginning with Weber's analysis of bureaucracy, a job or position has been seen as a space defined by tasks, responsibilities, and authority, but devoid of any human body

and any ties or obligations to anything or anyone outside the organization. This image still exists in social theory and in employers' assumptions that managers and workers will place work obligations before other demands, and will spend employer-defined periods of time at work during which they will keep their attention focused on work. Taking care of physical needs, for example, eating, or social needs, for example, those created by a child's illness, are viewed as taking time from work. The "perfect worker" implied by the concept of the empty slot would not have to do any of these things. Men who have the support services of wives or secretaries can approximate this model. Women, almost by definition, cannot. It can be argued, then, that the gender-neutral model of the organization assumes a male worker and manager as well as a gendered division of labor in which women do the tasks of life maintenance and renewal, usually in a private sector removed from the organization. This image of the organization as an abstract, gender-neutral entity with its legitimate demands that supersede other demands undergirds organizational rules and practices that then help to confirm and perpetuate the image. In the process, women's disadvantages are also confirmed.

Intentional symbolic production of gender is the business of many complex organizations, particularly media organizations. But explicit gender images, in addition to the implicit images I discussed previously, are created within and infuse organizational structures of all kinds, including religious, military, political, and social movement organizations. These images usually contain implications of masculinity and male sexuality (Collinson & Hearn, 1994). Metaphors of a stereotypical hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987) are often ways of defining the competent, successful organization (Kanter, 1975, 1977). The lean, mean, efficient, aggressive, competitive organization is the one that will survive and prosper in today's mean and competitive economy. Feminine images, such as empathy and caring, are rarely called upon to describe a well-functioning organization, except for certain service organizations such as hospitals, food banks, and daycare centers. The content of images and metaphors changes historically, but not their gendered nature. Thus, the resurgence of the corporation as the good father and the manager as the kindly overseer is a possiblity as large business organizations contend with distrust and suspicion by their workers and the general public. On the other hand, in the course of my study of Swedish banks (Acker 1991, 1994a), I observed a change in the opposite direction. Bank employees had seen their top management and the banks themselves as benevolent, paternal, steady, and responsible. In light of a scandal involving the CEO of the largest bank; the promotion of competitive values over community and customer service; and the influx of young, aggressive, entrepeneurial male managers, the employees we interviewed were disillusioned, relinquishing their old images, but filled with apprehension about the image of the manager.

3.3. Interactions Between Individuals and Groups

The work of organizing goes on through interactions between people, women and men, women and women, men and men, supervisors and subordinates, co-workers, and between employees and customers, clients, consultants, or others from the outside. While doing the work of organizing, people are also "doing gender" (West & Fenstermaker, 1995). These interactions are the everyday contexts within which people experience and create dominance and submission, create alliances and exclusions, put together and implement policies that divide and differentiate between women and men, and produce and

confirm gender images. Contexts and forms of interaction vary and they may be formally structured or informally, even subversively created. Gender is integral to many organizing practices and activities, rather than an external element that can be easily excised.

Gender is deeply embedded, for example, in the interactions between bosses and secretaries, or clerical workers and managers. The boss–secretary relationship, as well as the divisions of status and tasks between them, is rooted in a gender division in which the boss was a man and the secretary was a woman. Personal service from the secretary and paternal protection from the boss marked this relationship. It was no accident that secretaries were often called "office wives," as Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) pointed out. Although today there are many women managers, at least at the lower and middle levels, few men are secretaries or clerical workers. When men are in such positions, they are usually called something else, such as a research assistant (Pringle, 1989), and they are not expected to perform the supportive personal services expected from women (Pierce, 1995). Receptionists, airline stewardesses, nurses, and other service workers are also in subordinate female-typed jobs in which they are expected to interact with superiors and customers in appropriately feminine and respectful ways. Sexuality, both overt and hidden, may be a component of these interactions, supporting the dominance of certain men, solidifying relations between men, and establishing the subordination of women (Adkins, 1995; Pringle, 1989).

Situations undoubtedly exist in which gender is not present in interactions. However, the research on gender and organizations is full of descriptions of ways in which gender is produced even in ordinary encounters between equals in the workplace (Pierce, 1995). For example, Kanter (1977) documented the interactions between male managers and the few, or token, women who had achieved managerial status at that time. These interactions, shaped by the men in stereotypical terms, reaffirmed the stereotypes by defining the women managers as "mothers," "seductresses," "pets," or "iron maidens," confirming their conditional status as outsiders. In a more recent analysis of gendered interactions, Patricia Martin (1996) suggests that men enact masculinities in certain situations, conflating such enactments with their work activities and, in the process, relegating women to the situation of outsider. Martin identifies several gendered interactional styles in which men "enact masculinity" in evaluating job candidates and others' work in a university setting. Men, in her study, promoted the needs, talents, and accomplishments of themselves and other men over the talents and accomplishments of women. They asked for help from other men in pursuing their careers, while women did not seem to expect such aid. They made open criticisms of women, but not of men, and they collectively "ganged up" on women to denigrate their capacities. As Martin observes, "In exploring *interactional dynamics*, we gain insights into *how* men 'erect' barriers . . . " (1996, p 206).

3.4. Internal Mental Work

The fourth point of entry to understanding gendered organizing processes is through the internal mental work of individuals as they come to understand the organization's gendered expectations and opportunities, including the appropriate gendered behaviors and attitudes (Cockburn, 1991; Hochschild, 1983; Pierce, 1995; Pringle, 1989). Here, too, race and class are implicated and constructed. In *White Collar,* C. Wright Mills (1956) was one of the first to point to "personality markets," and the ways in which employees were

expected to construct themselves as charming and sincere. Although Mills did not recognize gender as part of this process, one can easily read masculinity and femininity into his analysis. Gendered expectations may be ambiguous and contradictory, thus requiring considerable interior mental work to get it right. All workers must first recognize what is appropriate and then try to control and shape their actions and feelings in those directions. Swedish bank workers, for example, are supposed to be friendly and calm; calmness, in particular we were told, may require extreme efforts at controlling one's outer behavior in the face of long lines of waiting customers, ringing telephones, and new technology that has not been sufficiently explained. Women bank employees believed that women were much better able to handle such emotional/mental work than were men. Inappropriate behavior, for example, by a woman refusing to be a good sport about men's sexual joking, can result in ostracism and dangerous isolation (Enarson, 1984). Women then have to cope emotionally with such humiliations and transform such feelings by convincing themselves that all this was just a joke. Women who are subjected to sexual harassment often go through painful decisions about whether to complain because complaint can violate the tacit understanding of appropriate female behavior, leading to job loss. The decision about whether to tolerate or complain can mean painful inner processes involving dealing with fear and identity.

Jennifer L. Pierce's (1995) study of two law firms, *Gender Trials*, exemplifies the various processes outlined previously. She describes the history and present structure of law firms as gendered bureaucracies. On the basis of her ethnographic work, she analyzes the emotional labor construed as masculine that marks the job of the litigator and the practice of law, and contrasts the "rambo litigator" with the paralegal whose job requires deference and caregiving as emotional labor. The caregiving and deference, both feminized practices, confirm the status of the lawyers and help to reproduce the gendered hierarchy of the law firms. Some female paralegals are uncomfortable with the gendered persona required by their work, but even their resistance tends to reinforce the gender structure. Women litigators, few in number, face a double bind: if they behave as aggressively as the men, they are considered too aggressive; if they do not, they are not tough enough. Men who are paralegals, on the other hand, are not held to the same supportive behaviors as the women, functioning more as junior colleagues to the attorneys. Thus, the ordinary work of these firms assumes gendered hierarchies. These hierarchies and the ongoing work depend upon and reproduce highly gendered images of the organizations and their central members. Gender is daily reproduced in the interactions that constitute the work, and individuals must learn and cope with the gender identities appropriate to the work.

4. MASCULINITY AND ORGANIZATION

Masculinity and organization has become a major focus in the study of gender and organizing (e.g., Collinson & Hearn, 1994, 1996). As I have indicated previously, masculinity enters in various ways in the playing out of organizing practices and policies that constitute the mundane, everyday processes of organizations and in the images, identities, and interactions involved. Here I want to extend that discussion to look in more detail at some issues about masculinity and organization.

Masculinity is defined by Deborah Kerfoot and David Knights (1996) as " . . . the socially generated consensus of what it means to be a man, to be 'manly' or to display

such behaviour at any one time" (p. 86). Thus, masculinity is clearly distinguished from actual men, who may differ in their practice of masculinity from this consensus. However, David Collinson and Jeff Hearn (1994) argue that masculinity is vaguely defined. "Does it refer to behaviours, identities, relationships, experiences, appearances, discourses or practices? . . . Are masculinities irreducibly related to men or are they discourses in which women can also invest" (p. 9)? Those writing on the topic do seem to agree that multiple masculinities exist in any society at any particular time, and that masculinities shift historically, as do femininities. Connell (1987, 1995) developed the concept "hegemonic masculinity" to stand for the dominant form that characterizes masculinity in positions of societal power. Hegemonic masculinity "embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women." (Connell, 1995, p. 77.) "Subordinated masculinities" are then defined in contrast to and dominated by hegemonic masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity is the form most often linked to the management of large organizations, a form that changes over time as the organization of production changes, although at any particular moment several different masculinities may exist. Beverly Burris (1996) identifies different forms of organizational and managerial patriarchy that represent different hegemonic masculinities, including entrepreneurial patriarchy, technical patriarchy, bureaucratic patriarchy, professional patriarchy, and technocratic patriarchy (the form found in the new, information-based enterprises) (Burris, 1996, p. 68). Managerial masculinities exhibit substantial differences, for example, in the degree to which risk-taking is a significant component. However, there are similarities in the focus on rationality and the "control (of) others in pursuit of the instrumental goals of production, productivity and profit" (Kerfoot & Knights, 1996, p. 88). Kerfoot and Knights (1996, p. 83) suggest that technologies of strategic management and control are congruent with "those contemporary forms of masculinity that turn everything into an object of conquest."

Hegemonic masculinities are not only defined in the management of business, but also in other organizations such as those devoted to sports (Messner, 1992), in police departments, and in the military. Alternative hegemonic masculinities characterize religious denominations and sects, while the worlds of university professors, medical doctors, and political pundits produce their own versions of dominant masculinity. Today, as the values of the competitive market sector spread through industrial societies, a convergence among these various masculinities toward a focus on rationality and the control of others in the pursuit of instrumental goals may be occurring.

Subordinated organizational masculinities have also been studied, most obviously in research focussed on working class jobs. Cynthia Cockburn (1983, 1985) showed how working class masculinity is, or was, organized around notions of physical strength, physical skill, and toughness, including the ability to withstand dangerous and dirty working conditions. Male solidarity based on the affirmation of these attributes valorized them in contrast to women who lacked them. In his study of working class boys, Paul Willis (1977) chronicled how this sort of masculinity was produced within the peer group, guaranteeing that these boys would never be other than shop floor workers, thus reproducing class as well as gender structures. Many other studies of working class jobs are also implicitly about gender, although usually this element remained implicit. David Morgan (1992) makes this point in a provocative rereading of some sociological classics about men and their work.

For both male managers and workers, masculinity is (was) formed and defended through patterns of homosociality, men forming solidary groups that exclude women. Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) recognized this in *Men and Women of the Corporation* (see also Lipman-Blumen, 1976). Jennifer Pierce (1995) shows how these exclusions based on masculinity operate in law firms. Cynthia Cockburn (1985) shows how men come together in affirmations of skill and technological competence that exclude women. Male enclaves in organizations are also usually defined by heterosexuality, and solidarity may be confirmed by talk that objectifies and denigrates women while, at the same time, excluding and denigrating homosexuals. Thus gays constitute another excluded or subordinate masculinity in most work organizations. Masculinity and femininity in organizational life are thus linked to sexuality in multiple ways, as I discuss in the next section.

5. SEXUALITY AND BODIES

Sexuality and bodies were absent in prefeminist organization theory, although real organizational participants, of course, have bodies and sexes. The absence of bodies and sexuality, components of the vision of organizations as gender-neutral, rational machines, contributed to masking the underlying assumption that the prototypical organization man was indeed a man (Acker, 1990). Bodies and sexuality are now recognized by some sociologists and organizational theorists as essential aspects of organizations and work processes (Adkins & Lury, 1996; Witz et al., 1996). In a study of tourist service organizations, Adkins (1995) argues and documents that, at least in this industry, gendering of the relations of production is accomplished partly through sexualization (see also Hochschild, 1983). Women workers were routinely expected to participate in sexual banter and to accept sexual innuendoes from male customers, managers, and co-workers. Such sexualized work was part of the job: women were required to be attractive and to dress to emphasize their attractions. Failure to use the proper makeup and dress or refusal to accept the sexualization of their work relations could result in dismissal. Such requirements did not exist for men hired into the same jobs. One implication of this is, as she points out, further support for the argument that the economy is not gender neutral.

Sexuality and bodies function in many cases as resources for control by male managers and workers. For example, managers who sexualize their relationships with female subordinates are clearly using sexuality as a form of control. At the same time, gender, sexuality, and bodies can constitute problems for management. The control and management of bodies is everywhere a management task, and that control is often done on the basis of gender. Women and men may have to be separated, never allowed proximity, or separated at certain times. This was a more pressing issue in the past than it is today, at least in rich industrial countries. For example, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as women were entering the newly expanding white collar jobs, they were usually placed in women-only offices, physically segregated from men (see, e.g., Cohn, 1985). However, spatial segregation by gender continues. For example, in the United States and elsewhere, women and men must use different toilets, a symbolically important way of emphasizing gender difference. Management almost always controls breaks for eating, but often also controls toilet breaks and physical movement in the workplace in the interests of productivity; women are often controlled more rigidly than men. A widespread belief seems to exist that women's bodies—and psyches—tolerate physical confinement, repetitive tasks, and rapid movements better than do those of men. Women, therefore, are

often perceived as ideal employees for jobs with these requirements. Women workers have been confined to production lines sorting beans, packing herring, or assembling small objects, while men have repaired the machines, lifted the boxes, and moved about the workplace. Explaining such divisions of labor, an electronics firm manager in the Mexican Border Industrial Zone said:

> We hire mostly women because they are more reliable than men; they have finer fingers, smaller muscles and unsurpassed manual dexterity. Also, women don't get tired of repeating the same operations nine-hundred times a day. (Fernández Kelly, 1979, quoted in Green, 1983)

Managers and co-workers often target sexuality and reproduction as objects of control, but in different ways for women and men. Women are often excluded on grounds of reproduction and objectified on grounds of sexuality, while male sexuality pervades many organizations and reinforces men's organizational power (Collinson & Collinson, 1989). Male talk about sexuality and their sense of sexual superiority can also be a source of cohesion that reinforces organizational stability. On the other hand, sexuality may be disruptive, and, according to Burrell (1984, p. 98), organizations institute mechanisms for control of sexuality early in their development. Women's challenges to exploitative male sexuality may result in management intervention, but only if the challenges are protected by law and thus become disruptive for the organization. The saga of the emergence of sexual harassment as an organizational problem is an example. Sexual harassment is an historically new concept, a product of the women's movement (MacKinnon, 1979). Although the behavior has always existed, it was not named until 1976 when two U.S. surveys on its prevalence were done (Stanko, 1985, p. 61). Some women took legal action against employers; eventually the courts, first in the United States and later in some other countries, ruled that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. Sensational and sometimes expensive cases continue to occur. Thus, a dirty secret, attesting to the ubiquitous sexualization of work relations, has been transformed into a major organizational problem, but one that persists and is probably more widespread than most studies indicate (e.g., Collinson & Collinson, 1996; Thomas & Kitzinger, 1994).

These are just a few examples of the complex ways that gender, bodies, and sexuality may be both problematic for organizational managers and resources for control and management (see also Hearn & Parkin, 1987). Consideration of bodies and sexuality has stimulated renewed interest in emotions in work processes and in the constitution of gendered hierarchies (Adkins, 1995; Fineman, 1993; Pierce, 1995). Descriptions of particular organizations will reveal different ways that gender differences in bodies, emotionality, and sexuality are accommodated, expressed, and employed in ongoing organizational processes.

6. GENDER AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Historically, the gendering processes of organizing and the gendered structures of organizations have changed with changing organization of production, changing economic conditions, increasing demands by women for equity and, on occasion, equality. However, as I argued earlier, there has also been a certain stability in the overall configuration of gendered practices and persona. In the last 10 to 15 years, organizational change and restructuring seem to have increased in pace and pervasiveness, stimulating questions about the possible consequences for women, gender inequality, men, and masculinities.

By framing the issue in this way, I am not suggesting that restructuring consists of abstract processes that then have impacts on gender, for organizational restructuring should be thought of as gendered processes (Halford & Savage, 1995).

Worldwide restructuring of capital and production, facilitated by new technologies, has included on the organizational level flattening of hierarchies, reductions in the numbers of middle managers, redistribution and reorganization of tasks and responsibilities, the development of team work, and various methods to increase flexibility (Jenson, 1989; Smith, 1993). The ideology justifying these changes is that they will increase productivity, efficiency, and profit. In addition, it has been argued, these changes require a new kind of management, one that is more humane and focussed on developing employees' capacities for creative engagement in their work (Calás & Smircich, 1993). Such changes, often recommended by management consultants, are occurring in the public as well as the private sectors. These efforts at transformation might seem to offer possibilities for reductions in gender segregation and the assignment of women to subordinate jobs and for increasing demand for women's caring and relational capacities in management positions. Contemporary change processes are complex and various. Moreover, research on the gendered outcomes and the ways in which gender enters these processes is sparse. Therefore, conclusions about what is actually happening must be tentative (Acker, 1994).

The most consistently reported changes are reductions in hierarchy, which means, of course, downsizing. Some evidence exists that women fare better in flat organizations than in hierarchical bureaucracies (e.g., Kvande & Rasmussen, 1994). However, more evidence indicates that reducing hierarchy as it is usually done, through downsizing middle management jobs and reorganizing tasks and responsibilities, has detrimental effects on both the quality of work and possibilities for advancement for women. Vicki Smith (1990) records how reducing the ranks of bank middle management was accompanied by an intensification of work for remaining employees and a centralization of control in the hands of higher management. Although she does not draw out the implications for women, women have increasingly filled middle management slots in most banks. Reporting on a study of organizational restructuring in a public sector utility, a multinational pharmaceutical company and a large insurance company, Jean Woodall, Christine Edwards, and Rosemary Welchman (1997) conclude that for women managers "the experience of organizational restructuring is akin to participation in a lottery in which they are occasionally winners, but usually losers" (p. 2). Restructuring led to "job losses in functions where women are concentrated," restricted access for women to organizational networks that provide opportunities for career development, and undermined formal equal opportunity programs. In contrast, Susan Halford and Mike Savage (1995), examining restructuring in banking and local government offices, suggest that these changes undermined traditional managerial masculinities and opened new possibilities for women. At the same time, new and more competitive managerial masculinities could be identified, while women managers often were "in posts which are not part of the mainstream departmental hierarchy" (p. 116).

Greater work loads and task variety accompanies reorganization to reduce middle management and "empower" lower level workers, Maile (1995) found in a study of a local government in Britain. I (Acker, 1994a) also found these patterns in a study of women's jobs in Swedish banks. Although at that time middle management was not being reduced, work was being reorganized on a team basis, requiring that all employees have a wide repertoire of skills and knowledge so that they could function interchangeably on the team. Their tasks were much more demanding and stressful, but, at the same

time, they found their jobs more satisfying, although not more rewarding in monetary terms. Elin Kvande (1997) describes restructuring in a program providing care for the elderly in Norway in which a "new managerialism" emphasizing budgets and efficiency characterised new management positions filled by men. Nursing and caretaking were separated from budget management, and those providing care, disproportionately women, had to make the stressful decisions about who would receive the increasingly scarce care resources.

Reorganization or restructuring may also include a search for flexibility through management-initiated changes in the labor force from primarily full-time, permanent employees to a partly contingent workforce. Contingent work takes many forms, but temporary and part-time work are the primary types. These workers are primarily women (Callaghan & Hartmann, 1991). The regular use of such workers constitutes a form of horizontal segregation in organizations. While it is a change that employers welcome, it tends to create a class of workers who have no opportunities for advancement and, usually, lower pay and fewer benefits than full-time workers.

Gender may be a resource for managers in organizational restructuring (Acker, 1994b). A dramatic example was the downsizing of AT&T in the 1970s reported by Sally Hacker (1979). AT&T was planning to reduce its labor force because of new technology at about the same time that it lost a large sex discrimination suit. The company met the requirements of the legal settlement that it integrate women into male jobs by moving many women into jobs that had already been scheduled for elimination with the introduction of the new technology. The numbers of women declined as these formerly male jobs, as well some traditionally female jobs, were eliminated.

Women may be preferred for certain reconstituted management jobs that involve less autonomy but also require more difficult decisions made with fewer resources (Kvande, 1997; Maile, 1995). As overall control and strategic decision-making are centralized, hierarchies are flattened, and career channels become constricted as a result, top managers may believe that women more readily than men accept the limitations on mobility possibilities, and may therefore define women as preferred employees. In the process, gender may be used consciously as a segregating device. For example, Reskin and Roos (1990, p. 51) suggested that "employers gerrymandered the sex labels of jobs that were feminizing for other reasons, selectively invoking sex stereotypes after they decided to hire more women."

7. CONCLUSION

This review of the developments in scholarship on gender and organizations necessarily skims over an increasingly rich field of study. In conclusion, I briefly identify some implications of this perspective for issues usually falling outside the study of organizations. First, gendering organizational studies reveal some of the ways in which gender is implicated in the economy, for the actual practices that constitute the "economy" are, on the whole, organizing practices. Although economic activities exist outside formal organizations, in families for example, most production of goods and services is accomplished in organizations. Markets, including financial markets, are constructed through intra- and interorganizational processes. Distribution through wages, profits, interest, or taxes actually occurs through organizational practices. People acting in organizations do the things that we talk about as economic; gender both shapes and is created in these processes.

Most academic conceptualizations of "the economy" are abstract, gender-absent models of market processes, choices, or value creation. Feminist economists have pointed to the gendered nature of economic analysis and the male bias in economic theory (Ferber & Nelson, 1993; Kuiper & Sap, 1995; Nelson, 1996) and have argued that "the economy" is "gendered." One way to explore the gendered nature of the economy, and to redefine what is meant by "economy," is through the concrete study of gendered organizing practices.

Second, gendered organizing is a critical site in which to study the intertwined processes of class, race, and gender, as Kathy Ferguson (1994) argues. Feminists, including feminist social scientists, recognize that gender cannot be torn from its social contexts without risking distortions, including privileging gender over other components of social relations and identities and denying their importance in creating inequality and domination. These other components include, at a minimum, class and race. Work organizations, in particular, are the locations in which class relations are produced; class relations are infused with gender relations, and often with race relations, which are also reproduced in material and ideological forms as organizational activities are undertaken. Looking at actual practices and experiences of organizing can illuminate the melding of what analysis has torn apart.

Third, the dangers and possibilities in the present processes of societal and global change cannot be fully understood without looking at transformations/nontransformations in gender relations in organizing. For example, the "feminization" of the world labor force has been a major factor in the global relocation of many industrial processes from high-wage countries to low-wage countries with large potential female labor forces. Particular patterns of women's subordination in the low-wage countries may become a resource for managers in high-wage countries, as work is subcontracted to patriarchically controlled family businesses or to factories employing women desperate for work at any wage. Changing employment patterns may have an impact on gender relations and gendered identities within and outside work organizations. For example, the old working class masculinity forged in industrial production seems in decline as production organizations change. At the same time, new or reemerging entrepeneurial masculinities seem to be factors in the contemporary ascendancy of profit, efficiency, and competitive success as major values. These contrasting developments may be both positive and negative for both women and men, marking the weakening of one sort of dominating masculinity and the strengthening of another. I think that a major question to be answered in understanding global economic developments is how the mobilization of various masculinities may be implicated.

Finally, bringing bodies and sexuality, as well as gender, into analyses of processes that have always been seen as disembodied and gender neutral could change our understanding of social structures and processes. Part of the feminist project in the social sciences has been to develop alternatives to abstract, gender neutral theorizing by locating the starting point for investigation outside those theories, in the concrete, ordinary experiences of women (and men) (Smith, 1987). Experiences, including experiences in organizations, are always located in material, concrete bodies, mediated, of course, by meanings and ideologies. Organizing activities and practices are always those of actual embodied people, including those engaged in creating abstract systems. Making bodies and sexuality, in all their concreteness, one of the places to begin our investigations is part of the effort to see social relations as actively produced linkages within and between many different and dispersed local places rather than as abstract macrostructures and processes imposed from above and outside.

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