

7

GENDER AT WORK

MARY NELL TRAUTNER WITH JOAN Z. SPADE

Throughout this book, we emphasize the social construction of gender, a dominant prism in people's lives. This chapter explores some of the ways the social and economic structures within capitalist societies create gendered opportunities and experiences at work, and how work and gender affect life choices, particularly as they relate to family and parenting. The gendered patterns of work that emerge in capitalist systems are complex, like those of a kaleidoscope. These patterns reflect the interaction of gender with other social prisms such as race, age, sexuality, and social class. Furthermore, gendered patterns at work are intertwined with patterns from other social institutions such as education and family. Readings in this chapter support points made throughout the book. First, women's presence, interests, orientations, and needs tend to be diminished or marginalized within occupational spheres. Second, one can use several of the concepts we have been studying to understand the relationships of men and women at work, including hegemonic masculinity, "doing gender," the commodification of gender, and the idea of separate spaces for men and women.

In this chapter, we explore the construction and maintenance of gender within both paid and unpaid work in the United States. We begin with a discussion of work and gender inequality. The history of gender discrimination in the paid labor market is a long one (Reskin & Padavic, 1999), with considerable social science research that documents gendered practices in workplace organizations. The first reading, by Joan Acker, discusses what she calls "inequality regimes," or the ways that work organizations create and maintain inequality across the intersections of

gender, race, and social class. In this piece, she looks beneath the surface to almost invisible institutional practices that maintain unequal opportunities within organizations, such as recruitment or promotion practices (see also Acker, 1999). The second reading in this chapter, by Christine L. Williams, Chandra Muller, and Kristine Kilanski, applies Acker's paradigm to examine the characteristics of gendered organizations that women geoscientists face in the global oil and gas industry.

Consider the various ways the workforce in the United States is gendered. Think about different jobs (e.g., nurse, engineer, teacher, mechanic, domestic worker) and ask yourself if you consider them to be "male" or "female" jobs. Now take a look at Table 7.1, which lists job categories used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018a). You will note that jobs tend to be gender typed; that is, men and women are segregated into particular jobs. The consequences for men and women workers of this continuing occupational gender segregation are significant in the maintenance of gendered identities. Included in Table 7.1 are jobs predominantly held by men (management, architecture and engineering, and construction) and those predominantly held by women (education, health care support, and office and administrative support).

Gender segregation of jobs is linked with pay inequity in the labor force. In 2017, all full-time women workers earned, on average, 81.8% of what all men earned, or median weekly earnings of \$770 compared with \$941 for men (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018b). As you look through Table 7.1, locate those jobs that are the highest paid and determine whether they employ more men or more women. Also, compare

Table 7.1 2017 Median Weekly Salary and Percentages of Men and Women in Selected Occupational Categories by Gender and Race/Ethnic Group^{1,2}

Occupational Category	Median Weekly Wages							
	White Women	White Men	Black Women	Black Men	Hispanic Women	Hispanic Men	% in Category	% in Category
All occupations	\$860	\$1,065	\$657	\$710	\$603	\$690	27.3%	10.5%
Management, professional, and related occupations	\$1,392	\$1,672	\$971	\$1,143	\$970	\$1,159	30.5%	5.7%
Management occupations	13,169	43.5%	4.5%	4.1%	4.5%	5.7%		
Business and financial operations occupations	\$1,174	\$1,440	\$950	\$1,075	\$912	\$1,106		
Computer and mathematical occupations	6,245	33.2%	6.7%	3.6%	5.9%	4.7%		
Architecture and engineering occupations	\$1,465	\$1,538	\$1,054	\$1,252	\$995	\$1,300		
Life, physical, and social science occupations	4,350	45.4%	3.4%	5.2%	1.3%	5.6%		
Community and social services occupations	\$1,478	\$1,516	\$1,099 ³	\$1,356	\$1,120 ³	\$1,450		
Legal occupations	2,936	60.9%	1.1%	4.4%	1.2%	7.4%		
Education, training, and library occupations	\$1,286	\$1,345	\$899 ³	\$1,405 ³	\$1,134	\$1,168		
	1,238	37.4%	3.5%	3.0%	4.4%	5.0%		
	\$900	\$1,045	\$797	\$895	\$774	\$904		
	2,165	22.3%	14.9%	6.8%	8.9%	3.2%		
	\$1,443	\$1,919	\$1,004	\$1,652 ³	\$843	\$1,609		
	1,379	33.4%	6.0%	1.8%	6.0%	3.7%		
	\$1,002	\$1,241	\$830	\$1,033	\$871	\$1,022		
	6,978	20.3%	8.6%	3.0%	7.8%	2.5%		

Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	\$1,066	\$960	\$1,193	\$840	\$791	\$928	\$1,075
Health care practitioner and technical occupations	1,778	31.4%	42.3%	3.5%	3.5%	4.0%	7.8%
	\$1,124	\$1,093	\$1,401	\$889	\$1,072	\$957	\$1,125
	6,970	51.4%	16.1%	10.4%	2.9%	5.7%	2.6%
Service occupations							
Health care support occupations	\$542	\$554	\$625	\$500	\$569	\$570	\$595
	2,500	39.2%	6.0%	26.4%	2.2%	16.4%	3.4%
Protective service occupations	\$852	\$806	\$986	\$595	\$731	\$653	\$782
	2,739	9.4%	51.4%	6.0%	14.4%	2.8%	10.1%
Food preparation and serving related occupations	\$484	\$484	\$514	\$435	\$452	\$424	\$495
	4,465	22.8%	21.7%	7.1%	8.8%	13.3%	17.8%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	\$522	\$505	\$615	\$420	\$503	\$435	\$535
	3,641	10.7%	29.2%	6.8%	9.4%	16.0%	23.3%
Personal care and service occupations	\$520	\$509	\$652	\$493	\$512	\$483	\$592
	2,699	34.7%	12.9%	13.6%	5.2%	14.0%	4.9%
Sales and office occupations							
Sales and related occupations	\$763	\$676	\$1,021	\$524	\$624	\$506	\$724
	9,953	27.1%	39.6%	5.8%	5.1%	7.5%	8.0%
Office and administrative support occupations	\$701	\$708	\$774	\$655	\$621	\$648	\$645
	13,733	45.3%	16.5%	11.2%	4.6%	11.0%	5.1%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations							
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	\$539	\$540	\$689	\$645 ³	\$415 ³	\$444	\$512
	962	6.7%	36.1%	1.0%	4.7%	13.7%	36.5%
Construction and extraction	\$796	\$895	\$914	\$745 ³	\$703	\$549 ³	\$672
	6,147	1.5%	51.3%	0.3%	7.0%	0.7%	36.8%

(Continued)

Table 7.1 (Continued)

Occupational Category	Total Number Employed in Category (16 years and older) (all numbers in this table are in thousands)	Median Weekly Wages					
		White Women	White Men	Black Women	Black Men	Hispanic Women	Hispanic Men
	% in Category	% in Category	% in Category	% in Category	% in Category	% in Category	% in Category
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	\$878	\$749	\$926	\$904 ³	\$776	\$585 ³	\$759
	4,400	1.8%	65.8%	0.7%	8.8%	0.7%	18.3%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations							
Production occupations	\$701	\$621	\$834	\$545	\$668	\$489	\$672
	7,589	12.0%	43.4%	4.9%	9.0%	7.2%	16.0%
Transportation and material moving occupations	\$681	\$585	\$798	\$507	\$624	\$455	\$621
	7,236	6.7%	44.5%	3.6%	15.6%	3.6%	19.9%

¹Data for this table were taken from the Current Population Survey, Table A2: Usual Weekly Earnings of Employed Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers by Intermediate Occupation, Sex, Race, and Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity and Non-Hispanic Ethnicity, Annual Average 2017 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018a).

²Data for White women and White men are White, non-Hispanic. However, there may be overlap between Blacks and Hispanics (that is, an individual might identify as Black and Hispanic). The table does not include data for Asian men or women, or individuals who identify as more than one race. Thus, percentages may not add to 100.

³These estimates do not meet the Bureau of Labor Statistics standard for statistical reliability (50,000 cases); therefore, they must be used cautiously.

women's to men's salaries across occupational categories. Clearly, a "gender wage gap" is evident in Table 7.1. Even in those job categories predominantly filled by women, men earn more than women. For example, going beyond the data in Table 7.1 and looking specifically at elementary and middle school teachers—a traditionally female job in which women outnumber men 3.62 to 1—the 2017 median weekly earnings for men, regardless of race or ethnicity, is \$1,139 compared with \$987 for women (a \$152/week or \$7,904/year average difference). In the occupation that Adia Harvey Wingfield studies in this chapter, registered nurses, women outnumber men 7.96 to 1, but earn \$117 less per week (\$1,143 compared to men's \$1,260, an annual average difference of \$6,084; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018b). The article by Wingfield discusses the "glass escalator" effect, where men in predominately female jobs earn more and get promoted more easily, even when they are not trying to be promoted or earn raises. But, as she discusses in her article, the glass escalator effect does not have a similar impact for African American men, as shown in Table 7.1. In addition, there is no glass escalator effect for women in traditionally male jobs. For example, looking at the specific occupation of lawyer, men still outnumbered women 1.32 to 1 in 2017 and also out-earned women \$2,105 to \$1,753 (a \$352/week or \$18,304/year difference on average; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018b); or civil engineers, where men outnumber women 5.44 to 1 and earn \$1,524 per week to women's \$1,343 per week median wages (a \$181/week or \$9,412/year difference on average; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018b); or physicians and surgeons, where men outnumber women 1.32 to 1 and earn \$2,277 per week median wages to women's \$1,759 per week (a \$518/week or \$26,936/year difference on average; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018b). These four specific job categories are contained within the larger selected occupational categories in Table 7.1 and provide further understanding of the differences you see there (the Bureau of Labor Statistics only calculates median weekly incomes within specific occupations when there are more than 50,000 persons in that category; therefore, we were limited in the detailed job categories available to us).

The pattern you see does not deny that *some* women are CEOs of corporations, and today we see women workers everywhere, including on construction crews (the article by Amy M. Denissen and Abigail C. Saguy in Chapter 9 describes what it is like for women working in the construction trades). However, although a few women crack what is often called "the glass ceiling," getting into the top executive or hypermasculine jobs is not easy for women and minority group members. The

glass ceiling refers to the point at which women and others, including racial minorities, reach a position in their organizations beyond which they cannot continue on an upward trajectory (Purcell, MacArthur, & Samblanet, 2010; see also the articles by Acker, Wingfield, and Williams, Muller, and Kilanski in this chapter). Informal networks generally maintain the impermeability of glass ceilings, with executive women often isolated and left out of "old boys' networks," finding themselves "outsiders on the inside" (Davies-Nettley, 1998, p. 347). Similar internal mechanisms within union and trade-related organizations also keep women and minority group members out, because "knowing" someone often helps one get a job in the higher paid, blue-collar occupations.

Some of these patterns are particularly apparent when we consider the perspectives of "outsiders within." The reading by Kristen Schilt in this chapter studies the workplace experiences of female-to-male (FTM) transsexuals before and after their transition. These workers, having worked as women and now as men, make visible many of the hidden inequalities and structural disadvantages discussed by Acker and others in this chapter.

GENDER, RACE, AND SOCIAL CLASS AT WORK

When we incorporate the prisms of race/ethnicity, and social class with gender, segregation in the workforce and pay inequality become more complex, as illustrated in the Wingfield article in this chapter. Another look at Table 7.1 indicates that individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino and African American earn less than White, non-Hispanic men and women, although minority men earn more than White women in some occupational categories. In addition, Hispanic and African American women and men are much less likely to be found in the job categories with higher salaries than their percentages in the labor force would suggest. The continuing discrimination against African Americans, Hispanics, and other ethnic minority groups (as indicated in Table 7.1) shows patterns similar to the discrimination against women, both in the segregation of certain job categories and in the wage gap that exists within these same job categories. These processes operate to keep African American, Hispanic, and other marginalized groups "contained" within a limited number of occupational categories in the labor force.

The inequities of the workplace carry over into retirement (Calasanti & Slevin, 2001). Women and other marginalized groups are at a disadvantage when they retire, because their salaries are lower during their paid work years. Toni M. Calasanti and Kathleen F. Slevin find considerable inequalities in retirement income,

which indicate that the inequalities in the labor force have a long-term effect for women and racial/ethnic minorities. They argue that only a small group of the workforce—privileged White men—are able to enjoy their “golden years,” and the reasons for this situation are monetary. Likewise, many of the FTMs in Kristen Schilt’s study who are not white find themselves unable to capitalize on the gender privilege in the workplace.

Efforts to change inequality in the workplace by combating wage and job discrimination through legislation have included both gender and race. In 1963, Congress passed the Equal Pay Act, prohibiting employment discrimination by sex but not by race. Men and women in the same job, with similar credentials and seniority, could no longer receive different salaries. Although this legislation was an important step, Kim M. Blankenship (1993) cites two weaknesses in it. First, by focusing solely on pay equity, this legislation did not address gender segregation or gender discrimination in the workplace. Thus, it was illegal to discriminate by paying a woman less than a man who held the same job, but gender segregation of the workforce and differential pay across jobs was legal. As Blankenship notes, this legislation saved “men’s jobs from women” (p. 220) because employers could continue to segregate their labor force into jobs that were held by men and those held by women and then pay the jobs held by men at a higher rate. Second, this legislation did little to help minority women, as a considerable majority of employed women of color were in occupations such as domestic workers in private households or employees of hotels/motels or restaurants that were not covered by the act (Blankenship, 1993).

In 1964, Congress passed Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Congress drafted this legislation to address racial discrimination in the labor force. This act prohibited discrimination in “hiring, firing, compensation, classification, promotion, and other conditions of employment on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, or national origin” (Blankenship, 1993, p. 204). Sex-based discrimination was not originally part of this legislation but was added at the last minute, an addition that some argue was to ensure the bill would not pass. However, the Civil Rights Act did pass Congress and women were protected along with the other groups. Unfortunately, the enforcement of gender discrimination legislation was much less enthusiastic than that for race discrimination (Blankenship, 1993).

Blankenship (1993) argues that the end result of these two pieces of legislation to overcome gender and race discrimination was to “protect white men’s interests and power in the family” (p. 221), with little concern about practices that kept women and men of color

out of higher paying jobs. Sadly, these attempts seem to have had little impact on race and gender discrimination (Sturm & Guinier, 1996). In this chapter, articles by Acker, and Williams, Muller, and Kilanski describe the more subtle ways wage discrimination can take place in higher paying occupations. Take another look at Table 7.1 and think about the ways the different allocations of jobs and wages affect women’s and men’s lives across race and social class—their ability to be partners in relationships and their ability to provide for themselves and their families.

As you think about the differences that remain in wage inequality, consider what still needs to be accomplished. Pay equity may seem like a simple task to accomplish. After all, now we have laws that should be enforced. However, the process by which most companies determine salaries is quite complex. They rank individual job categories based on the degree of skill needed to complete job-related tasks. Ronnie Steinberg (1990), a sociologist who has studied comparable worth of jobs for almost 40 years, portrays a three-part process for determining wages for individual jobs. First, jobs are evaluated based on certain job characteristics, such as “skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions” (p. 457). Second, job complexity is determined by applying a “value to different levels of job complexity” (p. 457). Finally, the values determined in the second step help set wage rates for the job. However, care work and other types of work typically performed by women are undervalued in this wage-setting process (England, 2005; Steinberg, 1990).

On the surface, this system of determining salaries seems consistent and “compatible with meritocratic values,” where each person receives pay based on the value of what he or she actually does on the job (Steinberg, 1987, p. 467). What is recognized as “skill,” however, is a matter of debate and is typically decided by organizational leaders who are predominately White, upper-class men. The gender and racial bias in the system of determining skills is shocking. Steinberg (1990, p. 456) gives an example from the State of Washington in 1972 in which two job categories, legal secretary and heavy equipment operator, were evaluated as “equivalent in job complexity,” but the heavy equipment operator was paid \$400 more per month than the legal secretary. Although it appears that all wages are determined in the same way based on the types of tasks they do at work, Steinberg (1987, 1990, 1992) and others (including Acker in this chapter) argue that the processes used to set salaries are highly politicized and biased.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION AT WORK

One way of interpreting why these gendered differences continue in the workforce is to examine workplaces as gendered institutions, as discussed in the introduction to this book. Acker, and Williams, Muller, and Kilanski—in the first two readings in this chapter—and other researchers examine work as a gendered institution (Acker, 1999, 2012). For example, Patricia Y. Martin (1996) studied managerial styles and evaluations of men and women in two different organizations: universities and a multinational corporation. She found that when promotions were at stake, male managers mobilized hegemonic masculinity to benefit themselves, thus excluding women. Understanding the processes and patterns by which hegemonic masculinity is considered “normal” within organizations is one avenue to understanding how organizations work to maintain sex segregation and pay inequity. These “inequality regimes” disadvantage all but a few, and, as Acker notes in this chapter, things are not likely to get better.

Gender discrimination at work is much more than an outcome of cultural or socialization differences in women’s and men’s behaviors in the workplace. Corporations have vested interests in exploiting gender labor. The exploitation of labor is a key element in the global as well as the U.S. economy, particularly as companies seek to reduce labor costs. Women in particular are likely targets for large, multinational corporations. In developing nations, companies exploit poor women’s desires for freedom for themselves and responsibility to their families. For example, research by McKay (2006) illustrates these points as he describes the gendered assumptions, policies, and practices that multinational corporations bring to their factories in the Philippines and how they reflect the cultures of their home countries and illustrate the various ways “inequality regimes” are created in the workplace.

Looking at some of the top-wage jobs in the United States, Williams, Muller, and Kilanski in this chapter describe some of the subtle and not-so-subtle mechanisms of discrimination for geoscientists in the global gas and oil industry. The “inequality regimes” surrounding career trajectories and compensation patterns make meritocracy a myth and discourage women from trying because it is clear that they are on an uneven playing field. As you read the articles in this chapter, consider those mechanisms and others where gender segregates workplaces and keeps women from advancing into particular jobs.

THE EFFECT OF WORK ON OUR LIVES

The work we do shapes our identities, affecting our expectations for ourselves and others (Kohn, Slomczynski, & Schoenbach, 1986) and our emotions. It is not just paid work that affects our orientations toward self and others (Spade, 1991) but also work done in the home. In Western societies, work also defines leisure, with leisure related to modernization and the definition of work being “done at specific times, at workplaces, and under work-specific authority” (Roberts, 1999, p. 2). Although the separation of leisure from work is much more likely to be found in developed societies, work is not always detached from leisure, as evidenced by the professionals who carry home a briefcase at the end of the day or the beepers that summon individuals to call their workplaces.

CARE WORK

Care work is one gendered pattern that restricts women’s leisure more so than men’s (England, 2005). Women’s leisure is often less an escape from work and more a transition to another form of work—domestic work. In an international study using time budgets collected from almost 47,000 people in 10 industrialized countries, Michael Bittman and Judy Wajcman (2000) found that men and women have a similar amount of free time; however, women’s free time tends to be more fragmented by demands of housework and caregiving. Another study using time budgets found that women spent 30.9 hours on average performing various different family care tasks such as cooking, cleaning, repairs, yard work, and shopping, while men spent 15.9 hours per week performing such tasks (Robinson & Godbey, 1997, p. 101). Women also reported more stress in the Bittman and Wajcman (2000) study, which the authors attributed to the fact that “fragmented leisure, snatched between work and self-care activities, is less relaxing than unbroken leisure” (p. 185).

Domestic work, while almost invisible and generally devalued, cannot be left out of a discussion of work and leisure (Gerstel, 2000). Care work is devalued—particularly unpaid care work, which rests largely on women’s shoulders. Gerstel and others refer to the contribution of women to care work as “the third shift.” As a result, domestic labor and caregiving, being unpaid, are done by people least valued in the paid market. The undervaluation of care work carries over to the paid market as well. Look again at Table 7.1 and identify those job categories that encompass care work, such as health support workers and personal care and

service workers. Now compare salaries and percentages of men and women in these caregiving jobs. As you start to consider these issues, ask why we undervalue care work—the unpaid care work in the home as well as care work in the workplace? Why are men encouraged not to participate in care work, and why are women the default caregivers? How is it that the work of the home is undervalued, and how is this pattern related to the workplace and the amount of leisure time available to men and women?

WORK, FAMILY, AND PARENTING

Unfortunately things have changed very little since the Bittman and Wajcman (2000) study, as Amy S. Wharton reports in her review of changes in the distribution of domestic labor in this chapter. Wharton calls it a “stalled revolution,” as the changes that did occur hit a plateau in the late 1990s. Women’s progress slowed in the workforce as well. Wharton sees the problems associated with this uneven workload as related to the institutions of work, family, and gender. With care work perceived as a “feminine” activity, it is not surprising that women’s lives are more likely to be focused around, or expected to be focused around, care work activities, whereas the image of the ideal worker is an employee who is totally devoted to his or her job with no other responsibilities that might interfere with those work responsibilities. The reading by Erin Reid in this chapter delves into this “ideal worker image.” While researchers have typically found that this expectation disadvantages women, particularly mothers, Reid finds that both men and women experience conflicts in their ability to conform to this ideology, as both men and women have family and care responsibilities and desires. However, men and women are able to cope with these conflicts differently. Men are more likely to hide their deviations from the ideal worker image, whereas women are more likely to make their conflicts known to their employer. Thus, work, family, and parenting become gendered institutions, reinforcing each other in maintaining a gender binary of separate spheres for women and men.

We can illustrate only a few patterns of work in this chapter. The rest you can explore on your own as you take the examples from the readings and apply them to your own life. When you read through the articles in this chapter, consider the consequences of maintaining gendered patterns at work for yourself and your future. While you are at it, consider why these patterns still exist and what these patterns of inequality look like in your life.

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Introduction to Reading 32

Joan Acker draws from her vast research on gender, class, work, and organizations to describe the structure of organizations that maintain gender, class, and race disparities in wages as well as power in organizations. She also explores why inequalities in organizational structures and practices are not likely to change. She describes “inequality regimes,” or practices and policies embedded in the organization itself, and shows how they work to create and maintain inequality across gender, race, and class. In this article, Acker provides detailed examples of how organizations maintain the gender inequalities in wages described in Table 7.1 and also why individuals seem powerless to overcome these gender inequalities.

1. Using your own life, think about whether you can identify any “inequality regimes” in the organizations you have worked in.
2. How does Acker’s description of inequality regimes explain the data in Table 7.1?
3. What would have to change to reduce “inequality regimes” in the workplace? How might this threaten masculinity?

INEQUALITY REGIMES

GENDER, CLASS, AND RACE IN ORGANIZATIONS

Joan Acker

All organizations have inequality regimes, defined as loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within particular organizations. The ubiquity of inequality is obvious: Managers, executives, leaders, and department heads have much more power and higher pay than secretaries, production workers, students, or even professors. Even organizations that have explicit egalitarian goals develop inequality regimes over time, as considerable research on egalitarian feminist organizations has shown (Ferree and Martin 1995; Scott 2000).

I define inequality in organizations as systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources, and outcomes; workplace decisions such as how to organize work; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations. Organizations vary in the degree to which these disparities are present and in how severe they are. Equality rarely exists in control over goals and resources, while pay and other monetary rewards are usually unequal. Other disparities may be less evident, or a

Acker, J. (2006). Inequality regimes: Gender, class, and race in organizations. *Gender & Society*, 20(4): 441–464. Reprinted by permission of SAGE Publications Inc., on behalf of Sociologists for Women in Society.

high degree of equality might exist in particular areas, such as employment security and benefits.

Inequality regimes are highly various in other ways; they also tend to be fluid and changing. These regimes are linked to inequality in the surrounding society, its politics, history, and culture. Particular practices and interpretations develop in different organizations and subunits. One example is from my study of Swedish banks in the late 1980s (Acker 1994). My Swedish colleague and I looked at gender and work processes in six local bank branches. We were investigating the degree to which the branches had adopted a reorganization plan and a more equitable distribution of work tasks and decision-making responsibilities that had been agreed to by both management and the union. We found differences on some dimensions of inequality. One office had almost all women employees and few status and power differences. Most tasks were rotated or shared, and the supervision by the male manager was seen by all working in the branch as supportive and benign. The other offices had clear gender segregation, with men handling the lucrative business accounts and women handling the everyday, private customers. In these offices, very little power and decision making were shared, although there were differences in the degrees to which the employees saw their workplaces as undemocratic. The one branch office that was most successful in redistributing tasks and decision making was the one with women employees and a preexisting participatory ethos.

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WHAT VARIES? THE COMPONENTS OF INEQUALITY REGIMES

Shape and Degree of Inequality

The steepness of hierarchy is one dimension of variation in the shape and degree of inequality. The steepest hierarchies are found in traditional bureaucracies in contrast to the idealized flat organizations with team structures, in which most, or at least some, responsibilities and decision-making authority are distributed among participants. Between these polar types are organizations with varying degrees of hierarchy and shared decision making. Hierarchies are usually gendered and racialized, especially at the top. Top hierarchical class positions are almost always occupied by white men in the United States and European countries. This is particularly true in large and influential organizations. The image of the successful organization and the image of the successful leader share many

of the same characteristics, such as strength, aggressiveness, and competitiveness. Some research shows that flat team structures provide professional women more equality and opportunity than hierarchical bureaucracies, but only if the women function like men. One study of engineers in Norway (Kvande and Rasmussen 1994) found that women in a small, collegial engineering firm gained recognition and advancement more easily than in an engineering department in a big bureaucracy. However, the women in the small firm were expected to put in the same long hours as their male colleagues and to put their work first, before family responsibilities. Masculine-stereotyped patterns of on-the-job behavior in team-organized work may mean that women must make adaptations to expectations that interfere with family responsibilities and with which they are uncomfortable. In a study of high-level professional women in a computer development firm, Joanne Martin and Debra Meyerson (1998) found that the women saw the culture of their work group as highly masculine, aggressive, competitive, and self-promoting. The women had invented ways to cope with this work culture, but they felt that they were partly outsiders who did not belong.

Other research (Barker 1993) suggests that team-organized work may not reduce gender inequality. Racial inequality may also be maintained as teams are introduced in the workplace (Vallas 2003). While the organization of teams is often accompanied by drastic reductions of supervisors' roles, the power of higher managerial levels is usually not changed: Class inequalities are only slightly reduced (Morgen, Acker, and Weigt n.d.).

The degree and pattern of segregation by race and gender is another aspect of inequality that varies considerably between organizations. Gender and race segregation of jobs is complex because segregation is hierarchical across jobs at different class levels of an organization, across jobs at the same level, and within jobs (Charles and Grusky 2004). Occupations should be distinguished from jobs: An occupation is a type of work; a job is a particular cluster of tasks in a particular work organization. For example, emergency room nurse is an occupation; an emergency room nurse at San Francisco General Hospital is a job. More statistical data are available about occupations than about jobs, although "job" is the relevant unit for examining segregation in organizations. We know that within the broad level of professional and managerial occupations, there is less gender segregation than 30 years ago, as I have already noted. Desegregation has not progressed so far in other occupations. However, research indicates that "sex segregation at the job level

is more extensive than sex segregation at the level of occupations” (Wharton 2005, 97). In addition, even when women and men “are members of the same occupation, they are likely to work in different jobs and firms” (Wharton 2005, 97). Racial segregation also persists, is also complex, and varies by gender.

Jobs and occupations may be internally segregated by both gender and race: What appears to be a reduction in segregation may only be its reconfiguration. Reconfiguration and differentiation have occurred as women have entered previously male-dominated occupations. For example, women doctors are likely to specialize in pediatrics, not surgery, which is still largely a male domain. I found a particularly striking example of the internal gender segregation of a job category in my research on Swedish banks (Acker 1991). Swedish banks all had a single job classification for beginning bank workers: They were called “aspiranter,” or those aspiring to a career in banking. This job classification had one description; it was used in banking industry statistics to indicate that this was one job that was not gender segregated. However, in bank branches, young women aspiranters had different tasks than young men. Men’s tasks were varied and brought them into contact with different aspects of the business. Men were groomed for managerial jobs. The women worked as tellers or answered telephone inquiries. They had contact only with their immediate supervisors and coworkers in the branch. They were not being groomed for promotion. This was one job with two realities based on gender.

The size of wage differences in organizations also varies. Wage differences often vary with the height of the hierarchy: It is the CEOs of the largest corporations whose salaries far outstrip those of everyone else. In the United States in 2003, the average CEO earned 185 times the earnings of the average worker; the average earnings of CEOs of big corporations were more than 300 times the earnings of the average worker (Mishel, Bernstein, and Boushey 2003). White men tend to earn more than any other gender/race category, although even for white men, the wages of the bottom 60 percent are stagnant. Within most service-sector organizations, both white women and women of color are at the bottom of the wage hierarchy.

The severity of power differences varies. Power differences are fundamental to class, of course, and are linked to hierarchy. Labor unions and professional associations can act to reduce power differences across class hierarchies. However, these organizations have historically been dominated by white men with the consequence that white women and people of color have not had increases in organizational power

equal to those of white men. Gender and race are important in determining power differences within organizational class levels. For example, managers are not always equal. In some organizations, women managers work quietly to do the organizational housekeeping, to keep things running, while men managers rise to heroic heights to solve spectacular problems (Ely and Meyerson 2000). In other organizations, women and men manage in the same ways (Wajcman 1998). Women managers and professionals often face gendered contradictions when they attempt to use organizational power in actions similar to those of men. Women enacting power violate conventions of relative subordination to men, risking the label of “witches” or “bitches.”

Organizing Processes That Produce Inequality

Organizations vary in the practices and processes that are used to achieve their goals; these practices and processes also produce class, gender, and racial inequalities. Considerable research exists exploring how class or gender inequalities are produced, both formally and informally, as work processes are carried out (Acker 1989, 1990; Burawoy 1979; Cockburn 1985; Willis 1977). Some research also examines the processes that result in continuing racial inequalities. These practices are often guided by textual materials supplied by consultants or developed by managers influenced by information and/or demands from outside the organization. To understand exactly how inequalities are reproduced, it is necessary to examine the details of these textually informed practices.

Organizing the general requirements of work. The general requirements of work in organizations vary among organizations and among organizational levels. In general, work is organized on the image of a white man who is totally dedicated to the work and who has no responsibilities for children or family demands other than earning a living. Eight hours of continuous work away from the living space, arrival on time, total attention to the work, and long hours if requested are all expectations that incorporate the image of the unencumbered worker. Flexibility to bend these expectations is more available to high-level managers, predominantly men, than to lower-level managers (Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Some professionals, such as college professors, seem to have considerable flexibility, although they also work long hours. Lower-level jobs have, on the whole, little flexibility. Some work is organized as part-time, which may help women to combine work and family obligations, but in the

United States, such work usually has no benefits such as health care and often has lower pay than full-time work (Mishel, Bernstein, and Boushey 2003). Because women have more obligations outside of work than do men, this gendered organization of work is important in maintaining gender inequality in organizations and, thus, the unequal distribution of women and men in organizational class hierarchies. Thus, gender, race, and class inequalities are simultaneously created in the fundamental construction of the working day and of work obligations.

Organizing class hierarchies. Techniques also vary for organizing class hierarchies inside work organizations. Bureaucratic, textual techniques for ordering positions and people are constructed to reproduce existing class, gender, and racial inequalities (Acker 1989). I have been unable to find much research on these techniques, but I do have my own observations of such techniques in one large job classification system from my study of comparable worth (Acker 1989). Job classification systems describe job tasks and responsibilities and rank jobs hierarchically. Jobs are then assigned to wage categories with jobs of similar rank in the same wage category. Our study found that the bulk of sex-typed women's jobs, which were in the clerical/secretarial area and included thousands of women workers, were described less clearly and with less specificity than the bulk of sex-typed men's jobs, which were spread over a wide range of areas and levels in the organization. The women's jobs were grouped into four large categories at the bottom of the ranking, assigned to the lowest wage ranges; the men's jobs were in many more categories extending over a much wider range of wage levels. Our new evaluation of the clerical/secretarial categories showed that many different jobs with different tasks and responsibilities, some highly skilled and responsible, had been lumped together. The result was, we argued, an unjustified gender wage gap: Although women's wages were in general lower than those of men, women's skilled jobs were paid much less than men's skilled jobs, reducing even further the average pay for women when compared with the average pay for men. Another component in the reproduction of hierarchy was revealed in discussions with representatives of Hay Associates, the large consulting firm that provided the job evaluation system we used in the comparable worth study. These representatives would not let the job evaluation committees alter the system to compare the responsibilities of managers' jobs with the responsibilities of the jobs of their secretarial assistants. Often, we observed,

managers were credited with responsibility for tasks done by their assistants. The assistants did not get credit for these tasks in the job evaluation system, and this contributed to their relatively low wages. But if managers' and assistants' jobs could never be compared, no adjustments for inequities could ever be made. The hierarchy was inviolate in this system.

In the past 30 years, many organizations have removed some layers of middle management and relocated some decision making to lower organizational levels. These changes have been described as getting rid of the inefficiencies of old bureaucracies, reducing hierarchy and inequality, and empowering lower-level employees. This happened in two of the organizations I have studied—Swedish banks in the late 1980s (Acker 1991), discussed above, and the Oregon Department of Adult and Family Services, responsible for administration of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and welfare reform (Morgen, Acker, and Weigt n.d.). In both cases, the decision-making responsibilities of frontline workers were greatly increased, and their jobs became more demanding and more interesting. In the welfare agency, ordinary workers had increased participation in decisions about their local operations. But the larger hierarchy did not change in either case. The frontline employees were still on the bottom; they had more responsibility, but not higher salaries. And they had no increased control over their job security. In both cases, the workers liked the changes in the content of their jobs, but the hierarchy was still inviolate.

In sum, class hierarchies in organizations, with their embedded gender and racial patterns, are constantly created and renewed through organizing practices. Gender and sometimes race, in the form of restricted opportunities and particular expectations for behavior, are reproduced as different degrees of organizational class hierarchy and are also reproduced in everyday interactions and bureaucratic decision making.

Recruitment and hiring. Recruitment and hiring is a process of finding the worker most suited for a particular position. From the perspectives of employers, the gender and race of existing jobholders at least partially define who is suitable, although prospective coworkers may also do such defining (Enarson 1984). Images of appropriate gendered and racialized bodies influence perceptions and hiring. White bodies are often preferred, as a great deal of research shows (Royster 2003). Female bodies are appropriate for some jobs; male bodies for other jobs.

A distinction should be made between the gendered organization of work and the gender and racial

characteristics of the ideal worker. Although work is organized on the model of the unencumbered (white) man, and both women and men are expected to perform according to this model, men are not necessarily the ideal workers for all jobs. The ideal worker for many jobs is a woman, particularly a woman who, employers believe, is compliant, who will accept orders and low wages (Salzinger 2003). This is often a woman of color; immigrant women are sometimes even more desirable (Hossfeld 1994).

Hiring through social networks is one of the ways in which gender and racial inequalities are maintained in organizations. Affirmative action programs altered hiring practices in many organizations, requiring open advertising for positions and selection based on gender- and race-neutral criteria of competence, rather than selection based on an old boy (white) network.

These changes in hiring practices contributed to the increasing proportions of white women and people of color in a variety of occupations. However, criteria of competence do not automatically translate into gender- and race-neutral selection decisions. “Competence” involves judgment: The race and gender of both the applicant and the decision makers can affect that judgment, resulting in decisions that white males are the more competent, more suited to the job than are others. Thus, gender and race as a basis for hiring or a basis for exclusion have not been eliminated in many organizations, as continuing patterns of segregation attest.

Wage setting and supervisory practices. Wage setting and supervision are class practices. They determine the division of surplus between workers and management and control the work process and workers. Gender and race affect assumptions about skill, responsibility, and a fair wage for jobs and workers, helping to produce wage differences (Figart, Mutari, and Power 2002).

Wage setting is often a bureaucratic organizational process, integrated into the processes of creating hierarchy, as I described above. Many different wage-setting systems exist, many of them producing gender and race differences in pay. Differential gender-based evaluations may be embedded in even the most egalitarian-appearing systems. For example, in my study of Swedish banks in the 1980s, a pay gap between women and men was increasing within job categories in spite of gender equality in wage agreements between the union and employers (Acker 1991). Our research revealed that the gap was increasing because the wage agreement allowed a small proportion of negotiated increases to be allocated by local

managers to reward particularly high-performing workers. These small increments went primarily to men; over time, the increases produced a growing gender gap. In interviews we learned that male employees were more visible to male managers than were female employees. I suspected that the male managers also felt that a fair wage for men was actually higher than a fair wage for women. I drew two implications from these findings: first, that individualized wage-setting produces inequality, and second, that to understand wage inequality it is necessary to delve into the details of wage-setting systems.

Supervisory practices also vary across organizations. Supervisory relations may be affected by the gender and race of both supervisor and subordinate, in some cases preserving or reproducing gender or race inequalities. For example, above I described how women and men in the same aspirant job classification in Swedish banks were assigned to different duties by their supervisors. Supervisors probably shape their behaviors with subordinates in terms of race and gender in many other work situations, influencing in subtle ways the existing patterns of inequality. Much of this can be observed in the informal interactions of workplaces.

Informal interactions while “doing the work.” A large literature exists on the reproduction of gender in interactions in organizations (Reskin 1998; Ridgeway 1997). The production of racial inequalities in workplace interactions has not been studied so frequently (Vallas 2003), while the reproduction of class relations in the daily life of organizations has been studied in the labor process tradition, as I noted above. The informal interactions and practices in which class, race, and gender inequalities are created in mutually reinforcing processes have not so often been documented, although class processes are usually implicit in studies of gendered or racialized inequalities.

As women and men go about their everyday work, they routinely use gender-, race-, and class-based assumptions about those with whom they interact, as I briefly noted above in regard to wage setting. Body differences provide clues to the appropriate assumptions, followed by appropriate behaviors. What is appropriate varies, of course, in relation to the situation, the organizational culture and history, and the standpoints of the people judging appropriateness. For example, managers may expect a certain class deference or respect for authority that varies with the race and gender of the subordinate; subordinates may assume that their positions require deference and respect but also find these demands demeaning or

oppressive. Jennifer Pierce (1995), in a study of two law firms, showed how both gendered and racialized interactions shaped the organizations' class relations: Women paralegals were put in the role of supportive, mothering aides, while men paralegals were cast as junior partners in the firms' business. African American employees, primarily women in secretarial positions, were acutely aware of the ways in which they were routinely categorized and subordinated in interactions with both paralegals and attorneys. The interaction practices that re-create gender and racial inequalities are often subtle and unspoken, thus difficult to document. White men may devalue and exclude white women and people of color by not listening to them in meetings, by not inviting them to join a group going out for a drink after work, by not seeking their opinions on workplace problems. Other practices, such as sexual harassment, are open and obvious to the victim, but not so obvious to others. In some organizations, such as those in the travel and hospitality industry, assumptions about good job performance may be sexualized: Women employees may be expected to behave and dress as sexually attractive women, particularly with male customers (Adkins 1995).

The Visibility of Inequalities

Visibility of inequality, defined as the degree of awareness of inequalities, varies in different organizations. Lack of awareness may be intentional or unintentional. Managers may intentionally hide some forms of inequality, as in the Swedish banks I studied (Acker 1991). Bank workers said that they had been told not to discuss their wages with their coworkers. Most seem to have complied, partly because they had strong feelings that their pay was part of their identity, reflecting their essential worth. Some said they would rather talk about the details of their sex lives than talk about their pay.

Visibility varies with the position of the beholder: "One privilege of the privileged is not to see their privilege." Men tend not to see their gender privilege; whites tend not to see their race privilege; ruling class members tend not to see their class privilege (McIntosh 1995). People in dominant groups generally see inequality as existing somewhere else, not where they are. However, patterns of invisibility/visibility in organizations vary with the basis for the inequality. Gender and gender inequality tend to disappear in organizations or are seen as something that is beside the point of the organization. Researchers examining gender inequality have sometimes experienced this disappearance as they have

discussed with managers and workers the ways that organizing practices are gendered (Ely and Meyerson 2000; Korvajärvi 2003). Other research suggests that practices that generate gender inequality are sometimes so fleeting or so minor that they are difficult to see.

Class also tends to be invisible. It is hidden by talk of management, leadership, or supervision among managers and those who write and teach about organizations from a management perspective. Workers in lower-level, nonmanagement positions may be very conscious of inequalities, although they might not identify these inequities as related to class. Race is usually evident, visible, but segregated, denied, and avoided. In two of my organization studies, we have asked questions about race issues in the workplace (Morgen, Acker, and Weigt n.d.). In both of these studies, white workers on the whole could see no problems with race or racism, while workers of color had very different views. The one exception was in an office with a very diverse workforce, located in an area with many minority residents and high poverty rates. Here, jobs were segregated by race, tensions were high, and both white and Black workers were well aware of racial incidents. Another basis of inequality, sexuality, is almost always invisible to the majority who are heterosexual. Heterosexuality is simply assumed, not questioned.

The Legitimacy of Inequalities

The legitimacy of inequalities also varies between organizations. Some organizations, such as cooperatives, professional organizations, or voluntary organizations with democratic goals, may find inequality illegitimate and try to minimize it. In other organizations, such as rigid bureaucracies, inequalities are highly legitimate. Legitimacy of inequality also varies with political and economic conditions. For example, in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, the civil rights and the women's movements challenged the legitimacy of racial and gender inequalities, sometimes also challenging class inequality. These challenges spurred legislation and social programs to reduce inequality, stimulating a decline in the legitimacy of inequality in many aspects of U.S. life, including work organizations. Organizations became vulnerable to lawsuits for discrimination and took defensive measures that included changes in hiring procedures and education about the illegitimacy of inequality. Inequality remained legitimate in many ways, but that entrenched legitimacy was shaken, I believe, during this period.

Both differences and similarities exist among class, race, and gender processes and among the ways in which they are legitimized. Class is fundamentally about economic inequality. Both gender and race are also defined by inequalities of various kinds, but I believe that gender and racial differences could still conceivably exist without inequality. This is, of course, a debatable question. Class is highly legitimate in U.S. organizations, as class practices, such as paying wages and maintaining supervisory oversight, are basic to organizing work in capitalist economies. Class may be seen as legitimate because it is seen as inevitable at the present time. This has not always been the case for all people in the United States; there have been periods, such as during the depression of the 1930s and during the social movements of the 1960s, when large numbers of people questioned the legitimacy of class subordination.

Gender and race inequality are less legitimate than class. Antidiscrimination and civil rights laws limiting certain gender and race discriminatory practices have existed since the 1950s. Organizations claim to be following those laws in hiring, promotion, and pay. Many organizations have diversity initiatives to attract workforces that reflect their customer publics. No such laws or voluntary measures exist to question the basic legitimacy of class practices, although measures such as the Fair Labor Standards Act could be interpreted as mitigating the most severe damages from those practices. In spite of antidiscrimination and affirmative action laws, gender and race inequalities continue in work organizations. These inequalities are often legitimated through arguments that naturalize the inequality (Glenn 2002). For example, some employers still see women as more suited to child care and less suited to demanding careers than men. Beliefs in biological differences between genders and between racial/ethnic groups, in racial inferiority, and in the superiority of certain masculine traits all legitimate inequality. Belief in market competition and the natural superiority of those who succeed in the contest also naturalizes inequality.

Gender and race processes are more legitimate when embedded in legitimate class processes. For example, the low pay and low status of clerical work is historically and currently produced as both a class and a gender inequality. Most people take this for granted as just part of the way in which work is organized. Legitimacy, along with visibility, may vary with the situation of the observer: Some clerical workers do not see the status and pay of their jobs as fair, while their bosses would find such an assessment bizarre.

The advantaged often think their advantage is richly deserved. They see visible inequalities as perfectly legitimate.

High visibility and low legitimacy of inequalities may enhance the possibilities for change. Social movements may contribute to both high visibility and low legitimacy while agitating for change toward greater equality, as I argued above. Labor unions may also be more successful when visibility is high and legitimacy of inequalities is low.

Control and Compliance

Organizational controls are, in the first instance, class controls, directed at maintaining the power of managers, ensuring that employees act to further the organization's goals, and getting workers to accept the system of inequality. Gendered and racialized assumptions and expectations are embedded in the form and content of controls and in the ways in which they are implemented. Controls are made possible by hierarchical organizational power, but they also draw on power derived from hierarchical gender and race relations. They are diverse and complex, and they impede changes in inequality regimes.

Mechanisms for exerting control and achieving compliance with inequality vary. Organization theorists have identified many types of control, including direct controls, unobtrusive or indirect controls, and internalized controls. Direct controls include bureaucratic rules and various punishments for breaking the rules. Rewards are also direct controls. Wages, because they are essential for survival in completely monetized economies, are a powerful form of control (Perrow 2002). Coercion and physical and verbal violence are also direct controls often used in organizations (Hearn and Parkin 2001). Unobtrusive and indirect controls include control through technologies, such as monitoring telephone calls or time spent online or restricting information flows. Selective recruitment of relatively powerless workers can be a form of control (Acker and Van Houten 1974). Recruitment of illegal immigrants who are vulnerable to discovery and deportation and recruitment of women of color who have few employment opportunities and thus will accept low wages are examples of this kind of control, which preserves inequality.

Internalized controls include belief in the legitimacy of bureaucratic structures and rules as well as belief in the legitimacy of male and white privilege. Organizing relations, such as those between a manager and subordinates, may be legitimate, taken for granted

as the way things naturally and normally are. Similarly, a belief that there is no point in challenging the fundamental gender, race, and class nature of things is a form of control. These are internalized, often invisible controls. Pleasure in the work is another internalized control, as are fear and self-interest. Interests can be categorized as economic, status, and identity interests, all of which may be produced as organizing takes place. Identities, constituted through gendered and racialized images and experiences, are mutually reproduced along with differences in status and economic advantage. Those with the most powerful and affluent combination of interests are apt to be able to control others with the aim of preserving these interests. But their self-interest becomes a control on their own behavior.

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GLOBALIZATION, RESTRUCTURING, AND CHANGE IN INEQUALITY REGIMES

Organizational restructuring of the past 30 years has contributed to increasing variation in inequality regimes. Restructuring, new technology, and the globalization of production contribute to rising competitive pressures in private-sector organizations and budget woes in public-sector organizations, making challenges to inequality regimes less likely to be undertaken than during the 1960s to the 1980s. The following are some of the ways in which variations in U.S. inequality regimes seem to have increased. These are speculations because, in my view, there is not yet sufficient evidence as to how general or how lasting these changes might be.

The shape and degree of inequality seem to have become more varied. Old, traditional bureaucracies with career ladders still exist. Relatively new organizations, such as Wal-Mart, also have such hierarchical structures. At the same time, in many organizations, certain inequalities are externalized in new segmented organizing forms as both production and services are carried out in other, low-wage countries, often in organizations that are in a formal, legal sense separate organizations. If these production units are seen as part of the core organizations, earnings inequalities are increasing rapidly in many different organizations. But wage inequalities are also increasing within core U.S.-based sectors of organizations.

White working- and middle-class men, as well as white women and all people of color, have been

affected by restructuring, downsizing, and the export of jobs to low-wage countries. White men's advantage seems threatened by these changes, but at least one study shows that white men find new employment after layoffs and downsizing more rapidly than people in other gender/race categories and that they find better jobs (Spalter-Roth and Deitch 1999). And a substantial wage gap still exists between women and men. Moreover, white men still dominate local and global organizations. In other words, inequality regimes still seem to place white men in advantaged positions in spite of the erosion of advantages for middle- and lower-level men workers.

Inequalities of power within organizations, particularly in the United States, also seem to be increasing with the present dominance of global corporations and their free market ideology, the decline in the size and influence of labor unions, and the increase in job insecurity as downsizing and reorganization continue. The increase in contingent and temporary workers who have less participation in decisions and less security than regular workers also increases power inequality. Unions still exercise some power, but they exist in only a very small minority of private-sector organizations and a somewhat larger minority of public-sector unions.

Organizing processes that create and re-create inequalities may have become more subtle, but in some cases, they have become more difficult to challenge. For example, the unencumbered male worker as the model for the organization of daily work and the model of the excellent employee seems to have been strengthened. Professionals and managers, in particular, work long hours and often are evaluated on their "face time" at work and their willingness to put work and the organization before family and friends (Hochschild 1997; Jacobs and Gerson 2004). New technology makes it possible to do some jobs anywhere and to be in touch with colleagues and managers at all hours of day and night. Other workers lower in organizational hierarchies are expected to work as the employer demands, overtime or at odd hours. Such often excessive or unpredictable demands are easier to meet for those without daily family responsibilities. Other gendered aspects of organizing processes may be less obvious than before sex and racial discrimination emerged as legal issues. For example, employers can no longer legally exclude young women on the grounds that they may have babies and leave the job, nor can they openly exclude consideration of people of color. But informal exclusion and

unspoken denigration are still widespread and still difficult to document and to confront.

The visibility of inequality to those in positions of power does not seem to have changed. However, the legitimacy of inequality in the eyes of those with money and power does seem to have changed: Inequality is more legitimate. In a culture that glorifies individual material success and applauds extreme competitive behavior in pursuit of success, inequality becomes a sign of success for those who win.

Controls that ensure compliance with inequality regimes have also become more effective and perhaps more various. With threats of downsizing and off-shoring, decreasing availability of well-paying jobs for clerical, service, and manual workers, and undermining of union strength and welfare state supports, protections against the loss of a living wage are eroded and employees become more vulnerable to the control of the wage system itself. That is, fear of loss of livelihood controls those who might challenge inequality.

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CONCLUSION

Greater equality inside organizations is difficult to achieve during a period, such as the early years of the twenty-first century, in which employers are pushing for more inequality in pay, medical care, and retirement benefits and are using various tactics, such as downsizing and outsourcing, to reduce labor costs. Another major impediment to change within inequality regimes is the absence of broad social movements outside organizations agitating for such changes. In spite of all these difficulties, efforts at reducing inequality continue. Government regulatory agencies, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in particular, are still enforcing antidiscrimination laws that prohibit discrimination against specific individuals (see www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/). Resolutions of complaints through the courts may mandate some organizational policy changes, but these seem to be minimal. Campaigns to alter some inequality regimes are under way.

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Introduction to Reading 33

In this article, Christine L. Williams, Chandra Muller, and Kristine Kilanski use Joan Acker's theory (from the previous reading) to examine the work experiences of women geoscientists in oil and gas companies. The 30 women they interviewed are highly educated (22 had master's degrees, and 8 had PhDs), ranged in age from 30 to 52 (average age 38), and worked in 14 different companies, including large global corporations such as Exxon Mobil, BP, and Shell. They used snowball sampling to locate the women they interviewed by asking women at professional meetings they attended to refer them to other women who held similar jobs. Through this process, they were also able to include three women who had left the industry. In-depth interviews with these women ranged from 1 to 2 hours. They also did observations at three professional meetings and interviewed three men supervisors. Their findings give us an inside look at the job experiences of women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; see also the article by Maria Charles in Chapter 4) and help us understand why women leave these fields.

1. Do men and women “do gender” in these professional fields, thus maintaining a system of inequality?
2. How does the “looser” style of “new management” practices in these powerful global corporations advantage or disadvantage women?
3. Using the findings from this study, explain why women engineers earn less than men.

GENDERED ORGANIZATIONS IN THE NEW ECONOMY

Christine L. Williams, Chandra Muller, and Kristine Kilanski

After making spectacular strides toward gender equality in the twentieth century, women's progress in the workplace shows definite signs of slowing (England 2010). Although women have entered occupations previously closed to them, many jobs remain as gender segregated today as they were in 1950. At both the top and the bottom of the employment pyramid, women continue to lag behind men in terms of pay and authority, despite closing gender gaps in educational attainment and workplace seniority. What accounts for these persistent gender disparities?

To explain gender inequality at work, many sociologists draw on Joan Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organizations. Acker argued that gender inequality is tenacious because it is built into the structure of work organizations. Even the very definition of a "job" contains an implicit preference for male workers (Acker 1990). Employers prefer to hire people with few distractions outside of work who can loyally devote themselves to the organization. This preference excludes many women, given the likelihood that they hold primary care responsibilities for family members. Consequently, for many employers the "ideal worker" is a man (see also Williams 2001).

Acker (1990) further identified five processes that reproduce gender in organizations: the division of labor, cultural symbols, workplace interactions, individual identities, and organizational logic. The latter process—organizational logic—was at the center of Acker's original critique of gendered organizations (Acker 1990) and is the focus of this article. The concept of organizational logic draws attention to how hierarchies are rationalized and legitimized in organizations. It encompasses the logical systems of work rules, job descriptions, pay scales, and job evaluations that govern bureaucratic organizations. Acker describes organizational logic as the taken-for-granted policies and principles that managers use to exercise legitimate control over the workplace. Workers comply because they view these policies and principles as "natural" or normal business practices.

While others had previously identified organizational logic as key to the reproduction of class

inequality, Acker's breakthrough identified it as a source of gender inequality as well, even though it appears gender neutral on the surface. . . .

For example, organizations supposedly use logical principles to develop job descriptions and determine pay rates. But Acker argues that managers often draw on gender stereotypes when undertaking these tasks, privileging qualities associated with men and masculinity that then become reified in organizational hierarchies. Through organizational logic, therefore, gender discourses are embedded in organizations, and gender inequality at work results.

A great deal of research supports Acker's theoretical claims (for a review, see Britton and Logan 2008). But in the decades since the article was published, the social organization of work has changed considerably. Starting in the 1970s, organizations began to experience downsizing, restructuring, computerization, and globalization (DiMaggio 2001; Kalleberg 2000; Vallas 2011). Referred to as "work transformation," this general and vast process of change is affecting the structure of work in the United States and around the world. Whereas in the past, many workers looked forward to a lifetime of loyal service to a single employer, workers in the so-called new economy expect to change employers frequently in search of better opportunities and in response to lay-offs, mergers, and downsizing. Organizational logic is changing, too. Under the former system, workers carried out narrow and specific tasks identified by their job descriptions and were evaluated and compensated by managers who controlled the labor process. Today, as corporations shed layers of management, work is increasingly organized into teams composed of workers with diverse skills who work with considerable discretion on time-bounded projects and are judged on results and outcomes, often by peers. Furthermore, in the new economy, standardized career "ladders"—with clearly demarcated rungs that lead to higher-paying and more responsible positions—are being eliminated or replaced by career maps, or "I-deals," which are individualized programs of career development. Networking has become a principal means through which

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workers identify opportunities for advancement both inside and outside their firms (Babcock and Laschever 2003; DiMaggio 2001; Osnowitz 2010; Powell 2001; Rousseau 2005; Vallas 2011).¹

In this study, we seek to extend Acker's (1990) analysis and critique of gendered organizations by investigating how gender is embedded in the organizational logic of the new economy. Acker's theory explains how gender is embedded in traditional organizations that value and reward worker loyalty and that are characterized by standardized job descriptions, career ladders, and manager-controlled evaluations—features that do not characterize jobs in the new economy. We investigate how organizational logic is gendered when work is precarious, teams instead of managers control the labor process, career maps replace career ladders, and future opportunities are identified primarily through networking.

GEOSCIENTISTS IN THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

To investigate gendered organizations in the new economy, we draw upon our research on women geoscientists in the oil and gas industry. Women geoscientists have increased their numbers radically in recent decades, currently constituting about 45 percent of graduates with master's degrees in geology, the entry-level credential in the field (AGI 2011). Also, according to anecdotal data, women geoscientists are entering professional careers in industry in almost equal numbers as men. Despite these encouraging advances, there is a strong perception that women stall out in mid-career and eventually leave their jobs at the major companies (AAPG 2009). This pattern is not uncommon among women scientists in general (Preston 2004). The glass ceiling is firmly in place in the oil and gas industry, with very few women represented at the executive levels and on boards of directors (*Catalyst* 2011).

The oil and gas industry is an ideal setting to study gendered organizations in the new economy for several reasons. First, it is arguably the most powerful, global, essential, and lucrative industry in the world. In 2007, the largest oil and gas companies made roughly two trillion dollars (U.S.) in combined revenue and 150 billion dollars in profit (Pirog 2008). Despite its critical importance, few sociologists have examined the gender dynamics in this industry (see Miller 2004 for an exception). Second, the industry has a high demand for so-called knowledge workers (scientists and engineers), which is a defining feature of the new economy; one solution to the perceived shortage of these workers has

been to increase the numbers of women in these fields (National Academy of Sciences 2010). Third, and most importantly for our analysis, the industry has been in the forefront of implementing the new organizational logic (McKee, Mauthner, and Maclean 2000). Throughout the 80s and 90s, the industry experienced numerous mergers, leading to reorganization and downsizing that exacerbated the vulnerability of its workforce. Consistent with the general process of work transformation, the major corporations have altered the career structure for their professional workforce by institutionalizing career maps and teamwork. The expectation of frequent career moves has enhanced the importance of networking for professional success. These innovations make the oil and gas industry a paradigmatic case for investigating gendered organizations in the twenty-first century.

* * *

FINDINGS

Organizational changes associated with the new economy are reflected in the careers of geoscientists in the oil and gas industry. Gone is the expectation of a life-long career spent in loyal service to a single employer. Oil and gas companies frequently expand and contract their workforce in response to economic cycles and mergers (Yergin 1993). . . . Job insecurity is described by [one] respondent as both a constant and a "very scary" feature of the oil and gas industry.

The constant threat of layoffs no doubt causes high levels of stress and performance pressures for geoscientists. But how is performance measured? In periods of downsizing and merging, how do individuals survive the periodic cuts and even succeed in the industry?

Given the work geoscientists are hired to do, it would seem that whoever finds the most oil and gas would receive the most rewards. Indeed, after a respondent drilled a successful well, headhunters tried to lure her away from her current company, offering incentives such as stock options. But corporations have good reason to be wary of using this particular metric of productivity, since it may incentivize geologists to overstate their claims, a risky and costly prospect for companies. To protect themselves from this lone wolf phenomenon and insure greater reliability, companies instituted the team structure. This geologist, who experienced both individual- and team-based work, explains the economic stakes:

When I first started in the mid-80s, I was working an exploration play in northern Louisiana, and the engineer who was going to drill a well for me was based in

Corpus Christi. I never met him. I would do my maps and put them in the mail because we didn't have electronic submission. We might have a few conference calls before we drilled a million dollar well. That was when it cost \$50,000 a day to drill a well. Now a well in the Gulf of Mexico is a million dollars a day. And so, [changing to the team structure] was part of that. You had to be able to get people face-to-face. There was too much on the line from a risk standpoint, and from a financial standpoint.

In the experience of this geologist, teams produce more reliable results than do individuals working alone. With more people involved, she believes that companies get better advice on where to drill and also where not to drill, lessening their economic risks.

Teams are now a standard organizational form for scientists working in industry (Connelly and Middleton 1996). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009) identifies the ability to work on teams as an important feature of geoscientists' careers. The women we talked to worked on teams ranging in size from five to 20. Some teams were interdisciplinary, while others were composed of members with a single specialty, all of whom were investigating a particular "play" or geographical area for potential drilling. Individuals' team assignments typically last from three to five years, and many require relocation to a different city, oil field, and/or country. Each team is headed by a supervisor, typically a professional peer working alongside the rest of the team. Supervisors also move around to different teams every few years. The result is a work organization in perpetual flux, with teams forming and disbanding, and team members and supervisors constantly circulating around the country and, indeed, all over the globe.

Even though work is team based and essentially collaborative, careers are still individual. Raises, promotions, and opportunities are allocated to individuals, not to teams (although team members can receive additional bonuses if their collective results contribute to a company's profits). Out of this particular context, oil and gas companies replaced career ladders and standardized job descriptions with career maps—individualized programs for career development. A career map establishes goals and sets expectations that are then used to monitor a worker's productivity and evaluate his or her performance. The supervisor plays a central role in crafting workers' career maps and making sure that they have the tools to achieve their goals. As the primary channel to management, the supervisor identifies high performers on the team, recommends raises and bonuses, and determines the

quality of future placements. Thus, individual workers must gain the support of their supervisors in order to further their careers in the industry.

A second major pathway to success in the oil and gas industry is through networking. In many of the large corporations, professionals are assigned mentors for their first three to five years, but by mid-career, we were told, they are basically left on their own to find support and encouragement as well as opportunities for career growth. Networking is viewed by respondents as the principal means to this end. Networks can be internal or external, formal or informal. Through these networks professionals gain exposure for lateral moves (after layoffs) and for leadership opportunities.

The new organizational logic appears gender neutral on the surface. Some have argued that because the new system of teams, career maps, and networking is less rigid than the older system of standardized career ladders and job descriptions, it may be more compatible with women's careers (e.g., Hewlett 2007). In fact, the transition to the new economy has taken place at the same time that major corporations have embraced gender and racial/ethnic diversity (Eisenstein 2009). The giant oil and gas companies tout their efforts to recruit women and minority men. Both Chevron and BP, for example, feature women scientists in recent publicity campaigns. Nevertheless, as we explain in the remainder of this article, these new forms may explain persistent patterns of gender inequality. . . .

Teamwork

In some recent studies, the team structure has been found to attenuate gender inequality in organizations (Kalev 2009; Plankey Videla 2006; Reskin 2002; Smith-Doerr 2004). However, we found that women may be disadvantaged on male-dominated teams. By the very nature of teamwork, the individual's contribution to the final product is obscured. Yet because careers are still individual, members of the team must engage in self-promotion to receive credit and rewards for their personal effort. Our study suggests that women encounter difficulties when promoting their accomplishments and gaining the credibility of their supervisors and other team members. This finding is consistent with experimental studies showing that, in general, women are given disproportionately less credit than men for the success they achieve when they work on teams in male-dominated environments (Heilman and Haynes 2005).

Because female workers are not given the benefit of the doubt in assessments of their work efforts by others, it is especially important that they are willing and able to tout their contributions to team accomplishments. Many of the women we interviewed are conscious of the importance of self-promotion, though they are not always secure in their ability to do it effectively. One geoscientist shared her misgivings about her own presentation skills, as well as her hunch that presentation skills may be more important than scientific ability to get ahead in industry:

I don't know especially if you have to be as good, or if you have to be just as loud and belligerent as the other people. You definitely/the personality here is, to prove your point, you have to bang the table sometimes. I think women are more reluctant to do that. It's not me to do that.

This woman attributes her reluctance to “bang the table” to her personality, which she suggests is a reflection of an essential gender difference. But the following quote, from the only woman geoscientist in her entire division, indicates that women may be regarded negatively when they promote themselves:

It's kind of interesting that I feel that I have to fight more to keep promoting what my expertise is. And it keeps getting kind of pushed back. The other people with less expertise in structural geology, they seem to get a little more recognition. Now, they've been working for the company for years. But still, I'm the one that has the expertise in that area. I just don't know how to do it. You don't want to be the one that yells and screams all the time. It's a delicate balance to keep promoting yourself.

Virtually everyone we interviewed talked about the fine line, or “delicate balance,” between being assertive and being a “bitch.” This perennial dilemma faced by women in the workplace is exacerbated in a team structure that requires workers to engage in assertive self-promotion in order to achieve recognition.

One woman reflected on her experience speaking at a partner meeting, at which she was the only woman, and youngest person, in attendance:

I had to stand up and tell why I thought the well location should be somewhere and I could absolutely tell that no one was taking me seriously. They didn't care what I had to say—it was very obvious. Part of that I'm sure is being young, part of it was being the first time I had to stand up and tell them that. Because now, after eleven years, I can stand up and I can talk [laughs], but you have to get to that point. You have to know your stuff. I know that I

have to cross every “t” and dot every “i,” because if I don't, someone is going to pick it apart. There will be some man in the audience that wants to heckle you because he can—and I know that.

As this observation suggests, the difficulties that women encounter with self-promotion may be compounded by age. The following quote also indicates that younger women may face additional hurdles when attempting to bring attention to their accomplishments:

I think automatically that anything I say is questioned. My supervisor, in my first go-round through the performance, told me I had to speak up—I have to believe what I'm saying, and I can't let them railroad me . . . which, I think he feels is more of an age thing. You get some credibility with age. I'm sure some people think you get more credibility being a guy. [I've got] kind of the short stick on both of those.

Her supervisor admonished her for not being assertive enough. But she perceived that, even when she did speak up, her views were constantly challenged because she was the only woman and the youngest member of the team.

At the professional meetings we attended, we observed that age is often treated as a status group in the industry. For example, when executives discussed “diversity” goals at their companies, they included age as well as gender and race/ethnicity. Layoffs that occurred in the 1980s and late 1990s were reported to have contributed to a large age gap among industry geoscientists (with a virtual absence of workers aged 35–45). Some of the geoscientists that we interviewed believed the age gap contributed to tension within teams. Young geoscientists do not always receive the recognition they seek from the older generation nearing retirement.

However, youth tends to operate differently based on gender and race. Youth can convey certain advantages to men, who may become the protégés of senior men (Roper 1994). In contrast, young women struggle to get noticed in positive ways. Some young women described feeling sexualized by men in their work teams. Others told us that they succeeded only because they fell into the “daughter” role with senior male mentors. Both roles are constraining in the quest for professional credibility. As Ollilainen and Calasanti (2007) have argued, family metaphors can disadvantage women who work on teams by encouraging a gendered division of labor and compelling women to engage in uncompensated emotional labor. Furthermore, in white male-dominated teams, metaphorical

family roles may be available only to white women (Bell and Nkomo 2001).

Minority women may be disadvantaged compared to white men and women in additional ways, according to one Asian American woman we interviewed:

It's all sorts of behaviors and soft skills that they look at for leadership potential. And a lot of the Asian people don't do well in those because we're culturally expected to be modest and we're culturally expected to not stand out. It's OK for us to be introverted or quiet. You actually get respected for being quiet, a man of few words. But at [my oil and gas company], that is not how you get success.

This statement suggests that self-promotion may have different meanings for racial/ethnic minority men and women. Furthermore, other research suggests that those who engage in it may be viewed negatively by white colleagues and supervisors (Harvey Wingfield 2010).

Interestingly, we observed that women who worked in gender-balanced teams (absent in some companies) felt like they received greater recognition and respect for their contributions. If correct, this observation would confirm theories of tokenism that predict less bias in numerically balanced work groups (Kanter 1977). But how do teams achieve this numerical balance? Supervisors play a key role in determining the composition of the work group. However, as we suggest in the next section, supervisor's discretionary power is not necessarily exercised in the interest of gender equality.

In sum, in order to achieve recognition and rewards for their contributions, individuals working on teams must be willing and able to stand out from the group and advertise their accomplishments. Our findings suggest that this apparently gender neutral requirement can discriminate against women. As other researchers have found (Babcock and Laschever 2003; Bowles, Babcock, and Lai 2007; Broadbridge 2004), self-promotion can have negative meanings and consequences for women in male-dominated environments. When work is organized on the teamwork model, gender inequality is the likely result.

Career Maps

In many companies, career maps have replaced standardized career ladders for highly valued professionals. The purpose of a career map is to chart an individualized course of professional development that incorporates both the company's needs and the personal aspirations of the worker. Sometimes called

"I-deals" (Rousseau 2005), these idiosyncratic arrangements often include employees' plans for reduced or flexible hours (e.g., to accommodate family needs) in addition to their career ambitions. Career maps are normally negotiated with supervisors, and they evolve over time.

Respondents were mostly positive about career maps because of the perception that they allow workers to manage their own careers. This was preferable to having, in the words of one geologist, "big brother" determine their futures with a one-size-fits-all set of career expectations (see also Hewlett 2007). However, in practice, the geoscientists we interviewed experienced several problems with career maps, stemming from the perceived ineptitude or gender bias of their supervisors. First, difficulties can arise if the criteria drawn are too vague or subjective. A woman with a PhD in geophysics explained that some workers, and especially new employees, struggled to figure out their job responsibilities. Supervisors sometimes assigned work without explaining the steps necessary or directing new employees to the resources needed to complete their assigned tasks. In fact, it wasn't until right before she left the industry that [one] particular woman felt she understood the "work flow." . . .

Without standardized job descriptions, workers can experience confusion about their job duties. Developing excellent communication skills becomes mandatory in this new context. One geologist attributed her success in the industry to the fact that she has "effectively communicated my career plan to the right people." She said, "Not everyone is so fortunate. . . . I do know of some people who haven't had as much influence on where they have gone. But when I've spoken with them, I really feel like they have not effectively communicated what they wanted to do." From her perspective, it is up to individual workers—not the corporation—to ensure that careers stay on the right track.

A second problem with career maps is that decisions about raises, promotions, and other rewards based on this system can appear arbitrary. This woman shared her confusion and frustration that her husband—who had started his job around the same time she did—had been promoted "a lot faster" than she had:

And I've seen that, just on the side, watching. . . . I'm like, "OK, what are you doing differently that I need to do to get this going?" He said, "Nothing. I haven't done anything." He is a quiet guy by nature. So he didn't know why he was getting promoted himself. And I thought that was very interesting.

The lack of common job descriptions and career ladders contributes to uncertainty about why some

individuals receive recognition and others do not. Because career maps are tailored to the individual—and because most companies prohibit employees from sharing salary information—it is difficult for workers to compare their career progress with others.²

Third, geoscientists perceive problems with career maps when supervisors do not actively advocate for them. A 35-year-old geologist working at a major described the importance of supervisors in obtaining good project assignments. . . .

This worker was grateful when a supervisor several levels above her recommended her for a job opening. Even though she didn't end up receiving that job, she felt "fortunate" to have been considered. She wondered aloud, "How do I get that to happen again?"

When opportunities are experienced as a windfall, workers are unsure how to advance themselves. At the same time, workers felt pressured to take any opportunities presented by a supervisor. Turning down more than one assignment was believed to foreclose them from receiving any in the future.

Without a supportive supervisor, careers can flounder. One geologist found herself in a precarious position when her supervisor left the company and another group subsumed her team. The manager of this group was an engineer rather than a geologist, which this respondent saw as a disadvantage. Not only did the person in charge of assigning and judging her work not understand it, he was already responsible for the careers of a large number of people. Without a supervisor advocating for her, this geologist said she felt "unnerved" and stressed out because she didn't know what her next assignment or career move would be.

While all of these issues with supervisors' discretion over career maps can impact both men and women equally, women may be especially disadvantaged if their supervisors harbor gender biases. As we know from previous research, supervisors who harbor biases against women (or in favor of men) can easily derail women's careers, even in the sciences (DiTomaso et al. 2007). Virtually every woman we interviewed encountered an individual supervisor at some point in her career who stymied her advancement. One geoscientist felt her career at a mid-size company was progressing well until she was assigned a new supervisor. The new supervisor would accept her work only if she had it pre-approved by a male employee on her team. . . .

Gender bias is also expressed in supervisors' decisions about whom to hire into their teams. Studies suggest that managers favor people who are like themselves, a process known as "homosocial reproduction" (Elliott and Smith 2004; Kanter 1977). Gender differences emerge because women are rarely in a position

to make personnel decisions. Even when women are in a supervisory position, their hiring decisions may be scrutinized. One female supervisor hired a woman to her team. When asked if it was controversial to pick a woman, she said that she "got that comment" but was able to defend herself because she had offered the job to a man first. She said, "I wasn't out looking for a female. It turns out we got a female in the group. In this particular case, she is the best fit." Thus, she was put on the defensive for a practice that is common among male supervisors. When gender bias appears to favor women, it is noticed and controversial (a topic we return to in the next section).

Part of developing a career map involves planning for maternity leave and flexible schedules, including part-time. Supervisors often have a great deal of control over these arrangements. One woman said the human resources (HR) department at the major company where she worked "purposefully wrote the rules [regarding flex time] kind of in a gray zone," leaving them open to the interpretation of supervisors. Smaller companies, which often lack formal HR departments, may give supervisors even more discretion than the larger companies do. However, a number of women working at majors gave examples of how supervisory discretion could impact workers' knowledge and ability to take advantage of flexible working options. . . .

This situation captures a paradox at the heart of career maps. On the one hand, they enable greater flexibility in career development, which some argue is in women's best interests (Hewlett 2007). As this geologist attests, "everybody" is unlikely to "want the same thing." On the other hand, if designing a career map that accommodates motherhood depends on having a sympathetic supervisor, potential gender bias is built into the organization. The lack of a "consistent, accepted solution" is frustrating and anxiety producing. . . .

Those we interviewed who had experience working in European offices experienced standardized maternity leave policies that were part of their host country's social welfare system. However, those who worked for European companies in the U.S. faced similarly limited options as those working in U.S. companies, with only supervisor-approved accommodations for maternity leave and part-time schedules available to them.

Because this study was motivated in part to understand women's attrition from the industry, we asked respondents their opinions about why women leave. Many speculated that it was because women tend to "opt out" of the labor force to bear and raise children,

which they considered a deeply personal choice. Interestingly, few could cite specific examples. And the three women we talked to who left the industry did not regard children or family as their primary reason for leaving. Nevertheless, we contend that the institution of career maps, which grants supervisors the ability to negotiate family accommodations on a case-by-case basis, may leave mothers without viable and meaningful alternatives. Furthermore, in an industry characterized by constant mergers and downsizing, we suspect that some women may use the framework of “opting out” as a face-saving way to explain a decision to leave prior to an impending layoff. Unfortunately, this framing reinforces the stereotype that women naturally prioritize family over careers and absolves organizations of the responsibility for structuring the workplace in more equitable ways.

In sum, career maps give supervisors a great deal of discretion over individuals’ career development. In the absence of accountability or an effective affirmative action program, supervisory discretion can be a breeding ground for gender bias (Reskin and McBrier 2000). Given the difficulty of comparing career progression in this context, patterns of gender and racial disparities may be obscured. Nevertheless, the logic of career maps encourages workers to blame themselves, not the organization, when their careers are stymied.

Networking

Virtually everyone we talked to said that networks are fundamental to achieving professional success. In an industry where layoffs are common and anticipated, workers must rely on their formal and informal networks to survive periodic cuts and to identify new opportunities. Yet, as we know from numerous research studies, networks are highly gendered and racialized (Burt 1998; Loscocco et al. 2009; McGuire 2002; Smith 2007). A geophysicist who worked for several large companies and who now owns her own consulting business explained that many people, and women especially, “work hard as opposed to work smart.” Networking, rather than simply doing one’s job well, was, she believed, the key to success in the industry. She reflected on the importance of this knowledge to boosting one’s career: “If I had known then what I know now, I would be CEO of a company.”

In the male-dominated oil and gas industry, not surprisingly, the most powerful networks are almost exclusively male. Often these are organized around golf or hunting (Morgan and Martin 2006). The women we interviewed provided classic accounts of exclusion from these groups.

The men at upper management were quite comfortable making seat-of-the-pants decisions with each other, and they trusted each other. They had lunch together, they played golf together, they trusted each other. If somebody is going to make a seat-of-the-pants decision, the other guy’s going to say “fine.” A woman comes in and tries to make a seat-of-the-pants decision, same process, same gut kind of thing, you’re not going to be trusted, you’re not going to be believed.

Some women perceive that men’s networks, sustained through company-sponsored sports and hunting/fishing trips, are not considered networks at all, even though in these spaces men are likely to develop strong relationships of mutual trust (see also DiTomaso et al. 2007). In one egregious case, a woman described how female strippers were positioned at each putting green at an annual company-sponsored golf tournament. While some women have no interest in attending these networking events, others try to fit in because of their critical importance to success in the industry. One independent producer told us that although she doesn’t play golf, she makes it a point to “ride in the cart.” Another woman tried to join her male colleagues’ fantasy football league. Although they were resistant to letting a woman join, she was finally allowed when one man agreed to be her partner (to the others’ chagrin).

In response to this exclusion, and in acknowledgment of the importance of networking for career development, some corporations have formed official women’s networks. However, these networks have dubious status in corporations and joining may not be in women’s best interest. For instance, DiTomaso and colleagues argue that “special mentoring programs for women set up by companies may be a disadvantage for those who use them” (DiTomaso et al. 2007, 198). The women we interviewed concurred, viewing women’s corporate-sponsored networks as neither powerful nor especially useful. . . .

One problem [mentioned] was that the company brought together all women from the company, rather than just geoscientists. While she saw value in allowing women to network from across the company, she thought the other women came from “a little bit of a different perspective.” Moreover, this type of networking is unlikely to result in future opportunities for a geologist.

At some companies, the women’s network is not limited to women, the rationale being that in the interests of “equal opportunity,” women should not receive “special treatment.” Consequently, when women’s groups are formed, they rarely address issues concerning discrimination or inequality. Topics like work-family balance are sometimes addressed, but in a way

that does not challenge the structure or policies of the organization. For example, a few years after joining the major at which she works, one respondent and her colleagues started an online “family support network” in order to provide employees with children a chance to connect and give them a place to ask questions and receive advice. This “grass-roots network” received immense support from top managers and has since become institutionalized. . . .

Importantly, this network requires no resources from the employer, nor does it challenge the company’s limited support for new parents. Yet the existence of the network makes the company appear to be doing something to promote gender equity.

Furthermore, while some women appreciate this focus on work-family balance, others find it alienating because they do not have children, and feel oppressed by the assumption that they do. For example, one woman spoke of receiving an invitation to a “women in science” session at a local seismic conference. She explained that she was originally excited to hear the experiences of “wicked smart” women scientists talking about how to thrive in a male-dominated environment. Instead she was disappointed that the group focus would be on motherhood. She added, “I don’t tend to seek out female-dominated groups because you inadvertently end up sitting next to someone talking about their kids—which is fine. I can hear about your kids for a while. But I don’t want to have kids.”

On the other hand, some convey more than a hint of cynicism about corporate-sponsored events that highlight the accomplishments of senior women. One woman expressed frustration that corporate diversity events seemed to feature the same senior women retelling their success stories. She explained, “Marilyn is [the company’s] poster child. But for every Marilyn there are fifteen women who are not getting what Marilyn gets”—referring to the same opportunities, exposure, and access to powerful networks.

Given the perceived limitations of official women’s networks, some women turn to informal networks instead. Unfortunately, these also occupy a highly dubious space in the corporate world. They may be perceived as mere outlets for complaining, venting, or “bitching.” A woman who organized a weekend retreat for a group of senior executive women was criticized by detractors for arranging a “ladies’ boondoggle,” an accusation she felt was “outrageous” because men do equivalent outings all the time.

Not surprisingly, some women are reluctant to disclose their interest in forming or joining a women’s group. One woman talked about returning from an AAPG [American Association of Petroleum

Geologists] event with the idea of starting a women’s mentoring group to mimic those in the larger companies. She and a small group of women had started to organize, but had decided it was in their best interest to keep their intentions secret. This woman expressed palpable fear that if found out, the women involved would suffer negative repercussions since company policy strictly forbids any discussion of salary or contracts among employees. These women knew they were taking a chance by organizing a women’s group, so they were planning to hold their meeting 200 miles away in order to avoid detection.

Networking has always been important for professional development. In the new economy, strong networks are needed not only to thrive but to survive periodic downsizing and layoffs. The heightened importance of networking places women geoscientists in a paradoxical position: They are often excluded from powerful men’s networks, yet women’s formal networks, when they exist, are not powerful and may actually have negative consequences for women’s career development. Women’s informal networks may be forced to operate under the radar. Because of the centrality of networking, the resulting gender inequality is thus embedded in the organizational logic of the new economy.

CONCLUSION

The traditional career model, in which a worker spends his or her entire career with one employer, in some, cases climbing a defined career ladder, is on the decline (Vallas 2011). Workers today expect to switch jobs and employers frequently throughout their careers. While some moves are in response to better opportunities, in many cases they are the result of corporate practices, common to some industries, that make workers vulnerable to job loss.

The new career model, created by corporations to reduce their economic risk and responsibility for workers, has several defining features. Under this new model, employees are evaluated based on individualized standards developed in conjunction with their direct supervisors, rather than by a standardized assessment tool. Although workers are evaluated on an individual basis, work is typically performed by self-managed teams. As it is difficult to determine individuals’ level of effort, supervisors have a great deal of discretionary power in rewarding employees for a job well done (i.e., giving employees good team placements). The proliferation of career maps may obscure inequality in the pace of career progress.

Given the level of job insecurity, the ability to maintain large networks to identify job opportunities inside and outside of the organization becomes critically important for successful careers.

We examined the careers of geoscientists in the oil and gas industry—an industry at the forefront of implementing these organizational changes—to explore the gendered consequences of these job features. Our research suggests that teams, career maps, and networking reflect gendered organizational logics. To excel at teamwork, individuals must be able to engage in self-promotion, which can be difficult for women in male-dominated environments—even though they are the ones who may need to do it the most. In contexts where supervisors have discretion over careers, gender bias can play a significant role in the allocation of rewards. And networking is gendered in ways that disadvantage women.

These features of work organization are not new, and, in fact, previous research has shown that all three of these elements can be problematic for women (Bowles, Babcock, and Lai 2007; Broadbridge 2004; Burt 1998; Loscocco et al. 2009; McGuire 2002; Ollilainen and Calasanti 2007). This article's contribution has been to connect them to work transformation. Previously, gender inequality has been institutionalized (in part) through the mechanisms of career ladders, job descriptions, and formal evaluations (Acker 1990). In the new economy, these elements of organizational logic have been replaced by teams, career maps, and networking. These have become principal mechanisms through which gender inequality is reproduced in the new economy. . . .

Our findings suggest that addressing workplace gender inequality in the twenty-first century will require focused attention on transforming these job features, or altering their consequences for women. For example standard options for organizing career maps should be made available to workers. In the interest of gender equity, workers should be informed of the I-deals and salaries of their peers. In addition, supervisors should be made accountable to diversity goals, and incentivized to encourage workers to use company flexibility options. While companies should encourage networking activities, all corporate-sponsored events must include women and minority men, and informal male-only social events must somehow be made culturally taboo. These are the sorts of changes that we believe will enhance the careers of women scientists in the new economy.

When Joan Acker (1990) first articulated the organizational logic underlying gendered organizations, she was operating under the assumptions of the

traditional career model. Those assumptions no longer apply in many organizations. Organizations are still gendered, but the mechanisms for reproducing gender disparities are different than those in the traditional career path. By exploring women's experiences of work in the new economy, we add an essential but previously missing dimension to the critique of work transformation. By paying close attention to the new organizational logic, we hope that effective policies can be devised to enhance gender equality in the twenty-first century workplace.

NOTES

1. These descriptions of “old” and “new” forms of work organizations refer to trends that in actual practice can overlap considerably, so they should be treated as “ideal types” in the Weberian sense.
2. The proliferation of career maps may also make it difficult for human resource departments to detect patterns (and potential disparities) in men's and women's career development.

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Introduction to Reading 34

Sociologists and others use the term *glass ceiling* to describe the barriers to promotion and advancement that women face in the world of work. At the same time, however, it is argued that men have a glass escalator, particularly men employed in what are traditionally women's jobs. In this article, Adia Harvey Wingfield describes the glass escalator and gives an overview of the research on men in traditionally female occupations. While men make up 8% of all nurses, the percentage of nurses who are Black men is unknown. Therefore, this study helps us understand the intersections of race and gender and how the experiences of Black men differ from those of White men in previous studies. Wingfield's study gives insight into the various ways race and gender intersect to discriminate against Black men in the workplace.

1. How are the experiences of the Black men she studied different from the results of previous studies of White men on the glass escalator?
2. Do Black male nurses do masculinity differently than White male nurses? Why or why not?
3. What forms of discrimination are described in this article? What would you recommend to eradicate such discrimination?

RACIALIZING THE GLASS ESCALATOR

RECONSIDERING MEN'S EXPERIENCES WITH WOMEN'S WORK

Adia Harvey Wingfield

Sociologists who study work have long noted that jobs are sex segregated and that this segregation creates different occupational experiences for men and women (Charles and Grusky 2004). Jobs predominantly filled by women often require "feminine" traits such as nurturing, caring, and empathy, a fact that means men confront perceptions that they are unsuited for the requirements of these jobs. Rather than having an adverse effect on their occupational experiences, however, these assumptions facilitate men's entry into better paying, higher status positions, creating what Williams (1995) labels a "glass escalator" effect.

The glass escalator model has been an influential paradigm in understanding the experiences of men who do women's work. Researchers have identified this process among men nurses, social workers, paralegals, and librarians and have cited its pervasiveness as evidence of men's consistent advantage in the workplace, such that even in jobs where men are numerical minorities they are likely to enjoy higher wages and faster promotions (Fløge and Merrill 1986; Heikes 1991; Pierce 1995; Williams 1989, 1995). Most of

these studies implicitly assume a racial homogenization of men workers in women's professions, but this supposition is problematic for several reasons. For one, minority men are not only present but are actually overrepresented in certain areas of reproductive work that have historically been dominated by white women (Duffy 2007). Thus, research that focuses primarily on white men in women's professions ignores a key segment of men who perform this type of labor. Second, and perhaps more important, conclusions based on the experiences of white men tend to overlook the ways that intersections of race and gender create different experiences for different men. While extensive work has documented the fact that white men in women's professions encounter a glass escalator effect that aids their occupational mobility (for an exception, see Snyder and Green 2008), few studies, if any, have considered how this effect is a function not only of gendered advantage but of racial privilege as well.

In this article, I examine the implications of race-gender intersections for minority men employed in a female-dominated, feminized occupation, specifically

Wingfield, A. H. (2009). Racializing the glass escalator: Reconsidering men's experiences with women's work. *Gender & Society*, 23(1): 5–26. Reprinted by permission of SAGE Publications Inc., on behalf of Sociologists for Women in Society.

focusing on Black men in nursing. Their experiences doing “women’s work” demonstrate that the glass escalator is a racialized as well as gendered concept.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In her classic study *Men and Women of the Corporation*, Kanter (1977) offers a groundbreaking analysis of group interactions. Focusing on high-ranking women executives who work mostly with men, Kanter argues that those in the extreme numerical minority are tokens who are socially isolated, highly visible, and adversely stereotyped. Tokens have difficulty forming relationships with colleagues and often are excluded from social networks that provide mobility. Because of their low numbers, they are also highly visible as people who are different from the majority, even though they often feel invisible when they are ignored or overlooked in social settings. Tokens are also stereotyped by those in the majority group and frequently face pressure to behave in ways that challenge and undermine these stereotypes. Ultimately, Kanter argues that it is harder for them to blend into the organization and to work effectively and productively, and that they face serious barriers to upward mobility.

Kanter’s (1977) arguments have been analyzed and retested in various settings and among many populations. Many studies, particularly of women in male-dominated corporate settings, have supported her findings. Other work has reversed these conclusions, examining the extent to which her conclusions hold when men were the tokens and women the majority group. These studies fundamentally challenged the gender neutrality of the token, finding that men in the minority fare much better than do similarly situated women. In particular, this research suggests that factors such as heightened visibility and polarization do not necessarily disadvantage men who are in the minority. While women tokens find that their visibility hinders their ability to blend in and work productively, men tokens find that their conspicuousness can lead to greater opportunities for leadership and choice assignments (Fløge and Merrill 1986; Heikes 1991). Studies in this vein are important because they emphasize organizations—and occupations—as gendered institutions that subsequently create dissimilar experiences for men and women tokens (see Acker 1990).

In her groundbreaking study of men employed in various women’s professions, Williams (1995) further develops this analysis of how power relationships shape the ways men tokens experience work in women’s professions. Specifically, she introduces the

concept of the glass escalator to explain men’s experiences as tokens in these areas. Like Fløge and Merrill (1986) and Heikes (1991), Williams finds that men tokens do not experience the isolation, visibility, blocked access to social networks, and stereotypes in the same ways that women tokens do. In contrast, Williams argues that even though they are in the minority, processes are in place that actually facilitate their opportunity and advancement. Even in culturally feminized occupations, then, men’s advantage is built into the very structure and everyday interactions of these jobs so that men find themselves actually struggling to remain in place. For these men, “despite their intentions, they face invisible pressures to move up in their professions. Like being on a moving escalator, they have to work to stay in place” (Williams 1995, 87).

The glass escalator term thus refers to the “subtle mechanisms in place that enhance [men’s] positions in [women’s] professions” (Williams 1995, 108). These mechanisms include certain behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs men bring to these professions as well as the types of interactions that often occur between these men and their colleagues, supervisors, and customers. Consequently, even in occupations composed mostly of women, gendered perceptions about men’s roles, abilities, and skills privilege them and facilitate their advancement. The glass escalator serves as a conduit that channels men in women’s professions into the uppermost levels of the occupational hierarchy. Ultimately, the glass escalator effect suggests that men retain consistent occupational advantages over women, even when women are numerically in the majority (Budig 2002; Williams 1995).

Though this process has now been fairly well established in the literature, there are reasons to question its generalizability to all men. In an early critique of the supposed general neutrality of the token, Zimmer (1988) notes that much research on race comes to precisely the opposite of Kanter’s conclusions, finding that as the numbers of minority group members increase (e.g., as they become less likely to be “tokens”), so too do tensions between the majority and minority groups. . . . Reinforcing, while at the same time tempering, the findings of research on men in female-dominated occupations, Zimmer (1988, 71) argues that relationships between tokens and the majority depend on understanding the underlying power relationships between these groups and “the status and power differentials between them.” Hence, just as men who are tokens fare better than women, it also follows that the experiences of Blacks and whites as tokens should differ in ways that reflect their positions in hierarchies of status and power. . . .

Relationships With Colleagues and Supervisors

One key aspect of riding the glass escalator involves the warm, collegial welcome men workers often receive from their women colleagues. Often, this reaction is a response to the fact that professions dominated by women are frequently low in salary and status and that greater numbers of men help improve prestige and pay (Heikes 1991). Though some women workers resent the apparent ease with which men enter and advance in women's professions, the generally warm welcome men receive stands in stark contrast to the cold reception, difficulties with mentorship, and blocked access to social networks that women often encounter when they do men's work (Roth 2006; Williams 1992). In addition, unlike women in men's professions, men who do women's work frequently have supervisors of the same sex. Men workers can thus enjoy a gendered bond with their supervisor in the context of a collegial work environment. These factors often converge, facilitating men's access to higher-status positions and producing the glass escalator effect.

The congenial relationship with colleagues and gendered bonds with supervisors are crucial to riding the glass escalator. Women colleagues often take a primary role in casting these men into leadership or supervisory positions. In their study of men and women tokens in a hospital setting, Floge and Merrill (1986) cite cases where women nurses promoted men colleagues to the position of charge nurse, even when the job had already been assigned to a woman. In addition to these close ties with women colleagues, men are also able to capitalize on gendered bonds with (mostly men) supervisors in ways that engender upward mobility. Many men supervisors informally socialize with men workers in women's jobs and are thus able to trade on their personal friendships for upward mobility. Williams (1995) describes a case where a nurse with mediocre performance reviews received a promotion to a more prestigious specialty area because of his friendship with the (male) doctor in charge. According to the literature, building strong relationships with colleagues and supervisors often happens relatively easily for men in women's professions and pays off in their occupational advancement.

For Black men in nursing, however, gendered racism may limit the extent to which they establish bonds with their colleagues and supervisors. The concept of gendered racism suggests that racial stereotypes, images, and beliefs are grounded in gendered ideals (Collins 1990, 2004; Espiritu 2000; Essed 1991; Harvey Wingfield 2007). Gendered racist stereotypes of Black men in particular emphasize the dangerous,

threatening attributes associated with Black men and Black masculinity, framing Black men as threats to white women, prone to criminal behavior, and especially violent. Collins (2004) argues that these stereotypes serve to legitimize Black men's treatment in the criminal justice system through methods such as racial profiling and incarceration, but they may also hinder Black men's attempts to enter and advance in various occupational fields.

For Black men nurses, gendered racist images may have particular consequences for their relationships with women colleagues, who may view Black men nurses through the lens of controlling images and gendered racist stereotypes that emphasize the danger they pose to women. This may take on a heightened significance for white women nurses, given stereotypes that suggest that Black men are especially predisposed to raping white women. Rather than experiencing the congenial bonds with colleagues that white men nurses describe, Black men nurses may find themselves facing a much cooler reception from their women coworkers.

Gendered racism may also play into the encounters Black men nurses have with supervisors. In cases where supervisors are white men, Black men nurses may still find that higher-ups treat them in ways that reflect prevailing stereotypes about threatening Black masculinity. Supervisors may feel uneasy about forming close relationships with Black men or may encourage their separation from white women nurses. In addition, broader, less gender-specific racial stereotypes could also shape the experiences Black men nurses have with white men bosses. Whites often perceive Blacks, regardless of gender, as less intelligent, hardworking, ethical, and moral than other racial groups (Feagin 2006). Black men nurses may find that in addition to being influenced by gendered racist stereotypes, supervisors also view them as less capable and qualified for promotion, thus negating or minimizing the glass escalator effect.

Suitability for Nursing and Higher-Status Work

The perception that men are not really suited to do women's work also contributes to the glass escalator effect. In encounters with patients, doctors, and other staff, men nurses frequently confront others who do not expect to see them doing "a woman's job." Sometimes this perception means that patients mistake men nurses for doctors; ultimately, the sense that men do not really belong in nursing contributes to a push "out of the most feminine-identified areas and up to those regarded as more legitimate for men" (Williams 1995,

104). The sense that men are better suited for more masculine jobs means that men workers are often assumed to be more able and skilled than their women counterparts. As Williams writes (1995, 106), “Masculinity is often associated with competence and mastery,” and this implicit definition stays with men even when they work in feminized fields. Thus, part of the perception that men do not belong in these jobs is rooted in the sense that, as men, they are more capable and accomplished than women and thus belong in jobs that reflect this. Consequently, men nurses are mistaken for doctors and are granted more authority and responsibility than their women counterparts, reflecting the idea that, as men, they are inherently more competent (Heikes 1991; Williams 1995).

Black men nurses, however, may not face the presumptions of expertise or the resulting assumption that they belong in higher-status jobs. Black professionals, both men and women, are often assumed to be less capable and less qualified than their white counterparts. In some cases, these negative stereotypes hold even when Black workers outperform white colleagues (Feagin and Sikes 1994). The belief that Blacks are inherently less competent than whites means that, despite advanced education, training, and skill, Black professionals often confront the lingering perception that they are better suited for lower-level service work (Feagin and Sikes 1994). Black men in fact often fare better than white women in blue-collar jobs such as policing and corrections work (Britton 1995), and this may be, in part, because they are viewed as more appropriately suited for these types of positions. . . .

As minority women address issues of both race and gender to negotiate a sense of belonging in masculine settings (Ong 2005), minority men may also face a comparable challenge in feminized fields. They may have to address the unspoken racialization implicit in the assumption that masculinity equals competence. Simultaneously, they may find that the racial stereotype that Blackness equals lower qualifications, standards, and competence clouds the sense that men are inherently more capable and adept in any field, including the feminized ones.

Establishing Distance From Femininity

An additional mechanism of the glass escalator involves establishing distance from women and the femininity associated with their occupations. Because men nurses are employed in a culturally feminized occupation, they develop strategies to disassociate themselves from the femininity associated with their work and retain some of the privilege associated with

masculinity. Thus, when men nurses gravitate toward hospital emergency wards rather than obstetrics or pediatrics, or emphasize that they are only in nursing to get into hospital administration, they distance themselves from the femininity of their profession and thereby preserve their status as men despite the fact that they do “women’s work.” Perhaps more important, these strategies also place men in a prime position to experience the glass escalator effect, as they situate themselves to move upward into higher-status areas in the field.

Creating distance from femininity also helps these men achieve aspects of hegemonic masculinity, which Connell (1989) describes as the predominant and most valued form of masculinity at a given time. Contemporary hegemonic masculine ideals emphasize toughness, strength, aggressiveness, heterosexuality, and, perhaps most important, a clear sense of femininity as different from and subordinate to masculinity (Kimmel 2001; Williams 1995). Thus, when men distance themselves from the feminized aspects of their jobs, they uphold the idea that masculinity and femininity are distinct, separate, and mutually exclusive. When these men seek masculinity by aiming for the better paying or most technological fields, they not only position themselves to move upward into the more acceptable arenas but also reinforce the greater social value placed on masculinity. Establishing distance from femininity therefore allows men to retain the privileges and status of masculinity while simultaneously enabling them to ride the glass escalator.

For Black men, the desire to reject femininity may be compounded by racial inequality. Theorists have argued that as institutional racism blocks access to traditional markers of masculinity such as occupational status and economic stability, Black men may repudiate femininity as a way of accessing the masculinity—and its attendant status—that is denied through other routes (hooks 2004; Neal 2005). Rejecting femininity is a key strategy men use to assert masculinity, and it remains available to Black men even when other means of achieving masculinity are unattainable. Black men nurses may be more likely to distance themselves from their women colleagues and to reject the femininity associated with nursing, particularly if they feel that they experience racial discrimination that renders occupational advancement inaccessible. Yet if they encounter strained relationships with women colleagues and men supervisors because of gendered racism or racialized stereotypes, the efforts to distance themselves from femininity still may not result in the glass escalator effect.

On the other hand, some theorists suggest that minority men may challenge racism by rejecting

hegemonic masculine ideals. . . . The results of these studies suggest that Black men nurses may embrace the femininity associated with nursing if it offers a way to combat racism. In these cases, Black men nurses may turn to pediatrics as a way of demonstrating sensitivity and therefore combating stereotypes of Black masculinity, or they may proudly identify as nurses to challenge perceptions that Black men are unsuited for professional, white-collar positions.

Taken together, all of this research suggests that Black men may not enjoy the advantages experienced by their white men colleagues, who ride a glass escalator to success. In this article, I focus on the experiences of Black men nurses to argue that the glass escalator is a racialized as well as a gendered concept that does not offer Black men the same privileges as their white men counterparts. . . .

Findings

Reception From Colleagues and Supervisors

When women welcome men into “their” professions, they often push men into leadership roles that ease their advancement into upper-level positions. Thus, a positive reaction from colleagues is critical to riding the glass escalator. Unlike white men nurses, however, Black men do not describe encountering a warm reception from women colleagues (Heikes 1991). Instead, the men I interviewed find that they often have unpleasant interactions with women coworkers who treat them rather coldly and attempt to keep them at bay. Chris is a 51-year-old oncology nurse who describes one white nurse’s attempt to isolate him from other white women nurses as he attempted to get his instructions for that day’s shift:

She turned and ushered me to the door, and said for me to wait out here, a nurse will come out and give you your report. I stared at her hand on my arm, and then at her, and said, “Why? Where do you go to get your reports?” She said, “I get them in there.” I said, “Right. Unhand me.” I went right back in there, sat down, and started writing down my reports.

Kenny, a 47-year-old nurse with 23 years of nursing experience, describes a similarly and particularly painful experience he had in a previous job where he was the only Black person on staff:

[The staff] had nothing to do with me, and they didn’t even want me to sit at the same area where they were charting in to take a break. They wanted me to sit somewhere

else. . . . They wouldn’t even sit at a table with me! When I came and sat down, everybody got up and left.

These experiences with colleagues are starkly different from those described by white men in professions dominated by women (see Pierce 1995; Williams 1989). Though the men in these studies sometimes chose to segregate themselves, women never systematically excluded them. Though I have no way of knowing why the women nurses in Chris’s and Kenny’s workplaces physically segregated themselves, the pervasiveness of gendered racist images that emphasize white women’s vulnerability to dangerous Black men may play an important role. For these nurses, their masculinity is not a guarantee that they will be welcomed, much less pushed into leadership roles. As Ryan, a 37-year-old intensive care nurse says, “[Black men] have to go further to prove ourselves. This involves proving our capabilities, *proving to colleagues that you can lead, be on the forefront*” (emphasis added). The warm welcome and subsequent opportunities for leadership cannot be taken for granted. In contrast, these men describe great challenges in forming congenial relationships with coworkers who, they believe, do not truly want them there.

In addition, these men often describe tense, if not blatantly discriminatory, relationships with supervisors. While Williams (1995) suggests that men supervisors can be allies for men in women’s professions by facilitating promotions and upward mobility, Black men nurses describe incidents of being overlooked by supervisors when it comes time for promotions. Ryan, who has worked at his current job for 11 years, believes that these barriers block upward mobility within the profession:

The hardest part is dealing with people who don’t understand minority nurses. People with their biases, who don’t identify you as ripe for promotion. I know the policy and procedure, I’m familiar with past history. So you can’t tell me I can’t move forward if others did. [How did you deal with this?] By knowing the chain of command, who my supervisors were. Things were subtle. I just had to be better. I got this mostly from other nurses and supervisors. I was paid to deal with patients, so I could deal with [racism] from them. I’m not paid to deal with this from colleagues.

Kenny offers a similar example. Employed as an orthopedic nurse in a predominantly white environment, he describes great difficulty getting promoted, which he primarily attributes to racial biases:

It's almost like you have to, um, take your ideas and give them to somebody else and then let them present them for you and you get no credit for it. I've applied for several promotions there and, you know, I didn't get them. . . . When you look around to the, um, the percentage of African Americans who are actually in executive leadership is almost zero percent. Because it's less than one percent of the total population of people that are in leadership, and it's almost like they'll go outside of the system just to try to find a Caucasian to fill a position. Not that I'm not qualified, because I've been master's prepared for 12 years and I'm working on my doctorate.

According to Ryan and Kenny, supervisors' racial biases mean limited opportunities for promotion and upward mobility. This interpretation is consistent with research that suggests that even with stellar performance and solid work histories, Black workers may receive mediocre evaluations from white supervisors that limit their advancement (Feagin 2006; Feagin and Sikes 1994). For Black men nurses, their race may signal to supervisors that they are unworthy of promotion and thus create a different experience with the glass escalator.

Strong relationships with colleagues and supervisors are a key mechanism of the glass escalator effect. For Black men nurses, however, these relationships are experienced differently from those described by their white men colleagues. Black men nurses do not speak of warm and congenial relationships with women nurses or see these relationships as facilitating a move into leadership roles. Nor do they suggest that they share gendered bonds with men supervisors that serve to ease their mobility into higher-status administrative jobs. In contrast, they sense that racial bias makes it difficult to develop ties with coworkers and makes superiors unwilling to promote them. Black men nurses thus experience this aspect of the glass escalator differently from their white men colleagues. They find that relationships with colleagues and supervisors stifle, rather than facilitate, their upward mobility.

Perceptions of Suitability

Like their white counterparts, Black men nurses also experience challenges from clients who are unaccustomed to seeing men in fields typically dominated by women. As with white men nurses, Black men encounter this in surprised or quizzical reactions from patients who seem to expect to be treated by white women nurses. . . .

Yet while patients rarely expect to be treated by men nurses of any race, white men encounter statements and behaviors that suggest patients expect them to be doctors, supervisors, or other higher-status, more masculine positions (Williams 1989, 1995). In

part, this expectation accelerates their ride on the glass escalator, helping to push them into the positions for which they are seen as more appropriately suited.

(White) men, by virtue of their masculinity, are assumed to be more competent and capable and thus better situated in (nonfeminized) jobs that are perceived to require greater skill and proficiency. Black men, in contrast, rarely encounter patients (or colleagues and supervisors) who immediately expect that they are doctors or administrators. Instead, many respondents find that even after displaying their credentials, sharing their nursing experience, and, in one case, dispensing care, they are still mistaken for janitors or service workers. Ray's experience is typical:

I've even given patients their medicines, explained their care to them, and then they'll say to me, "Well, can you send the nurse in?"

Chris describes a somewhat similar encounter of being misidentified by a white woman patient:

I come [to work] in my white uniform, that's what I wear—being a Black man, I know they won't look at me the same, so I dress the part—I said good evening, my name's Chris, and I'm going to be your nurse. She says to me, "Are you from housekeeping?" . . . I've had other cases. I've walked in and had a lady look at me and ask if I'm the janitor. . . .

These negative stereotypes can affect Black men nurses' efforts to treat patients as well. The men I interviewed find that masculinity does not automatically endow them with an aura of competency. In fact, they often describe interactions with white women patients that suggest that their race minimizes whatever assumptions of capability might accompany being men. They describe several cases in which white women patients completely refused treatment. Ray says,

With older white women, it's tricky sometimes because they will come right out and tell you they don't want you to treat them, or can they see someone else.

Ray frames this as an issue specifically with older white women, though other nurses in the sample described similar issues with white women of all ages. Cyril, a 40-year-old nurse with 17 years of nursing experience, describes a slightly different twist on this story:

I had a white lady that I had to give a shot, and she was fine with it and I was fine with it. But her husband, when she told him, he said to me, I don't have any problem with you as a Black man, but I don't want you giving her a shot.

While white men nurses report some apprehension about treating women patients, in all likelihood this experience is compounded for Black men (Williams 1989). Historically, interactions between Black men and white women have been fraught with complexity and tension, as Black men have been represented in the cultural imagination as potential rapists and threats to white women's security and safety—and, implicitly, as a threat to white patriarchal stability (Davis 1981; Giddings 1984). In Cyril's case, it may be particularly significant that the Black man is charged with giving a shot and therefore literally penetrating the white wife's body, a fact that may heighten the husband's desire to shield his wife from this interaction. White men nurses may describe hesitation or awkwardness that accompanies treating women patients, but their experiences are not shaped by a pervasive racial imagery that suggests that they are potential threats to their women patients' safety.

This dynamic, described primarily among white women patients and their families, presents a picture of how Black men's interactions with clients are shaped in specifically raced and gendered ways that suggest they are less rather than more capable. These interactions do not send the message that Black men, because they are men, are too competent for nursing and really belong in higher-status jobs. Instead, these men face patients who mistake them for lower-status service workers and encounter white women patients (and their husbands) who simply refuse treatment or are visibly uncomfortable with the prospect. These interactions do not situate Black men nurses in a prime position for upward mobility. Rather, they suggest that the experience of Black men nurses with this particular mechanism of the glass escalator is the manifestation of the expectation that they should be in lower-status positions more appropriate to their race and gender.

Refusal to Reject Femininity

Finally, Black men nurses have a different experience with establishing distance from women and the feminized aspects of their work. Most research shows that as men nurses employ strategies that distance them from femininity (e.g., by emphasizing nursing as a route to higher-status, more masculine jobs), they place themselves in a position for upward mobility and the glass escalator effect (Williams 1992). For Black men nurses, however, this process looks different. Instead of distancing themselves from the femininity associated with nursing, Black men actually embrace some of the more feminized attributes linked to nursing. In particular, they emphasize how much they value and enjoy the way their jobs allow them to be caring and nurturing. Rather than conceptu-

alizing caring as anathema or feminine (and therefore undesirable), Black men nurses speak openly of caring as something positive and enjoyable.

This is consistent with the context of nursing that defines caring as integral to the profession. As nurses, Black men in this line of work experience professional socialization that emphasizes and values caring, and this is reflected in their statements about their work. Significantly, however, rather than repudiating this feminized component of their jobs, they embrace it. Tobias, a 44-year-old oncology nurse with 25 years of experience, asserts,

The best part about nursing is helping other people, the flexibility of work hours, and the commitment to vulnerable populations, people who are ill.

Simon, a 36-year-old oncology nurse, also talks about the joy he gets from caring for others. He contrasts his experiences to those of white men nurses he knows who prefer specialties that involve less patient care:

They were going to work with the insurance industries, they were going to work in the ER where it's a touch and go, you're a number literally. I don't get to know your name, I don't get to know that you have four grandkids, I don't get to know that you really want to get out of the hospital by next week because the following week is your birthday, your 80th birthday and it's so important for you. I don't get to know that your cat's name is Sprinkles, and you're concerned about who's feeding the cat now, and if they remembered to turn the TV on during the day so that the cat can watch *The Price Is Right*. They don't get into all that kind of stuff. OK, I actually need to remember the name of your cat so that tomorrow morning when I come, I can ask you about Sprinkles and that will make a world of difference. I'll see light coming to your eyes and the medicines will actually work because your perspective is different.

Like Tobias, Simon speaks with a marked lack of self-consciousness about the joys of adding a personal touch and connecting that personal care to a patient's improvement. For him, caring is important, necessary, and valued, even though others might consider it a feminine trait.

For many of these nurses, willingness to embrace caring is also shaped by issues of race and racism. In their position as nurses, concern for others is connected to fighting the effects of racial inequality. Specifically, caring motivates them to use their role as nurses to address racial health disparities, especially those that disproportionately affect Black men. Chris describes his efforts to minimize health issues among Black men:

With Black male patients, I have their history, and if they're 50 or over I ask about the prostate exam and a

colonoscopy. Prostate and colorectal death is so high that that's my personal crusade.

Ryan also speaks to the importance of using his position to address racial imbalances:

I really take advantage of the opportunities to give back to communities, especially to change the disparities in the African American community. I'm more than just a nurse. As a faculty member at a major university, I have to do community hours, services. Doing health fairs, in-services on research, this makes an impact in some disparities in the African American community. [People in the community] may not have the opportunity to do this otherwise.

As Lamont (2000) indicates in her discussion of the "caring self," concern for others helps Chris and Ryan to use their knowledge and position as nurses to combat racial inequalities in health. Though caring is generally considered a "feminine" attribute, in this context it is connected to challenging racial health disparities. Unlike their white men colleagues, these nurses accept and even embrace certain aspects of femininity rather than rejecting them. They thus reveal yet another aspect of the glass escalator process that differs for Black men. As Black men nurses embrace this "feminine" trait and the avenues it provides for challenging racial inequalities, they may become more comfortable in nursing and embrace the opportunities it offers.

CONCLUSIONS

Existing research on the glass escalator cannot explain these men's experiences. As men who do women's work, they should be channeled into positions as charge nurses or nursing administrators and should find themselves virtually pushed into the upper ranks of the nursing profession. But without exception, this is not the experience these Black men nurses describe. Instead of benefiting from the basic mechanisms of the glass escalator, they face tense relationships with colleagues, supervisors' biases in achieving promotion, patient stereotypes that inhibit caregiving, and a sense of comfort with some of the feminized aspects of their jobs. These "glass barriers" suggest that the glass escalator is a racialized concept as well as a gendered one. The main contribution of this study is the finding that race and gender intersect to determine which men will ride the glass escalator. The proposition that men who do women's work encounter undue opportunities and advantages appears to be unequivocally true only if the men in question are white.

* * *

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Introduction to Reading 35

Erin Reid tackles a well-known ideology in many workplaces: that of the “ideal worker image.” This is an ideology that says the best and most desirable workers are those who are completely devoted to their work, ahead and above all other concerns or aspects of their lives. While the ideal worker expectation has historically been noted as particularly disadvantageous for women (especially mothers), Reid finds that contemporary men and women both experience conflict with the ideal worker image. The difference, she shows, is in how men and women cope with that conflict. Women were more likely to reveal their conflict to their employer by asking for less travel or shorter working hours, while men were more likely to “pass,” that is, find under-the-radar ways to not conform but still give the appearance of conforming.

1. What is the difference between an expected professional identity and an experienced professional identity? What was the expected professional identity at AGM?
2. What tools were available to workers who strayed from the ideal worker image?
3. How did men and women combine “passing” and “revealing” across different audiences?
4. What were the consequences for those men and women who “passed” or “revealed”?

EMBRACING, PASSING, REVEALING, AND THE IDEAL WORKER IMAGE

HOW PEOPLE NAVIGATE EXPECTED AND EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES

Erin Reid

INTRODUCTION

People today are expected to be wholly devoted to work, such that they attend to their jobs ahead of all else, including family (Blair-Loy 2003), personal needs (Kreiner et al. 2006), and even their health (Michel 2011). These expectations are personified in the ideal worker image: a definition of the most desirable worker

as one who is totally committed to, and always available for, his or her work (Acker 1990). Embracing this image is richly rewarded, particularly for people in professional and managerial jobs; in many such workplaces, advancement and prizes accrue to those perceived to best embody this image (Bailyn 2006). Although scholars have focused on the difficulties that women in such jobs experience with these expectations

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(e.g., Blair Loy 2003, Stone 2007), research increasingly suggests that their male colleagues may also find these expectations challenging (Galinsky et al. 2009, Humberd et al. 2014). Thus, many people may encounter a conflict between employer expectations that they be ideal workers and the sort of workers that they believe and prefer themselves to be.

This paper closely examines how people working at a demanding professional service firm navigate tensions between organizational expectations that they be ideal workers—which I conceptualize as an *expected professional identity*—and the sort of workers they believe and prefer themselves to be—their experienced professional identities. I find that people cope with conflict between these two identities by straying from the expected identity and seeking to remain true to their experienced identities. I draw on Goffman's (1963) concepts of passing and revealing, typically used to explain how people manage discredited social identities (Clair et al. 2005, Jones and King 2014, Ragins 2008), to develop a theory about how men and women navigate organizational audiences in ways that disclose or that mask their deviance, and I explore how they are consequently perceived and treated.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Professional Identity and the Ideal Worker Image

Identity, and its significance for people's work experiences, is a central concern of contemporary organizational scholarship (Ashforth et al. 2008, Ramarajan 2014, Roberts and Dutton 2009). This study focuses on professional identity (Ibarra 1999, Pratt et al. 2006). Professional identities are role identities, or the "goals, values, beliefs, norms, interaction styles and time horizons that are typically associated with a role" (Ashforth 2001, p. 6). Like most social roles, professional roles are subject to external expectations of incumbents' identities; I focus here on organizational, or employer, expectations and refer to these as *expected professional identities*. People, however, have their own preferences about their identities, and these do not always match those expected of them. I use the term *experienced professional identities* to describe people's beliefs and preferences regarding who they are as professionals. As people form their identities in relation to their past, future, alternative, and possible selves (Ibarra 1999, Markus and Nurius 1986, Obodaru

2012), their statements about their experienced identities may include allusions to these other selves.

Many organizations expect professionals to assume an identity that centers on the ideal worker image, such that they are fully committed to and totally available for their work, with no external commitments that limit this devotion (Acker 1990, Bailyn 2006, Williams et al. 2013). Although professional identities also include profession specific content, this image is central to many professions' expected identities. For example, surgeons, who spend years honing technical skills, are expected to embrace a professional identity that includes always placing "their patients first, over and above any personal commitment" (Kellogg 2011, p. 51). In such jobs, pressures to be ideal workers are often embedded in the very design of work, which routinely spills into evenings and weekends (Moen et al. 2013, Perlow 1998).

This image, and its attendant expectations of devotion, is viewed as a key driver of workplace gender inequality (Bailyn 2006, Correll et al. 2014, Williams 2000), and perhaps consequently, scholars have mostly examined how women, particularly mothers, navigate expectations that they devote themselves to work (e.g., Blair-Loy 2003, Christopher 2012, Webber and Williams 2008). Little work has considered men's experiences in this regard, echoing more general tendencies to frame work—family conflict as a woman's problem (for a review, see Leslie and Manchester 2011). Yet as a core element of an expected professional identity, this image necessarily shapes all workers' experiences, including men's. Moreover, studies increasingly suggest that men also find demands for work devotion challenging (Galinsky et al. 2009, Humberd et al. 2014), suggesting that difficulties with expectations that one assume the identity of an ideal worker are not necessarily restricted to women.

Yet although people apply for jobs in part based on assumptions about incumbents' identities (Babulescu and Bidwell 2013), many workers are ambivalent about the identities their organization expects them to take on (Collinson 2003, Gagnon and Collinson 2014, Ramarajan and Reid 2013), suggesting that conflict between expected and experienced identities may be relatively common. However, deviance from expected identities may go unrecognized: people's identities do not necessarily match how others perceive them (Gecas 1982). To develop theory about the ways that people may manage incongruence between expected and experienced professional identities, and how this shapes how they are perceived, I turned to Goffman's (1963) concepts of "passing" and "revealing."

Identity Management Strategies: Passing and Revealing

Passing and revealing are ways that people control others' beliefs about who they are. The need to pass or to reveal arises when a person does not belong to a group of people to whom social rewards accrue (Goffman 1963). Some characteristics that disqualify one from membership in a favored group are clearly visible (e.g., skin color) and are managed through methods that “cover” or reduce the salience of the characteristic (Phillips et al. 2009, Rosette and Dumas 2007, Yoshino 2007). Other characteristics, however, are invisible (e.g., sexual preference), and people may choose how to manage them (Clair et al. 2005, Ragins 2008). That is, people may either misrepresent themselves as members of the favored group—thus, passing—or disclose that they are nonmembers—thus revealing. Passing can be intentional, as when a person lies about his or her identity, or accidental, as when others make incorrect assumptions; revealing also occurs across a continuum of intentionality.

METHOD

I explored these issues through a field study of a consulting firm. The study draws principally on semistructured interview data. I link the findings from the interview data to performance data, turnover data, and participants' stories about each other. Archival data (e.g., human resources (HR) documents) provided contextual information about the firm and industry.

Research Setting

I conducted this study at AGM (a pseudonym), a global consulting firm with a strong U.S. presence. Like many such firms, AGM offered advisory services in multiple areas, such as strategy, marketing, and finance and used small teams to complete projects over a period of weeks to months. Consulting is a notoriously demanding profession: consultants must typically be available for overnight travel to client sites and often work evenings and weekends on short notice. Within AGM, consultants advanced through several levels: associate, junior manager, senior manager, partner, and senior partner.

This setting provided certain advantages for investigating how people navigate tensions between expected and experienced professional identities. First, identity expectations in professional jobs are often strong, and AGM's status as one of the more demanding consulting

firms within the industry qualified it as an “extreme” case (Eisenhardt 1989), where pressures to be an ideal worker might be especially acute and hence particularly visible (Pratt et al. 2006). Second, as AGM hired from elite colleges and MBA programs through a complex interview process, its hires were fairly homogeneous in terms of intellect, education level, and social skills. Participants were therefore all likely to be capable of doing the work; this helped to focus the analysis on how they coped with the firm's identity expectations.

Data Collection

Participants. I conducted 115 interviews with people associated with AGM. The core data for this study came from interviews with consultants; I interviewed 70 consultants. I added to this sample by accessing transcripts of 18 interviews conducted by other researchers as part of a study of AGM's culture; these covered topics pertinent to this study (discussed below). This sample included several of AGM's senior partners and senior leaders in the internal HR department. I met about half of these people during meetings at AGM and interviewed two of them during my own data collection. Because of cross-national differences in norms regarding the relationship between work and non work (Uhlmann et al. 2013), I excluded four people employed by non-North American offices. With these duplications and exclusions, the total number of consultants analyzed here is 82.

All consultants held undergraduate or advanced degrees (e.g., MBA, PhD, LL.B.) from elite schools (e.g., Williams, Harvard, Stanford). Twenty-two percent were women, similar to the proportional representation of women at AGM at the time (in 2009, 24%) and similar to or higher than that at competitor firms. Thirteen percent were visible racial minorities (e.g., African American, Southeast Asian).

As the study progressed, I expanded my sampling to include interviews with 27 other people whose experiences might inform the research. These included six employees in non consulting roles, six consultants who had left AGM prior to my study, eight people who worked at competitor firms, and seven of the consultants' spouses. These people were contacted through either random sampling from lists provided by AGM or personal contacts. Table 1 describes participant characteristics.

Interviews

The interview guide included structured questions, which enabled comparisons across people, as well as

Table 1 Participant Characteristics

	<i>Congruent</i>	<i>Expected vs. experienced identity</i>		
		<i>Conflicting</i>		
<i>Primary identity management strategy^a</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Embracing</i>	<i>Passing</i>	<i>Revealing</i>
Consultants	82	35 (43%)	22 (27%)	25 (30%)
Men	64	27 (42%)	20 (31%)	17 (27%)
Women	18	8 (44%)	2 (11%)	8 (44%)
White	71	29 (41%)	19 (27%)	23 (32%)
Visible minority	11	6 (55%)	2 (18%)	3 (27%)
Associate	12		1 (8%)	4 (33%)
Junior Manager	26		7 (27%)	11 (42%)
Senior management	22		7 (32%)	7 (32%)
Partner	13		4 (31%)	2 (15%)
Senior partner	9		3 (33%)	1 (11%)
Additional participants	31			
Nonconsulting Employees	6			
Former AGM consultants	6			
Consultants from competitor firms	8			
Consultants' spouses	7			
Non-North American AGM Consultants	4			
Total participants	113 ^b			

^a“Primary identify management strategy” refers to the strategy people employed in their interactions with senior members of the firm.

^b Represents 115 interviews in total: 2 participants were interviewed twice.

unstructured questions, which permitted open ended reflection. In the interviews with consultants, I began by asking about people’s work histories (e.g., months between promotions), job tasks, work hours, and travel. I then asked about their future goals, the importance of work to their sense of self, recent team projects, and colleagues whom they viewed as successful. Later, I asked about gender dynamics and their non-work lives. By grounding the interview in the details of people’s work, I hoped to limit opportunities for them to misrepresent their experiences. Interviews with other participants followed similar guides tailored to their particular experiences (e.g., I asked former consultants why they had left). The interviews conducted as part of the study of AGM’s culture included similar questions about work histories and experiences and perceptions of AGM’s success metrics.

Performance Data

I accessed quantitative ratings of consultants’ performance for the year preceding the interviews (2009)

and for the year of the interviews (2010). As I detail in the findings section, consultants were rated on several dimensions following each project, and these ratings were compiled into one annual rating at the end of each calendar year. The 2009 performance ratings cover 54 of the 60 non-partner consultants in the study (some were unreachable, one refused). Because of departures during 2010 and one promotion to partner, the 2010 data include 43 participants.

Archival Data. I also accessed internal HR documents that described hiring and evaluation practices, newspaper articles about AGM, and reviews of AGM on career websites. These data helped me to better understand AGM and its position in the industry.

Data Analysis

First, to understand the sort of worker that consultants believed AGM favored, I coded for experiences, behaviors, and characteristics that they associated with success at AGM. Once I had stabilized a description of AGM’s expected professional identity and how it was

communicated, I examined consultants' responses to this expectation. This process revealed that some easily embraced the expected identity, but it also uncovered widespread conflict between this expected identity and people's experienced professional identities. I deduced that people managed this conflict through passing and revealing. I coded the tools that they used in these efforts and their target audiences.

To examine external perceptions, I combined three data sources. First, I used the performance data, which, given the ambiguity of competence and importance of image in professional service work, corresponds well to AGM's perceptions of how well consultants fit its expected professional identity. Second, I quantified the average number of months people reported between promotions. I used these data to rate each person's career progress at AGM as slow, average, or fast. Finally, I examined the transcripts to identify instances where consultants described colleagues' work habits. I identified 78 such accounts of 47 people (some were mentioned several times). Of these, I had interviewed 32. Coding these accounts for consistency with the person's own account revealed that people who had worked directly with the focal individual tended to view their work habits in ways consistent with the person's own account, but that people whose experiences were less direct held less consistent views.

I now report the findings that emerged from this analysis. I begin by describing AGM's expected professional identity, how it was imposed, and its fit with people's experienced identities. I then explain how people strayed in ways that fostered passing or revealing. I close with a discussion of the study's contributions to theories of people's management of their professional identities, the ideal worker image, and passing and revealing in organizations.

EXPECTED AND EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES

Consultants believed that AGM expected them, like ideal workers, to be fully devoted to work: primarily committed to and available for their work at all times and in all places. Although people sometimes associated other attributes with success (e.g., courage, charisma), mention of these attributes was sporadic relative to the near-constant emphasis on commitment and availability that permeated accounts of life at AGM. Tellingly, nearly all senior partners and leaders of AGM's HR group cited commitment and availability as attributes that distinguished successful from unsuccessful consultants. This analysis therefore focuses on AGM's identity

expectations regarding commitment and availability

Expected Identity: Committed and Available

Consultants believed that success at AGM required being committed, passionate, and dedicated, such that their work occupied a central place in their lives. "Star" consultants would "give everything they have to the company." Commitment involved loyalty: despite the industry's high turnover, good consultants sought to remain at AGM. Commitment also meant placing work ahead of other life demands. Curtis (Partner, M), for example, had spent Thanksgiving "running a project remotely from the outside deck of [my in-laws'] condominium in Florida." Despite his wife's fury, he believed being a consultant required this commitment:

I will sometimes have to get calls on Sunday nights. Sometimes, I have to do calls on Saturday mornings. So that the weekend is not sacrosanct. . . . If the client needs me, I will generally take [the call]. And you know when the client needs me to be somewhere, I just have to be there. In the consulting—in the professional services industry, generally—you don't really have the latitude of saying "I can't really be there." And if you can't be there, it's probably because you've got another client meeting at the same time. You know it's tough to say I can't be there because my—my son had a Cub Scout meeting.

The personal sacrifices such commitment entailed were justified by the intense "love" that successful consultants were expected to feel for their work. Suzanne (Junior manager, F) told me that to succeed, "You have to really love client service. I really love my clients. I wake up in the morning and wonder whether my clients are awake, whether they've emailed me, whether I need to do something for them."

Successful consultants were also believed to be fully available for work. Although availability was associated with commitment, the two were not the same: commitment involved dedicating oneself to work ahead of other demands and responsibilities, but availability corresponded to work hours and willingness to travel. People were expected to "work all night, if needed, to get things done" and travelled at "the drop of a hat." The need to be fully available, along with the need to be primarily committed to work, characterized Amos's (Junior manager, M) description of his colleagues:

You know AGM people, we're on our Black Berries. We're thinking about our work 24/7. I mean, maybe you tune out for a little while here and there, but AGM people work all the time, all the time. I mean, you wake up at night, you're dreaming about it. The first thing you do is you pick up your BlackBerry, you're on it through the morning. You get

to the office, you're working through the day, you sit at your desk, you know, you're cancelling plans.

Thus, consultants believed that "AGM people" were primarily committed to and fully available for work.

To assess the extent to which consultants' views about the identity of a successful consultant were shared by those who evaluated them, I compared the perceptions of people in client service-based consulting roles (associate through partner) to those of people who led the firm and who controlled recruiting and evaluation (senior partners and leaders of the HR department). Nearly all shared the consultants' beliefs regarding the importance of commitment and availability. For example, Sharon (Partner (HR), F) said,

The culture at AGM is "give, give, give." The guy you saw leaving my office is leaving AGM, and he came to talk to me and said, "This place is crazy. It's like you're supposed to love this place and give your soul And when you leave, the norm is to write an email to everyone saying, 'Thank you AGM for all you have given me.' "But no one thanks you. So it's like the message is, we will only love you if you "give, give, give."

These shared beliefs between consultants and those who evaluated them confirms this identity's position as a category that distinguished between favored and unfavored consultants (Goffman 1963).

Mechanisms of Identity Control: Structure of Work and Performance Evaluations

AGM pressured people to adopt this identity through the structure of work and the performance evaluation system. Together, these mechanisms encouraged consultants to adopt the expected identity by constructing work demands that seemed to require conforming to this identity while rewarding those who seemed to conform and penalizing those who did not.

Expectations regarding consultants' identities were embedded in AGM's haphazard work structure: crisis situations wherein teams worked late into the night were common, and partners often promised clients new work mid project. Clients often expected travel at short notice: two people arrived for our interview uncertain whether they would travel that day, and several rescheduled interviews because of unanticipated client travel. Kristi's (Junior manager, F) comments about a recent project illustrate the demands that ensued:

On a recent technology project, the partners were very busy. They would get a document at 10 a.m. and not look at it until 10 p.m. Then, at 11 p.m., I'd have to work on it and get the team online to do the work so they could turn

it around for the next day. I ended up working more with the team on the nuts and bolts than I was supposed to. But it was all so last minute.

To satisfy these work demands, one had to be committed to and available for work. Indeed, partners acknowledged that the structure of work demanded a certain sort of person: "Occasionally my teams have to work overnight, you know, around the clock. . . . Some people thrive on 'It's a gold medal game,' and others don't. And I think this job requires that you thrive on 'It's a gold medal game.' You know, it uses every bit of you" (Partner, M).

Performance evaluations served as a second mechanism of identity control. Assessing competence and work quality is difficult in professional service work, and firms consequently may evaluate people based on perceptions of their identities (Alvesson 2001, Rivera 2012). Each year, partners and HR leaders sorted consultants into four performance tiers based on their project performance and "extracurricular" firm service (e.g., recruiting).¹ The highest tier (4) was denoted AGM's "stars." Many acknowledged this evaluation system's subjectivity; an HR document described it as a "highly individualized. . . highly subjective process." AGM officially assessed performance along multiple dimensions, including relational and analytic skills, but members of its HR department stressed the importance of availability and commitment and described these attributes in terms of an expected identity. Keith (Partner (HR), M), the leader of the HR department, described successful consultants in the following terms:

Consulting is a profession where we hold beliefs regarding what it takes to be a good consultant. . . . Look at Melissa. We hire her because she's willing to be over responsible, highly committed, and we fall into the trap of thinking everyone is always available all the time. . . . I have person A and person B. Re person B, they don't seem that passionate, responsible, committed, [willing to] go the extra mile; if I ask them to do something, they huff around and it feels like work to get it done. Person A, I ask to do something, it gets done immediately; if I have a problem I can call them, and the next day they've taken a crack at it and with a smile on their face. We will use that in appraisal and recruiting.

It is notable that Keith's description of "what it takes to be good consultant" centered on commitment and availability—"highly committed" and "always available all the time"—not expert knowledge and skills.

Because of its effects on apportioning bonuses, recommending promotions, and counseling people out of the firm, the evaluation system, together with the

structure of work, was key to how the firm controlled who succeeded and who failed. These control mechanisms loomed large in consultants' minds; they drew on their beliefs about what AGM rewarded, as well as the structure of their work, to argue that one had to conform to the expected identity to succeed, as illustrated in the following quotations:

To be viewed as successful, you have to take conference calls at 9 p.m. on Sunday evenings. You have to answer your BlackBerry or your emails the second you receive them. You have to put everything on the line for the client and for the partners. And sort of hand over the keys and head down, elbows out. (Junior manager, F)

The system is incentivized to reward people for a certain set of behaviors. . . . Surprise: the people who have a new family, a new kid, and want to spend time with them may have less time to devote to their job and may not rise as fast as the people who are more single-mindedly devoted to advancing. (Junior manager, M)

Thus, taken together, the structure of work and the performance evaluation system pressured consultants to adopt the expected professional identity.

Congruence or Conflict With People's Experienced Professional Identities

Nearly all consultants were aware of this expected professional identity, but whether they embraced or strayed from it varied according to its fit with their experienced professional identities: the professionals they believed and preferred themselves to be. I first briefly describe those whose experienced identities were congruent, then turn to those whose identities were conflicting.

Many people's experienced professional identities were congruent with the expected professional identity, and they easily embraced this identity (35 consultants, 43% of the sample). They were primarily committed to their work, speaking frequently of their "passion" for their work and "what we're trying to do in the world." Many described being offered good jobs elsewhere but choosing to stay at AGM. Indeed, one year following the interviews, only three of these consultants had left, one of whom was sponsored for an MBA and later rehired into a higher position. They were also fully available: most regularly worked late nights and weekends, more than 70 hours a week, and willingly traveled at a client's "whim." Dave (Senior manager, M) told me, "You know what? At the end of the day, I want to work hard. I like working hard. I want to be successful. I want to make a lot of money. It's important to me. I rationalize it as, you know,

Table 2 Congruence or Conflict with the Expected Professional Identity

	Total (N)	Congruence	Conflict
Men	64	27 (42%)	37 (58%)
Women	18	8 (44%)	10 (56%)
Parents	41	17 (41%)	24 (59%)
Non-parents	41	18 (44%)	23 (56%)
Married	55	21 (38%)	34 (62%)
Single	27	14 (52%)	13 (48%)
Total	82	35 (43%)	47 (57%)

trying to provide for my family. So I don't mind so much if I'm at work at 9 p.m."

Most people (of the sample), however, encountered conflict between the expected professional identity and their experienced professional identities. As noted, scholars typically identify the ideal worker image as chiefly problematic for women, especially mothers, but at AGM, conflict with the expected professional identity was not restricted to these groups. Rather, as shown in Table 2, most people reported conflict with this expected identity.

These people were unwilling to make work their primary life commitment, unwilling to make themselves fully available for their work, or both. Further, their experienced identities centered primarily on attributes that AGM treated as peripheral, which they often directly compared to those attributes considered core to the expected identity. For example, Michael (Junior manager, M) described himself in the following way:

I've made sure I'm the problem solver. Everything, I mean, even my hobbies usually involve some sort of problem solving. I mean, I enjoy the intellectual part of the job, I enjoy the challenges. . . . But you know, a lot of times our partners can be focused on really needing to delight the client, and so we can never say no to them. . . .

These people's experienced identities thus conflicted with AGM's expected professional identity. Such a conflict is illustrated in Thomas's (Senior manager, M) musings about his future at AGM:

I am kind of at a crossroads about how much I want to push for partner. I kind of want to do it on my terms, as opposed to assume I have to be like some of the other partners. . . . There's definitely the road warrior model, the guy who's always on the road, who's always walking the halls with clients, he's sending emails on Saturday and Sunday, you know, and he's sending out requests at 6 p.m. expecting something the next day. And I don't want that. . . . I might be more of an outlier than a main stream consultant.

Thus, because of his unwillingness to be a “road warrior,” Thomas viewed himself as an “outlier” and was uncertain about his next career steps.

The pressures that organizations’ demands for devotion place on people’s non work lives are well established (e.g., Kreiner et al. 2009, Perlow 1998), and indeed, many viewed embracing the expected identity as detrimental to their ability to engage meaningfully in their non work lives. However, the data from AGM also show that people’s non work lives provoked conflict over their professional identities. To illustrate, Cliff (Junior manager, M) told me,

[I’m] someone that doesn’t work as hard as I should, is a little quicker to say “this is good enough” and pass it along than my peers are. . . . I think that might, if I don’t change it soon, [affect] my ability to be really, really successful here. . . . The decision for me is, [do] I get into bed and watch some TV with my fiancée, or sit down and have dinner with her as opposed to wolfing it down and going back to work? I always choose not to work. I think that it makes me a little less likely to be CEO [chief executive officer] of this place one day.

Thus, by not working constantly and maintaining non-work commitments, Cliff perceived himself as not fitting the identity expected of him (“a little quicker to . . . pass it along than my peers”) and believed this might limit his success at the firm (“less likely to be CEO”).

STRAYING: PASSING AND REVEALING

People coped with this conflict by straying from the expected identity. They did so by altering the structure of their work—a key means of identity control in this setting. By altering aspects of their work (e.g., client types, client location), people constructed opportunities to remain true to their experienced professional identities. Unlike those who embraced, these people reported working about 60 hours per week or less, having predictable work schedules, and having regular engagement in other aspects of life. For example, Colin (Partner, M) told me, “I work until 5:30 or 6. I go home. I have dinner with my family. I put the kids to bed. Then I’ll probably work an hour or two after that if I need to, or if I want to.” Most limited weekend work to exceptional circumstances; several minimized travel, and for these people, work did not normally trump other life commitments. Thus, they were both less committed to their work, and less available for it, than the expected identity demanded.

Although some who altered their jobs were penalized, others seemed to pass as having embraced the expected identity. My data show that these differences

in how people were perceived and treated originated from information they shared as a result of how they altered their work—personally or asking for help—as well as the information they shared with others. I now elaborate on how the use of different tools enabled people to stray while passing or revealing.

Tools for Straying

Personally Cultivating Necessary Work Conditions: Passing. Some people personally altered the structure of their work in ways that constructed space to enact their experienced selves, thereby straying from the expected identity. People described cultivating local, repeat, or nonprofit clients who required less time and commitment than more typical clients. Some found ways to work on internal firm projects, which reduced travel time and also had more predictable demands. Others worked from home, reducing travel time and creating space for other aspects of life. These efforts bear resemblance to “job crafting”: altering the aspects of one’s job in ways that reshape work identities (Wrzesniewski and Dutton 2001). However, my findings go further, showing that these efforts to alter the structure of work also permitted people to avoid disclosing their desire to stray from the expected identity and allowed them to pass as having embraced it.

For example, Lloyd (Senior manager, M) viewed himself as an “odd duck” and did not embrace the work devotion he saw in his colleagues (“I’m going to misquote *The Matrix* here, but I feel like the problem is choice . . . the perception of autonomous choice is what makes it palatable. People are more willing to work harder because its perceived to be their choice . . .”). Lloyd strayed from the expected identity: “I skied five days last week. I took calls in the morning and in the evening but I was able to be there for my son when he needed me to be, and I was able to ski five days in a row.” He clarified that these were work days, not vacation days: “No, no one knows where I am. . . . Those boundaries are only practical with my local client base. . . . Especially because we’re mobile, there are no boundaries.” Thus, by using local clients and telecommuting, Lloyd altered the structure of his work in ways that allowed him to stray from the expected professional identity. His statement that “no one knows where I am” indicates that he believed others were unaware of his deceit. Indeed, despite his deviance, senior colleagues viewed him as an incumbent of the expected identity. Cameron (Partner, M), for example, labeled Lloyd a “rising star” who worked “much harder than” he did. This assessment—in combination with Lloyd’s star performance rating of 4 and his promotion to partner that year—suggests he had

successfully passed in the eyes of senior members of the firm.

Asking for Help in Restructuring Work: Revealing. By contrast, those who requested AGM's help to restructure their work, through informal alterations such as local clients or more formal accommodations such as parental leave, thereby revealed their deviance and were penalized. Doug (Junior manager, M) recounted how he had lost a promotion because, following months in the Middle East, he had requested a U.S.-based project:

I told the firm, you know, I don't think I can go back to the Middle East again. And if that means I'm going to have to look for something else, I'm going to look for something else. And that was kind of what resulted in the nonpromotion, because they said, "Well, you'll probably get it if you stay out there." . . . Because I'm a brown guy it's easy to think that the Middle East is no big hurdle for me . . . They said, "Well, it's easier for you, you know. You don't drink already." They don't drink in the country I was working in. I said, "Listen, drinking and not drinking is not the hardest thing . . . It's about being away from your family for that long. Right?"

Doug's story later arose during an interview I conducted with Barry (Senior manager, M), who had also worked in the Middle East. Barry told me, "Doug's wife didn't want him to do it, but he did it anyway and that was a much different experience for him . . . He stayed for about five months and then came back and refused to go back again." Barry identified working in the Middle East as an opportunity that had signaled his personal commitment to AGM and had enabled a recent promotion. Thus, the man who went to the Middle East happily was promoted; the man who publicly cut his stay short because of his non work commitments, thereby revealing his deviance, was denied a promotion.

Accessing formal accommodations also revealed deviance. For example, Michael told me,

When my daughter was born, one of the things I wanted to do was take off three months and do the full FMLA² and be a stay-at-home. Dad. . . . I felt like this was the only time in my career I would be able to do this . . . But the original reaction I actually got inside of AGM was, "Oh no, you can't take three months off."

He settled for six weeks of unpaid leave and worked 80-hour weeks, travelling weekly, for the rest of the year. Yet he found that "people still talked like I was out three months." At his annual review he was told that AGM could not properly evaluate him because the six weeks he had taken off meant he "had this big do nut hole in [his] year." That year, his

performance rating fell from a 3 to a 2, and he did not receive a hoped-for promotion. Thus, Michael's deviance was both recognized and penalized. In a subsequent conversation, he reflected, "No one questioned my commitment until I had a family."

Hiding or Sharing Personal Information Passing and Revealing. The personal information that people hid or shared, such as details about how one worked or about how one felt about one's work, also affected whether they passed or revealed. Some deliberately misrepresented themselves as having embraced the expected identity. For example, one afternoon, Venkat (Junior manager, M) told me, "Every one inflates their hours. I would guess I work 50–60 hours a week but would tell others 60. . . . Right now it's about 40, on this particular client." The next morning, I met Robert (Junior manager, M), who had recently begun working with Venkat. Robert, reflecting on his own work ethic, commented, "I could work every night, every weekend, way over deliver, make new work for myself, [but] I'm more laid back than other people on projects Last week when I worked with Venkat, he was a thousand times better than me." He later confirmed that he meant Venkat worked longer hours, suggesting that Venkat had successfully passed to him as fully available.

Others, however, revealed their deviance by telling colleagues about their struggles with AGM's identity expectations. Philippa (Junior manager, F), who found AGM's work structure "difficult for someone like me who's very operational, very structured, [who likes to] have a good plan about where we're going and have flexibility," said that she had disclosed her deviance to colleagues. "I have been very, very open about the fact that I'm unsatisfied. . . ."

As these examples show, how people altered the structure of their work, in tandem with how they controlled their personal information, enabled them to stray from the expected identity while also shaping whether they passed or revealed in their interactions with others. People did not, however, pass or reveal exclusively. Next, I expand on how people combined these efforts across different audiences at the firm.

INTEGRATED IDENTITY MANAGEMENT: COMBINING PASSING AND REVEALING ACROSS AUDIENCES

People managed their identities differently in their interactions with audiences based on four factors: the status of the audience, the closeness of the relationship, perceived access to the firm's formal accommodations, and

the extremity of the conflict that people experienced. These efforts at passing and revealing were interdependent: in the examples I present, people are often revealing to some audiences while simultaneously passing to others. In addition, the perceptions of targeted audiences could spill over to shape other audiences' perceptions through three avenues: labeling, construction of opportunities for passing, and a need to continually negotiate accommodations.

Situational Factors Shaping Passing and Revealing Across Audiences

Audience Status

Consultants typically sought to pass with high-status audiences who had clear power over their chances at the firm, consistent with theoretical ideas about how status distance shapes people's management of stigmatized identities (Phillips et al. 2009). Junior consultants typically focused on passing to high-status audiences within AGM (e.g., partners); more senior consultants, who needed strong client relationships and high sales to these clients, focused their efforts on clients. For example, Veronica (Senior manager, F), who worked only an 80% schedule and had thus revealed her deviance within AGM, still attempted to pass to clients as an always available consultant. She explained to me, "I have full-time day care. . . . [I use my day off] to accommodate client things so that it's not really visible to the clients that I work a reduced schedule."

Closeness of Relationship

People sometimes revealed their deviance to close friends. These were typically people at the same hierarchical level in the organization. For example, Chris (Junior manager, M), describing a recent night with two colleagues, told me, "The three of us had like five pitchers and talked for four hours, just running around in a circle, questioning why we can't imagine doing this demanding of a job for long." People also disclosed to close personal mentors. Although mentors typically occupied higher-status positions, their history of providing professional guidance and the friendship that often (but not always) developed in these relationships seemed to encourage people to reveal their deviance to them. Revealing to these close colleagues seemed to function as a release valve for the tensions that people experienced with straying from the expected identity: being known as their true selves by at least some colleagues may have enabled them to continue passing to others. However, this was not the only consequence of revealing: studies of

work/non work boundary management have shown the importance of relationships to one's ability to alter work boundaries (Trefalt 2013, Trefalt and Heaphy 2014). My data similarly show that revealing one's deviance to close colleagues and mentors sometimes led to informal fixes to the structure of work that in turn facilitated straying. Amos, describing a mentor who had become "a buddy of mine," said, "When I had trouble, when I raised my hand and said 'This is BS,' at that time I was under resourced and I was working insane hours. I was hitting obstacles. He'd say, 'Alright, let me take care of that.' I'd get a call two hours later, done, gone, everything." Thus, for Amos, like others, revealing to a close mentor permitted immediate alterations to the structure of work.

Perceived Access to Formal Accommodations

People varied in whether they believed they were entitled to formal accommodations (e.g., parental leave, part time schedule), and these beliefs shaped how readily they sought these options. AGM targeted its accommodations to mothers, and mothers who encountered difficulties with the expected identity tended to gravitate toward requesting formal accommodations. Although some needs, such as maternity leaves, could only be solved formally, other, more chronic issues with the expected identity could possibly be handled through informal accommodations (e.g., personally cultivating non profit clients). Mothers tended simply to seek the organization's help ahead of exploring other, informal means of restructuring their work. For example, Veronica told me,

I have two kids, so I took two pretty long leaves . . . And then from then on, I've been working an 80% schedule pretty much consistently. . . . And certainly my preference after having my kids was just to be able not to travel. So it's mostly worked out. . . . My preference is accommodated by AGM so far. . . . It's kind of a combination of serendipity and my preference slash AGM being willing to accommodate that preference. . . . Theoretically, [I] would become a partner in four years. . . . I'm assuming it would be a little longer trajectory because I only work four days a week.

Although AGM "accommodated" Veronica's preferences through an 80% schedule and little travel, as her comments regarding her trajectory suggest, use of these tools clearly revealed her deviance. Like Veronica, other mothers gravitated toward official alterations to their schedule. Other people at AGM, however, faced resistance if they requested formal accommodations, or they believed these accommodations were simply not available to them. For example,

although AGM was legally required to offer parental leave to fathers, Doug told me that after his son was born, “I was off for a week. There’s no paternity leave policy here. But you kind of go to your current case manager and say, Look, I’m going to be off this week. And, they’re like, okay. Just pick up the mobile if you get a call from my cell.”

Situation-Specific Conflict. Although accommodations and formal alterations of work were typically viewed as accessible to mothers but difficult for others to obtain at AGM, people other than mothers did sometimes seek the firm’s help in restructuring their work. I found that people typically did so in order to solve situation-specific problems that resulted from sudden collisions between work demands (e.g., working on an excessively demanding project) and events in their personal lives (e.g., illness of a family member). In such situations, people sought formal accommodations or other sanctioned modifications of work practices (e.g., local client assignments), or they simply told senior colleagues about their problems. Kate (Junior manager, F), following an illness brought on by work stress, began openly questioning and resisting pressures to always “over deliver.” In doing so, she outed herself to the partners managing the project:

One of the partners called me a whiner. He said, “Why are you always whining about this and that?” And I said, “Ok, I don’t really understand why you’re making us do all this work. The case is already going well. Yeah, we could do all this additional work to over deliver, but at what cost, right?” . . . Literally three people left the case, and two of them have left AGM since. So, not good.

In addition to being labeled a “whiner,” Kate was poorly evaluated for her work on this case—each an indication that she had revealed her deviance.

Spread of Perceptions Across Audiences

Thus, people managed their deviance differently across audiences, passing to some, revealing to others. These efforts to pass or to reveal in relation to specific audiences often spilled over to shape other audiences’ perceptions.

Passing to High Status Audiences Facilitates Passing More Broadly. Passing to high-status audiences seemed to facilitate passing to equal- or lower-status colleagues as well. For example, Alex (Junior manager, M) worked fewer than 60 hours a week and never travelled overnight, which he managed by focusing on repeat clients and a local industry:

I’ve managed to be the junior manager for several cases on one account, which is great. . . . The account happens

to be in Connecticut. So I manage it so I go there for day trips, but I almost never spend the night away from home . . . I try to head out by 5 o’clock, get home at 5:30, have dinner, [and] play with my daughter . . . [On weekends,] I try to limit it to, you know, two hours at most, really just catching up on emails.

Alex targeted his efforts to pass at clients: “I know what clients are expecting. So I deliver above that, but I deliver only above that to impress them, not to know that I did . . . everything I could for a particular case.” Although Alex thus targeted his efforts at clients, he also passed more generally within AGM: equal-status colleagues viewed him as a star, he received a star performance rating (4) that year, and he had been promoted relatively quickly. Such spillovers in perceptions likely occurred in part because the largely invisible ways that people altered their work to pass to high-status audiences also avoided revealing their deviance more generally. In addition, however, being labeled a star performer by particular, high-status audiences seemed to create a powerful halo effect, such that other audiences also assumed the person was a star. For example, Bill (Senior manager, M) told me,

My ability here to ascend this hierarchy rapidly is partly about my own abilities and so forth, but it’s also partly about the connection that exists between me and my kind of advocates, and the chief advocate is the guy who runs my group. So is he going to value me in the same way as another person who has been flagged by the firm as a star? Probably not.

Once one had been labeled a star, this label was, as one person told me, sticky. Indeed, perceptions that someone had embraced the expected identity could persist even when evidence was presented of the person’s deviance. Caroline (Partner, F) said,

The women say they look up and see women like me and don’t want to live my life—they think I work more than I do. If I am client-facing and commercially successful, I must be working all the time. And then they get emails from me at 8 at night and Sunday 5 a.m. What they don’t know is that I have taken a half a day off to go on my son’s field trip, so I do the work when I fit it in. I try to tell them, but still feel there are misperceptions.

Thus, although Caroline tried to unravel junior colleagues’ assumptions, “misperceptions” persisted. Indeed, junior consultants’ assumptions about their managers’ work habits often seemed more grounded in their managers’ reputations than in their actual behavior. For example, Jimmy (Associate, M) assumed that his manager, who was known as a star,

worked in ways consistent with the expected identity: “I don’t know [how much she worked] because she was never in the office. But it was my impression, I’m sure this is right, that she was working a lot.” When pressed, however, he was able to offer no evidence of her work hours aside from this “impression.” Thus, the strength of consultants’ assumptions that success required embracing the expected identity, passing to the firm’s senior partners, and being marked by them as successful enabled passing to the broader audience of the firm.

Revealing to Close Colleagues Facilitates Passing More Broadly

People’s choices to reveal to close colleagues tended to result in informal fixes to their work structure that, because of their informality, enabled them to stray from the expected identity while passing to the broader audience in AGM, including high-status audiences. Some, like Wesley (Partner, M), were aware of this spillover effect:

We kind of have a shared agreement as to what work—life balance is on our team. We basically work really closely with each other to make sure that we can all do that. A lot of us have young kids, and we’ve designed it so we can do that. We’ve really designed the whole business[unit] around having intellectual freedom, making a lot of money, [and] having work—life balance. It’s pretty rare. And we don’t get push back from above because we are squaring that circle—from the managing partners—’cause we are one of the most successful parts of the company. Most of the partners have no idea our hours are that light.

Thus, Wesley acknowledges that he and his colleagues revealed their deviance to each other (“shared agreement”). He identifies the target of their passing behavior as AGM’s two managing partners. But as a result, in his account, a broader audience—most of AGM’s “partners”—was in fact unaware that people in his unit strayed from the expected identity.

Revealing to High-Status Audiences Entails Revealing More Broadly

Revealing to high-status audiences tended to result in revealing to the broader audience of the firm. This occurred in part because of the visibility of the accommodations people received and the complexity of negotiating them: an extended leave, or an internal

assignment, often required negotiations with multiple people over several weeks. In addition, however, formal accommodations typically required ongoing negotiations with clients, teams, and partners that drew continued attention to the person’s deviance over time. The following quotations illustrate this dynamic:

It’s hard to stay on the line, doing client service, working part time. You’re kind of all in or you’re not. We set that expectation for clients. If you’re working part time, you’ll pay for it. If you’re working three days, four days, you will be asked, “Can you really not come in on that day off?” People are wondering, are they in the game or not? (Senior manager, M)

I worry that [those who go part-time] are getting paid 60% but end up doing 100%. But it’s up to the individual to manage this. Some partners are understanding and will remember that someone is 60%, and some will not. So it’s up to the individual to “remind” the manager. . . . All in all, it’s not good. (Senior manager, F)

CONSEQUENCES OF PASSING AND REVEALING

By managing their identities differently across audiences, people found ways to stray from AGM’s expected identity such that they mostly passed in their interactions with senior members of the firm or mostly revealed their deviance to these people. Although, as previously noted, conflict with the expected identity was not restricted to any particular demographic group, men and women seemed to cope with conflict in different ways. Namely, women who strayed from the expected identity were unlikely to engage identity management strategies that enabled passing to senior members of the firm; rather, most (80% of those who strayed) ultimately revealed their deviance to senior members of the firm. The strategies of men who strayed, by contrast, seemed more evenly split between passing (54% of those who strayed) and revealing (45% of those who strayed). The reasons for these differences are likely complex; however, my analyses suggest that one important reason may be that mothers were targeted by AGM’s formal accommodation policies and thus tended to gravitate toward these policies. Men, however, were not targeted and instead tended to experiment with informal strategies for straying.

How people were perceived by senior members of the firm in turn influenced the performance evaluation system, a key mechanism through which AGM

controlled consultants' identities. As many of the examples I have shown suggest, at AGM, both those who embraced the expected identity and those who successfully passed to senior members of the firm were typically labeled successes and rewarded, whereas those who revealed to senior members were recognized as deviant and penalized. In what follows, I draw on performance and promotion data to further support these assertions.

External Perceptions and the Performance Evaluation System

Embracing Celebrated Successes

The 35 people (42% of men, 44.5% of women) who embraced AGM's expected identity were typically regarded as among AGM's top consultants, described as stars and "superheroes" by their colleagues. They typically received high performance ratings relative to their colleagues (mean rating of 3.0 in 2009 and 3.14 in 2010) (see Table 3). Most reported straightforward career paths, with few stories of disappointments. Three of the 35 were promoted the year after the study, though 2 did not receive hoped for promotions. Partners often occupied internal leadership positions, further signs that they were perceived as having embraced the expected identity.

Passing: Celebrated Successes

The 22 people (31% of men, 11% of women) who strayed yet managed the identities in ways that promoted passing to senior members of the firm were typically perceived as embracing AGM's expected identity and were favorably regarded and highly rewarded. Like those who embraced, others described them in superlative terms, e.g., "stars" and "top senior men." Echoing these perceptions, their performance rankings were slightly higher than those who embraced the expected identity (mean rating of 3.08 in 2009 and 3.13 in 2010)³ and significantly better than those who revealed their deviance to senior members of the firm. They enjoyed straightforward, even accelerated advancement; one was described by a colleague as "by far the fastest person I've ever seen make partner here." Three were promoted in 2010; none reported being denied a promotion. Some of those who were partners occupied leadership roles within their groups. Thus, AGM did not appear to distinguish between those who embraced and those who passed. In this way, they evaded the performance evaluation system, a key mechanism of identity control.

Revealing: Penalized Deviance

By contrast, the 25 people (27% of men, 44.5% of women) who revealed their deviance to senior

Table 3 Performance Data

	2009		2010	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>
Strategy				
Embracing (E)	22	3.0 (0.62)	21	3.14 (0.47)
Passing (P)	12	3.08 (0.67)	8	3.13 (0.78)
Revealing (R)	20	2.45 (0.69)	14	2.85 (0.66)
Total	54 ^a		43 ^b	
Kruskal—Wallis test statistics ^c				
(df), with ties		8.65* (2)		1.5 (3)
Mann—Whitney test statistics (z)				
E vs P		-0.37		0.06
E vs R		2.56*		1.31
P vs R		2.53*		0.78

^a Total N is 54, not 60, because a few participants declined to release their data or were unreachable.

^b Total N is lower in 2010 because of departures from the firm and one promotion to partner.

^c Grouping variable: Type.

members of the firm were largely recognized as deviant and penalized accordingly. Their performance ratings were significantly lower than those of other consultants (mean rating of 2.45 in 2009 and 2.85 in 2010). When I interviewed them, just one had been recently promoted, and seven reported not receiving anticipated promotions. They complained of being persistently placed on difficult projects with demanding clients, and they had slow career trajectories, both indicators that they were not highly valued by AGM. Eight of the 25 left within a year for other jobs, the highest turnover rate of the sample. A few senior partners revealed their deviance by significantly reducing travel and working far less, without apparent penalty. They may have, after years of embracing the expected identity, accrued enough “idiosyncrasy credits” to openly stray without penalty (Hollander 1958). Overall, however, most who revealed their deviance to senior members of the firm were penalized.

DISCUSSION

I set out to understand how people cope with organizational expectations that they embrace a professional identity that centers on the ideal worker image in light of their experienced professional identities. In the firm I studied, most workers—not simply women and not simply those with families—encountered conflict between these identities, and they responded by straying from the expected identity. I found that this deviance did not in itself beget penalties: rather, some people strayed while still passing as having embraced the expected identity. Moreover, although men and women both experienced conflict, they managed their deviance differently: men tended to pass, whereas women revealed.

The analyses suggest a conceptual model of how people navigate conflict between expected and experienced professional identities: people who experienced conflict coped by engaging tools that permitted straying from the expected identity. People’s use of these tools to pass or to reveal were shaped by situational factors, and efforts to manage one audience’s perceptions sometimes spilled over to shape other audiences’ perceptions. Together, people’s efforts at passing and revealing across different audiences coalesced to shape the perceptions of senior members of the firm, influencing the performance evaluation system, such that those who passed were highly evaluated and rewarded, whereas those who revealed were penalized. Overall, my findings suggest that people’s management of conflict between an expected professional identity and

their experienced professional identity is best understood as a layered process involving passing and revealing across audiences. Together, the findings deepen our understanding of and suggest fruitful new directions for scholarship on how men and women can navigate ideal worker images and expected professional identities; they also enrich our understanding of passing and revealing in organizational contexts.

Contributions to Theory

A contribution of this study is to show that the gender inequalities typically associated with the ideal worker image may arise principally from systematic differences in how men and women cope with conflict with this expected identity, rather than from differences in who embraces it. As noted, this image has historically been identified as mostly problematic for women, particularly mothers. Conversely, at AGM, these expectations were experienced as problematic by most workers: men as well as women, parents and non parents, married and single people. Men and women coped with this conflict differently, however: fewer women than men passed; rather, they tended to reveal their deviance. At AGM, an important reason for this divergence seemed to be that its HR accommodations were targeted at mothers, who were consequently more likely to take advantage of these accommodations, which revealed their deviance. Men, not expected to take HR accommodations, instead experimented with less formal, under-the-radar ways of straying from the expected identity.

However, access to accommodations is unlikely to be the only reason why women coped differently than men, and further analysis of gender differences in coping strategies, and the organizational and cultural factors shaping them, would be useful to understand how the ideal worker image contributes to work place inequality. For example, some of the tools for passing required coordination with colleagues or clients; as women typically have different workplace networks than men (Ibarra 1997), they may have been relatively less able to access these tools. Another possible reason is that professional identities are often associated with particular social identities (Ashcraft 2013, Clair et al. 2012, Ramarajan and Reid 2013); in this setting, most consultants were men. Women might have been more focused on managing their status as women in a male dominated role than on finding opportunities to pass. Racial minorities might face similar challenges, as they typically have different workplace networks than their white colleagues (Ibarra 1995) and, like women, often face stereotypes regarding their suitability for a

particular job (e.g., Rosette et al. 2008). Overall, for scholars interested in the role of the ideal worker image in inequality, my findings suggest broadening the analytical lens to include all workers' experiences and moving beyond *examining who experiences* conflict to focus on *how* people manage this conflict, and the resources available to them to do so.

Practical Insights

This research also offers important lessons for practice. Society still tends to assume that primarily women, and mainly mothers, experience difficulties with devoting themselves wholly to work. This study shows that problems with demands for work devotion are neither only a mother's issue nor only a women's issue: rather, this conflict is experienced by most workers. It is particularly striking that so many people in this firm experienced this conflict, as AGM, like the consulting industry more generally, was well known to be demanding: people accepted this job with some knowledge of its demands. That so many still experienced conflict with the expected identity underscores a troublesome mismatch between people's preferences and organizations' expectations. The widespread nature of this conflict both heightens the importance for organizations to assess the need for demands for work devotion and suggests that solutions should be targeted at all workers, not simply women.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study underscores the continued salience of demands to be an ideal worker in professional work settings and the complex ways these demands shape men and women's work experiences. As the need to pass or reveal is typically associated with highly stigmatized social identities, the fact that many privileged workers who strayed from the expected identity still felt the need to pass is both surprising and speaks to the power of the ideal worker image in defining success in this setting. Yet the very fact that people passed demonstrates that the association between total devotion and success maybe as much a matter of perception as reality.

NOTES

1. Partners were excluded from this assessment: their performance was assumed to fall between 3 and 4, and underperforming partners were asked to leave.

2. FMLA stands for the Federal Medical Leave Act of 1993.

3. As noted, men were likely to pass than to reveal, and women were more likely to reveal than to pass. Women often receive poorer evaluations than men in male-type jobs and are held to higher standards for promotion (Lyness and Heilman 2006). To examine whether such differences in men and women's performance evaluations drove the observed difference between the scores of those who passed and those who revealed. I reran the performance data with only men's performance scores. This analysis revealed the same pattern of results and significant differences between people who embraced, passed, and revealed.

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Introduction to Reading 36

In this reading, Kristen Schilt studies a unique population in order to shed light on the underpinnings of gendered workplace disparities. She interviews a sample of female-to-male (FTM) transsexuals about changes in their workplace interactions and experiences from when they worked as women to when they worked as men, as this “dual” experience has the potential to provide them with an “outsider-within” perspective about gender inequalities at work. Her findings illustrate how structural disadvantages for women are reproduced in workplace interactions, disadvantages that cannot be traced back to individual abilities or skills.

1. What is the “outsider-within” perspective? Why were some transmen not able to develop this perspective? How does being an “outsider within” make workplace disparities visible?
2. In Schilt’s study, what were the workplace advantages that FTM workers experienced? Why did some FTM workers not receive gender advantages after transition?
3. What do Schilt’s findings suggest about human capital theory as an explanation for gender inequality at work?

JUST ONE OF THE GUYS?

HOW TRANSMEN MAKE GENDER VISIBLE AT WORK

Kristen Schilt

Theories of gendered organizations argue that cultural beliefs about gender difference embedded in workplace structures and interactions create and reproduce workplace disparities that disadvantage women and advantage men (Acker 1990; Martin 2003; Williams 1995). As Martin (2003) argues, however, the practices that reproduce gender difference and gender inequality at work are hard to observe. As these gendered practices are citations of established gender norms, men and women in the workplace repeatedly and unreflectively engage in “doing gender” and therefore “doing inequality” (Martin 2003; West and Zimmerman 1987). This repetition of well-worn gender ideologies naturalizes workplace gender inequality, making gendered disparities in achievements appear to be offshoots of “natural” differences between men and women, rather than the products of dynamic gendering and gendered practices (Martin 2003). As the active reproduction of gendered workplace disparities is

rendered invisible, gender inequality at work becomes difficult to document empirically and therefore remains resistant to change (Acker 1990; Martin 2003; Williams 1995).

The workplace experiences of female-to-male transsexuals (FTMs), or transmen, offer an opportunity to examine these disparities between men and women at work from a new perspective. Many FTMs enter the workforce as women and, after transition, begin working as men.¹ As men, they have the same skills, education, and abilities they had as women; however, how this “human capital” is perceived often varies drastically once they become men at work. This shift in gender attribution gives them the potential to develop an “outsider-within” perspective (Collins 1986) on men’s advantages in the workplace. FTMs can find themselves benefiting from the “patriarchal dividend” (Connell 1995, 79)—the advantages men in general gain from the subordination of women—after they transition. However, not being “born into it”

Schilt, K. (2006). Just one of the guys?: How transmen make gender visible at work. *Gender & Society*, 20(4): 465–490.

gives them the potential to be cognizant of being awarded respect, authority, and prestige they did not have working as women. In addition, the experiences of transmen who fall outside of the hegemonic construction of masculinity, such as FTMs of color, short FTMs, and young FTMs, illuminate how the interplay of gender, race, age, and bodily characteristics can constrain access to gendered workplace advantages for some men (Connell 1995).

In this article, I document the workplace experiences of two groups of FTMs, those who openly transition and remain in the same jobs (open FTMs) and those who find new jobs posttransition as “just men” (stealth FTMs).² I argue that the positive and negative changes they experience when they become men can illuminate how gender discrimination and gender advantage are created and maintained through workplace interactions. These experiences also illustrate that masculinity is not a fixed character type that automatically commands privilege but rather that the relationships between competing hegemonic and marginalized masculinities give men differing abilities to access gendered workplace advantages (Connell 1995).

THEORIES OF WORKPLACE GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Sociological research on the workplace reveals a complex relationship between the gender of an employee and that employee's opportunities for advancement in both authority and pay. While white-collar men and women with equal qualifications can begin their careers in similar positions in the workplace, men tend to advance faster, creating a gendered promotion gap (Padavic and Reskin 2002; Valian 1999). When women are able to advance, they often find themselves barred from attaining access to the highest echelons of the company by the invisible barrier of the “glass ceiling” (Valian 1999). Even in the so-called women's professions, such as nursing and teaching, men outpace women in advancement to positions of authority (Williams 1995). Similar patterns exist among blue-collar professions, as women often are denied sufficient training for advancement in manual trades, passed over for promotion, or subjected to extreme forms of sexual, racial, and gender harassment that result in women's attrition (Byrd 1999; Miller 1997; Yoder and Aniakudo 1997). These studies are part of the large body of scholarly research on gender and work finding that white- and blue-collar workplaces

are characterized by gender segregation, with women concentrated in lower-paying jobs with little room for advancement.

Among the theories proposed to account for these workplace disparities between men and women are human capital theory and gender role socialization. Human capital theory posits that labor markets are neutral environments that reward workers for their skills, experience, and productivity. As women workers are more likely to take time off from work for child rearing and family obligations, they end up with less education and work experience than men. Following this logic, gender segregation in the workplace stems from these discrepancies in skills and experience between men and women, not from gender discrimination. However, while these differences can explain some of the disparities in salaries and rank between women and men, they fail to explain why women and men with comparable prestigious degrees and work experience still end up in different places, with women trailing behind men in advancement (Valian 1999; Williams 1995).

A second theory, gender socialization theory, looks at the process by which individuals come to learn, through the family, peers, schools, and the media, what behavior is appropriate and inappropriate for their gender. From this standpoint, women seek out jobs that reinforce “feminine” traits such as caring and nurturing. This would explain the predominance of women in helping professions such as nursing and teaching. As women are socialized to put family obligations first, women workers would also be expected to be concentrated in part-time jobs that allow more flexibility for family schedules but bring in less money. Men, on the other hand, would be expected to seek higher-paying jobs with more authority to reinforce their sense of masculinity. While gender socialization theory may explain some aspects of gender segregation at work, however, it leaves out important structural aspects of the workplace that support segregation, such as the lack of workplace child care services, as well as employers' own gendered stereotypes about which workers are best suited for which types of jobs (Padavic and Reskin 2002; Valian 1999; Williams 1995).

A third theory, gendered organization theory, argues that what is missing from both human capital theory and gender socialization theory is the way in which men's advantages in the workplace are maintained and reproduced in gender expectations that are embedded in organizations and in interactions between employers, employees, and coworkers (Acker 1990;

Martin 2003; Williams 1995). However, it is difficult to study this process of reproduction empirically for several reasons. First, while men and women with similar education and workplace backgrounds can be compared to demonstrate the disparities in where they end up in their careers, it could be argued that differences in achievement between them can be attributed to personal characteristics of the workers rather than to systematic gender discrimination. Second, gendered expectations about which types of jobs women and men are suited for are strengthened by existing occupational segregation; the fact that there are more women nurses and more men doctors comes to be seen as proof that women are better suited for helping professions and men for rational professions. The normalization of these disparities as natural differences obscures the actual operation of men's advantages and therefore makes it hard to document them empirically. Finally, men's advantages in the workplace are not a function of simply one process but rather a complex interplay between many factors, such as gender differences in workplace performance evaluation, gendered beliefs about men's and women's skills and abilities, and differences between family and child care obligations of men and women workers.

The cultural reproduction of these interactional practices that create and maintain gendered workplace disparities often can be rendered more visible, and therefore more able to be challenged, when examined through the perspective of marginalized others (Collins 1986; Martin 1994, 2003; Yoder and Aniakudo 1997). As Yoder and Aniakudo note, "marginalized others offer a unique perspective on the events occurring within a setting because they perceive activities from the vantages of both nearness (being within) and detachment (being outsiders)" (1997, 325–26). This importance of drawing on the experiences of marginalized others derives from Patricia Hill Collins's theoretical development of the "outsider-within" (1986, 1990). Looking historically at the experience of Black women, Collins (1986) argues that they often have become insiders to white society by virtue of being forced, first by slavery and later by racially bounded labor markets, into domestic work for white families. The insider status that results from being immersed in the daily lives of white families carries the ability to demystify power relations by making evident how white society relies on racism and sexism, rather than superior ability or intellect, to gain advantage; however, Black women are not able to become total insiders due to being visibly marked as different. Being a

marginalized insider creates a unique perspective, what Collins calls "the outsider-within," that allows them to see "the contradictions between the dominant group's actions and ideologies" (Collins 1990, 12), thus giving a new angle on how the processes of oppression operate. Applying this perspective to the workplace, scholars have documented the production and reproduction of gendered and racialized workplace disparities through the "outsider-within" perspective of Black women police officers (Martin 1994) and Black women firefighters (Yoder and Aniakudo 1997).

In this article, I posit that FTMs' change in gender attribution, from women to men, can provide them with an outsider-within perspective on gendered workplace disparities. Unlike the Black women discussed by Collins, FTMs usually are not visibly marked by their outsider status, as continued use of testosterone typically allows for the development of a masculine social identity indistinguishable from "bio men."³ However, while both stealth and open FTMs can become social insiders at work, their experience working as women prior to transition means they maintain an internalized sense of being outsiders to the gender schemas that advantage men. This internalized insider/outsider position allows some transmen to see clearly the advantages associated with being men at work while still maintaining a critical view to how this advantage operates and is reproduced and how it disadvantages women. I demonstrate that many of the respondents find themselves receiving more authority, respect, and reward when they gain social identities as men, even though their human capital does not change. This shift in treatment suggests that gender inequality in the workplace is not continually reproduced only because women make different education and workplace choices than men but rather because coworkers and employers often rely on gender stereotypes to evaluate men's and women's achievements and skills.

METHOD

I conducted in-depth interviews with 29 FTMs in the Southern California area from 2003 to 2005. My criteria for selection were that respondents were assigned female at birth and were currently living and working as men or open transmen. These selection criteria did exclude female-bodied individuals who identified as men but had not publicly come out as men at work and FTMs who had not held any jobs as

men since their transition, as they would not be able to comment about changes in their social interactions that were specific to the workplace. My sample is made up of 18 open FTMs and 11 stealth FTMs.

At the onset of my research, I was unaware of how I would be received as a non-transgender person doing research on transgender workplace experiences, as well as a woman interviewing men. I went into the study being extremely open about my research agenda and my political affiliations with feminist and transgender politics. I carried my openness about my intentions into my interviews, making clear at the beginning that I was happy to answer questions about my research intentions, the ultimate goal of my research, and personal questions about myself. Through this openness, and the acknowledgment that I was there to learn rather than to be an academic “expert,” I feel that I gained a rapport with my respondents that bridged the “outsider/insider” divide (Merton 1972).

Generating a random sample of FTMs is not possible as there is not an even dispersal of FTMs throughout Southern California, nor are there transgender-specific neighborhoods from which to sample. I recruited interviewees from transgender activist groups, transgender listservers, and FTM support groups. In addition, I participated for two years in Southern California transgender community events, such as conferences and support group meetings. Attending these community events gave me an opportunity not only to demonstrate long-term political commitment to the transgender community but also to recruit respondents who might not be affiliated with FTM activist groups. All the interviews were conducted in the respondents’ offices, in their homes, or at a local café or restaurant. The interviews ranged from one and a half to four hours. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and coded.

Drawing on sociological research that reports longstanding gender differences between men and women in the workplace (Reskin and Hartmann 1986; Reskin and Roos 1990; Valian 1999; Williams 1995), I constructed my interview schedule to focus on possible differences between working as women and working as men. I first gathered a general employment history and then explored the decision to openly transition or to go stealth. At the end of the interviews, I posed the question, “Do you see any differences between working as a woman and working as a man?” All but a few of the respondents immediately answered yes and began to provide examples of both positive and negative differences. About half of the respondents also, at

this time, introduced the idea of male privilege, addressing whether they felt they received a gender advantage from transitioning. If the concept of gender advantage was not brought up by respondents, I later introduced the concept of male privilege and then posed the question, saying, “Do you feel that you have received any male privilege at work?” The resulting answers from these two questions are the framework for this article.

In reporting the demographics of my respondents, I have opted to use pseudonyms and general categories of industry to avoid identifying my respondents. Respondents ranged in age from 20 to 48. Rather than attempting to identify when they began their gender transition, a start date often hard to pinpoint as many FTMs feel they have been personally transitioning since childhood or adolescence, I recorded how many years they had been working as men (meaning they were either hired as men or had openly transitioned from female to male and remained in the same job). The average time of working as a man was seven years. Regarding race and ethnicity, the sample was predominantly white (17), with 3 Asians, 1 African American, 3 Latinos, 3 mixed-race individuals, 1 Armenian American, and 1 Italian American. Responses about sexual identity fell into four main categories, heterosexual (9), bisexual (8), queer (6), and gay (3). The remaining 3 respondents identified their sexual identity as celibate/asexual, “dating women,” and pansexual. Finally, in terms of region, the sample included a mixture of FTMs living in urban and suburban areas. (See Table 1 for sample characteristics.)

The experience of my respondents represents a part of the Southern California FTM community from 2003 to 2005. As Rubin (2003) has demonstrated, however, FTM communities vary greatly from city to city, meaning these findings may not be representative of the experiences of transmen in Austin, San Francisco, or Atlanta. In addition, California passed statewide gender identity protection for employees in 2003, meaning that the men in my study live in an environment in which they cannot legally be fired for being transgender (although most of my respondents said they would not wish to be a test case for this new law). This legal protection means that California transmen might have very different workplace experiences than men in states without gender identity protection. Finally, anecdotal evidence suggests that there are a large number of transgender individuals who transition and then sever all ties with the transgender community, something known as being “deep stealth.”

Table 1 Sample Characteristics

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	<i>Sexual Identity</i>	<i>Approximate Number of Years Working as Male</i>	<i>Industry</i>	<i>Status at Work</i>
Aaron	28	Black/White	Queer	5	Semi-Professional	Open
Brian	42	White	Bisexual	14	Semi-Professional	Stealth
Carl	34	White	Heterosexual	16	Higher Professional	Stealth
Christopher	25	Asian	Pansexual	3	Semi-Professional	Open
Colin	31	White	Queer	1	Lower Professional	Open
Crispin	42	White	Heterosexual	2	Blue-Collar	Stealth
David	30	White	Bisexual	2	Higher Professional	Open
Douglas	38	White	Gay	5	Semi-Professional	Open
Elliott	20	White	Bisexual	1	Retail/Customer Service	Open
Henry	32	White	Gay	5	Lower Professional	Open
Jack	30	Latino	Queer	1	Semi-Professional	Open
Jake	45	White	Queer	9	Higher Professional	Open
Jason	48	White/Italian	Celibate	20	Retail/Customer Service	Stealth
Keith	42	Black	Heterosexual	1	Blue-Collar	Open
Kelly	24	White	Bisexual	2	Semi-Professional	Open
Ken	26	Asian/White	Queer	6 months	Semi-Professional	Open
Paul	44	White	Heterosexual	2	Semi-Professional	Open
Peter	24	White/Armenian	Heterosexual	4	Lower Professional	Stealth
Preston	39	White	Bisexual	2	Blue-Collar	Open
Riley	37	White	Dates women	1	Lower Professional	Open
Robert	23	Asian	Heterosexual	2	Retail/Customer Service	Stealth
Roger	45	White	Bisexual	22	Lower Professional	Stealth
Sam	33	Latino	Heterosexual	15	Blue-Collar	Stealth
Simon	42	White	Bisexual	2	Semi-Professional	Open
Stephen	35	White	Heterosexual	1	Retail/Customer Service	Stealth
Thomas	42	Latino	Queer	13	Higher Professional	Open
Trevor	35	White	Gay/Queer	6	Semi-Professional	Open
Wayne	44	/Latino	Bisexual	22	Higher Professional	Stealth
Winston	40	White	Heterosexual	14	Higher Professional	Stealth

This lack of connection to the transgender community means they are excluded from research on transmen but that their experiences with the workplace may be very different than those of men who are still connected, even slightly, to the FTM community.

TRANSMEN AS OUTSIDERS WITHIN AT WORK

In undergoing a physical gender transition, transmen move from being socially gendered as women to being socially gendered as men (Dozier 2005). This shift in

gender attribution gives them the potential to develop an “outsider-within” perspective (Collins 1986) on the sources of men’s advantages in the workplace. In other words, while they may find themselves, as men, benefiting from the “patriarchal dividend” (Connell 1995, 79), not being “born into it” can make visible how gendered workplace disparities are created and maintained through interactions. Many of the respondents note that they can see clearly, once they become “just one of the guys,” that men succeed in the workplace at higher rates than women because of gender stereotypes that privilege masculinity, not because they have greater skill or ability. For transmen who do see how these cultural beliefs about gender create gendered workplace disparities, there is an accompanying sense that these experiences are visible to them only because of the unique perspective they gain from undergoing a change in gender attribution. Exemplifying this, Preston reports about his views on gender differences at work posttransition: “I swear they let the guys get away with so much stuff! Lazy ass bastards get away with so much stuff and the women who are working hard, they just get ignored. . . . I am really aware of it. And that is one of the reasons that I feel like I have become much more of a feminist since transition. I am just so aware of the difference that my experience has shown me.” Carl makes a similar point, discussing his awareness of blatant gender discrimination at a hardware/home construction store where he worked immediately after his transition: “Girls couldn’t get their forklift license or it would take them forever. They wouldn’t make as much money. It was so pathetic. I would have never seen it if I was a regular guy. I would have just not seen it. . . . I can see things differently because of my perspective. So in some ways I am a lot like a guy because I transitioned younger but still, you can’t take away how I was raised for 18 years.” These comments illustrate how the outsider-within perspective of many FTMs can translate into a critical perspective on men’s advantages at work. The idea that a “regular guy,” here meaning a bio man, would not be able to see how women were passed over in favor of men makes clear that for some FTMs, there is an ability to see how gender stereotypes can advantage men at work.

However, just as being a Black woman does not guarantee the development of a Black feminist perspective (Collins 1986), having this critical perspective on gender discrimination in the workplace is not inherent to the FTM experience. Respondents who had held no jobs prior to transition, who were highly gender ambiguous prior to transition, or who worked in

short-term, high-turnover retail jobs, such as food service, found it harder to identify gender differences at work. FTMs who transitioned in their late teens often felt that they did not have enough experience working as women to comment on any possible differences between men and women at work. For example, Sam and Robert felt they could not comment on gender differences in the workplace because they had begun living as men at the age of 15 and, therefore, never had been employed as women. In addition, FTMs who reported being very “in-between” in their gender appearance, such as Wayne and Peter, found it hard to comment on gender differences at work, as even when they were hired as women, they were not always sure how customers and coworkers perceived them. They felt unable to speak about the experience of working as a woman because they were perceived either as androgynous or as men.

The kinds of occupations FTMs held prior to transition also play a role in whether they develop this outsider-within perspective at work. Transmen working in blue-collar jobs—jobs that are predominantly staffed by men—felt their experiences working in these jobs as females varied greatly from their experiences working as men. This held true even for those transmen who worked as females in blue-collar jobs in their early teens, showing that age of transition does not always determine the ability to see gender discrimination at work. FTMs working in the “women’s professions” also saw a great shift in their treatment once they began working as men. FTMs who transitioned in their late teens and worked in marginal “teenage” jobs, such as fast food, however, often reported little sense of change posttransition, as they felt that most employees were doing the same jobs regardless of gender. As a gendered division of labor often does exist in fast food jobs (Leidner 1993), it may be that these respondents worked in atypical settings, or that they were assigned “men’s jobs” because of their masculine appearance.

Transmen in higher professional jobs, too, reported less change in their experiences posttransition, as many of them felt that their workplaces guarded against gender-biased treatment as part of an ethic of professionalism. The experience of these professional respondents obviously runs counter to the large body of scholarly research that documents gender inequality in fields such as academia (Valian 1999), law firms (Pierce 1995), and corporations (Martin 1992). Not having an outsider-within perspective, then, may be unique to these particular transmen, not the result of working in a professional occupation.

Thus, transitioning from female to male can provide individuals with an outsider within perspective on gender discrimination in the workplace. However, this perspective can be limited by the age of transition, appearance, and type of occupation. In addition, as I will discuss at the end of this article, even when the advantages of the patriarchal dividend are seen clearly, many transmen do not benefit from them. In the next section, I will explore in what ways FTMs who expressed having this outsider-within perspective saw their skills and abilities perceived more positively as men. Then, I will explore why not all of my respondents received a gender advantage from transitioning.

TRANSITION AND WORKPLACE GENDER ADVANTAGES⁴

A large body of evidence shows that the performance of workers is evaluated differently depending on gender. Men, particularly white men, are viewed as more competent than women workers (Olian, Schwab, and Haberfeld 1988; Valian 1999). When men succeed, their success is seen as stemming from their abilities while women's success often is attributed to luck (Valian 1999). Men are rewarded more than women for offering ideas and opinions and for taking on leadership roles in group settings (Butler and Geis 1990; Valian 1999). Based on these findings, it would be expected that stealth transmen would see a positive difference in their workplace experience once they have made the transition from female to male, as they enter new jobs as just one of the guys. Open FTMs, on the other hand, might find themselves denied access to these privileges, as they remain in the same jobs in which they were hired as women. Challenging these expectations, two-thirds of my respondents, both open and stealth, report receiving some type of posttransition advantage at work. These advantages fell into four main categories: gaining competency and authority, gaining respect and recognition for hard work, gaining "body privilege," and gaining economic opportunities and status.

Authority and Competency

Illustrating the authority gap that exists between men and women workers (Elliott and Smith 2004; Padavic and Reskin 2002), several of my interviewees reported receiving more respect for their thoughts and opinions posttransition. For example, Henry, who is stealth in a professional workplace, says of his

experiences, "I'm right a lot more now. . . . Even with folks I am out to [as a transsexual], there is a sense that I know what I am talking about." Roger, who openly transitioned in a retail environment in the 1980s, discussed customers' assumptions that as a man, he knew more than his boss, who was a woman: "People would come in and they would go straight to me. They would pass her and go straight to me because obviously, as a male, I knew [sarcasm]. And so we would play mind games with them. . . . They would come up and ask me a question, and then I would go over to her and ask her the same question, she would tell me the answer, and I would go back to the customer and tell the customer the answer." Revealing how entrenched these stereotypes about masculinity and authority are, Roger added that none of the customers ever recognized the sarcasm behind his actions. Demonstrating how white men's opinions are seen to carry more authority, Trevor discusses how, posttransition, his ideas are now taken more seriously in group situations—often to the detriment of his women coworkers: "In a professional workshop or a conference kind of setting, a woman would make a comment or an observation and be overlooked and be dissed essentially. I would raise my hand and make the same point in a way that I am trying to reinforce her and it would be like [directed at me], 'That's an excellent point!' I saw this shit in undergrad. So it is not like this was a surprise to me. But it was disconcerting to have happen to me." These last two quotes exemplify the outsider-within experience: Both men are aware of having more authority simply because of being men, an authority that happens at the expense of women coworkers.

Looking at the issue of authority in the women's professions, Paul, who openly transitioned in the field of secondary education, reports a sense of having increased authority as one of the few men in his work environment:

I did notice [at] some of the meetings I'm required to attend, like school district or parent involvement [meetings], you have lots of women there. And now I feel like there are [many times], mysteriously enough, when I'm picked [to speak]. . . . I think, well, why me, when nobody else has to go to the microphone and talk about their stuff? That I did notice and that [had] never happened before. I mean there was this meeting . . . a little while ago about domestic violence where I appeared to be the only male person between these 30, 40 women and, of course, then everybody wants to hear from me.

Rather than being alienated by his gender tokenism, as women often are in predominantly male workplaces

(Byrd 1999), he is asked to express his opinions and is valued for being the “male” voice at the meetings, a common situation for men in “women’s professions” (Williams 1995). The lack of interest paid to him as a woman in the same job demonstrates how women in predominantly female workspaces can encourage their coworkers who are men to take more authority and space in these careers, a situation that can lead to the promotion of men in women’s professions (Williams 1995).

Transmen also report a positive change in the evaluation of their abilities and competencies after transition. Thomas, an attorney, relates an episode in which an attorney who worked for an associated law firm commended his boss for firing Susan, here a pseudonym for his female name, because she was incompetent—adding that the “new guy” [i.e., Thomas] was “just delightful.” The attorney did not realize that Susan and “the new guy” were the same person with the same abilities, education, and experience. This anecdote is a glaring example of how men are evaluated as more competent than women even when they do the same job in careers that are stereotyped requiring “masculine” skills such as rationality (Pierce 1995; Valian 1999). Stephen, who is stealth in a predominantly male customer-service job, reports, “For some reason just because [the men I work with] assume I have a dick, [they assume] I am going to get the job done right, where, you know, they have to second-guess that when you’re a woman. They look at [women] like well, you can’t handle this because you know, you don’t have the same mentality that we [men] do, so there’s this sense of panic . . . and if you are a guy, it’s just like, oh, you can handle it.” Keith, who openly transitioned in a male-dominated blue-collar job, reports no longer having to “cuddle after sex,” meaning that he has been able to drop the emotional labor of niceness women often have to employ to when giving orders at work. Showing how perceptions of behavior can change with transition, Trevor reports, “I think my ideas are taken more seriously [as a man]. I had good leadership skills leaving college and um . . . I think that those work well for me now. . . . Because I’m male, they work better for me. I was ‘assertive’ before. Now I’m ‘take charge.’” Again, while his behavior has not changed, his shift in gender attribution translates into a different kind of evaluation. As a man, being assertive is consistent with gendered expectations for men, meaning his same leadership skills have more worth in the workplace because of his transition. His experience underscores how women who take on leadership roles are evaluated negatively, particularly if their leadership style is perceived as

assertive, while men are rewarded for being aggressive leaders (Butler and Geis 1990; Valian 1999).⁵

This change in authority is noticeable only because FTMs often have experienced the reverse: being thought, on the basis of gender alone, to be less competent workers who receive less authority from employers and coworkers. This sense of a shift in authority and perceived competence was particularly marked for FTMs who had worked in blue-collar occupations as women. These transmen report that the stereotype of women’s incompetence often translated into difficulty in finding and maintaining employment. For example, Crispin, who had worked as a female construction worker, reports being written up by supervisors for every small infraction, a practice Yoder and Aniakudo (1997, 330) refer to as “pencil whipping.” Crispin recounts, “One time I had a field supervisor confront me about simple things, like not dotting i’s and using the wrong color ink. . . . Anything he could do, he was just constantly on me. . . . I ended up just leaving.” Paul, who was a female truck driver, recounts, “Like they would tell [me], ‘Well we never had a female driver. I don’t know if this works out.’ Blatantly telling you this. And then [I had] to go, ‘Well let’s see. Let’s give it a chance, give it a try. I’ll do this three days for free and you see and if it’s not working out, well then that’s fine and if it works out, maybe you want to reconsider [not hiring me].’” To prove her competency, she ended up working for free, hoping that she would eventually be hired.

Stephen, who was a female forklift operator, described the resistance women operators faced from men when it came to safety precautions for loading pallets:

[The men] would spot each other, which meant that they would have two guys that would close down the aisle . . . so that no one could go on that aisle while you know you were up there [with your forklift and load] . . . and they wouldn’t spot you if you were a female. If you were a guy . . . they got the red vests and the safety cones out and it’s like you know—the only thing they didn’t have were those little flash-lights for the jets. It would be like God or somebody responding. I would actually have to go around and gather all the dykes from receiving to come out and help and spot me. And I can’t tell you how many times I nearly ran over a kid. It was maddening and it was always because [of] gender.

Thus, respondents described situations of being ignored, passed over, purposefully put in harm’s way, and assumed to be incompetent when they were working as women. However, these same individuals, as

men, find themselves with more authority and with their ideas, abilities, and attributes evaluated more positively in the workforce.

Respect and Recognition

Related to authority and competency is the issue of how much reward workers get for their workplace contributions. According to the transmen I interviewed, an increase in recognition for hard work was one of the positive changes associated with working as a man. Looking at these stories of gaining reward and respect, Preston, who transitioned openly and remained at his blue-collar job, reports that as a female crew supervisor, she was frequently short staffed and unable to access necessary resources yet expected to still carry out the job competently. However, after his transition, he suddenly found himself receiving all the support and materials he required:

I was not asked to do anything different [after transition]. But the work I did do was made easier for me. [Before transition] there [were] periods of time when I would be told, “Well, I don’t have anyone to send over there with you.” We were one or two people short of a crew or the trucks weren’t available. Or they would send me people who weren’t trained. And it got to the point where it was like, why do I have to fight about this? If you don’t want your freight, you don’t get your freight. And, I swear it was like from one day to the next of me transitioning [to male], I need this, this is what I want and [snaps his fingers]. I have not had to fight about anything.

He adds about his experience, “The last three [performance] reviews that I have had have been the absolute highest that I have ever had. New management team. Me not doing anything different than I ever had. I even went part-time.” This comment shows that even though he openly transitioned and remained in the same job, he ultimately finds himself rewarded for doing less work and having to fight less for getting what he needs to effectively do his job. In addition, as a man, he received more positive reviews for his work, demonstrating how men and women can be evaluated differently when doing the same work.

As with authority and competence, this sense of gaining recognition for hard work was particularly noticeable for transmen who had worked as women in blue-collar occupations in which they were the gender minority. This finding is not unexpected, as women are also more likely to be judged negatively when they are in the minority in the workplace, as their statistical minority status seems to suggest that women are unsuited for the job (Valian 1999). For example,

Preston, who had spent time in the ROTC as a female cadet, reported feeling that no matter how hard she worked, her achievements were passed over by her men superiors: “On everything that I did, I was the highest. I was the highest-ranking female during the time I was there. . . . I was the most decorated person in ROTC. I had more ribbons, I had more medals, in ROTC and in school. I didn’t get anything for that. There was an award every year called Superior Cadet, and guys got it during the time I was there who didn’t do nearly what I did. It was those kinds of things [that got to me].” She entered a blue-collar occupation after ROTC and also felt that her workplace contributions, like designing training programs for the staff, were invisible and went unrewarded.

Talking about gender discrimination he faced as a female construction worker, Crispin reports,

I worked really hard. . . . I had to find myself not sitting ever and taking breaks or lunches because I felt like I had to work more to show my worth. And though I did do that and I produced typically more than three males put together—and that is really a statistic—what it would come down to a lot of times was, “You’re single. You don’t have a family.” That is what they told me. “I’ve got guys here who have families.” And even though my production quality [was high], and the customer was extremely happy with my work . . . I was passed over lots of times. They said it was because I was single and I didn’t have a family and they felt bad because they didn’t want Joe Blow to lose his job because he had three kids at home. And because I was intelligent and my qualities were very vast, they said, “You can just go get a job anywhere.” Which wasn’t always the case? A lot of people were—it was still a boy’s world and some people were just like, uh-uh, there aren’t going to be any women on my job site. And it would be months . . . before I would find gainful employment again.

While she reports eventually winning over many men who did not want women on the worksite, being female excluded her from workplace social interactions, such as camping trips, designed to strengthen male bonding.

These quotes illustrate the hardships that women working in blue-collar jobs often face at work: being passed over for hiring and promotions in favor of less productive male coworkers, having their hard work go unrecognized, and not being completely accepted.⁶ Having this experience of being women in an occupation or industry composed mostly of men can create, then, a heightened appreciation of gaining reward and recognition for job performance as men.

Another form of reward that some transmen report receiving posttransition is a type of bodily respect in

the form of being freed from unwanted sexual advances or inquiries about sexuality. As Brian recounts about his experience of working as a waitress, that customer service involved “having my boobs grabbed, being called ‘honey’ and ‘babe.’” He noted that as a man, he no longer has to worry about these types of experiences. Jason reported being constantly harassed by men bosses for sexual favors in the past. He added, “When I transitioned . . . it was like a relief! [laughs] . . . I swear to God! I am not saying I was beautiful or sexy but I was always attracting something.” He felt that becoming a man meant more personal space and less sexual harassment. Finally, Stephen and Henry reported being “obvious dykes,” here meaning visibly masculine women, and added that in blue-collar jobs, they encountered sexualized comments, as well as invasive personal questions about sexuality, from men uncomfortable with their gender presentation, experiences they no longer face posttransition. Transitioning for stealth FTMs can bring with it physical autonomy and respect, as men workers, in general, encounter less touching, groping, and sexualized comments at work than women. Open FTMs, however, are not as able to access this type of privilege, as coworkers often ask invasive questions about their genitals and sexual practices.

Economic Gains

As the last two sections have shown, FTMs can find themselves gaining in authority, respect, and reward in the workplace posttransition. Several FTMs who are stealth also reported a sense that transition had brought with it economic opportunities that would not have been available to them as women, particularly as masculine women.

Carl, who owns his own company, asserts that he could not have followed the same career trajectory if he had not transitioned:

I have this company that I built, and I have people following me; they trust me, they believe in me, they respect me. There is no way I could have done that as a woman. And I will tell you that as just a fact. That when it comes to business and work, higher levels of management, it is different being a man. I have been on both sides [as a man and a woman], younger obviously, but I will tell you, man, I could have never done what I did [as a female]. You can take the same personality and it wouldn't have happened. I would have never made it.

While he acknowledges that women can be and are business entrepreneurs, he has a sense that his business

partners would not have taken his business venture idea seriously if he were a woman or that he might not have had access to the type of social networks that made his business venture possible. Henry feels that he would not have reached the same level in his professional job if he were a woman because he had a nonnormative gender appearance:

If I was a gender normative woman, probably. But no, as an obvious dyke, I don't think so . . . which is weird to say but I think it's true. It is interesting because I am really aware of having this job that I would not have had if I hadn't transitioned. And [gender expression] was always an issue for me. I wanted to go to law school but I couldn't do it. I couldn't wear the skirts and things females have to wear to practice law. I wouldn't dress in that drag. And so it was very clear that there was a limit to where I was going to go professionally because I was not willing to dress that part. Now I can dress the part and it's not an issue. It's not putting on drag; it's not an issue. I don't love putting on a tie, but I can do it. So this world is open to me that would not have been before just because of clothes. But very little has changed in some ways. I look very different but I still have all the same skills and all the same general thought processes. That is intense for me to consider.

As this response shows, Henry is aware that as an “obvious dyke,” meaning here a masculine-appearing woman, he would have the same skills and education level he currently has, but those skills would be devalued due to his nonnormative appearance. Thus, he avoided professional careers that would require a traditionally feminine appearance. As a man, however, he is able to wear clothes similar to those he wore as an “obvious dyke,” but they are now considered gender appropriate. Thus, through transitioning, he gains the right to wear men's clothes, which helps him in accessing a professional job.

Wayne also recounts negative workplace experiences in the years prior to his transition due to being extremely ambiguous or “gender blending” (Devor 1987) in his appearance. Working at a restaurant in his early teens, he had the following experience:

The woman who hired me said, “I will hire you only on the condition that you don't ever come in the front because you make the people uncomfortable.” 'Cause we had to wear like these uniforms or something and when I would put the uniform on, she would say, “That makes you look like a guy.” But she knew I was not a guy because of my name that she had on the application. She said, “You make the customers uncomfortable.” And a couple of times it got really busy, and I would have to come in the front or whatever, and I remember one time

she found out about it and she said, “I don’t care how busy it gets, you don’t get to come up front.” She said I’d make people lose their appetite.

Once he began hormones and gained a social identity as a man, he found that his work and school experiences became much more positive. He went on to earn a doctoral degree and become a successful professional, an economic opportunity he did not think would be available had he remained highly gender ambiguous.

In my sample, the transmen who openly transitioned faced a different situation in terms of economic gains. While there is an “urban legend” that FTMs immediately are awarded some kind of “male privilege” post-transition (Dozier 2005), I did not find that in my interviews. Reflecting this common belief, however, Trevor and Jake both recount that women colleagues told them, when learning of their transition plans, that they would probably be promoted because they were becoming white men. While both men discounted these comments, both were promoted relatively soon after their transitions. Rather than seeing this as evidence of male privilege, both respondents felt that their promotions were related to their job performance, which, to make clear, is not a point I am questioning. Yet these promotions show that while these two men are not benefiting undeservedly from transition, they also are not disadvantaged. Thus, among the men I interviewed, it is common for both stealth and open FTMs to find their abilities and skills more valued posttransition, showing that human capital can be valued differently depending on the gender of the employee.

Is It Privilege or Something Else?

While these reported increases in competency and authority make visible the “gender schemas” (Valian 1999) that often underlie the evaluation of workers, it is possible that the increases in authority might have a spurious connection to gender transitions. Some transmen enter a different work field after transition, so the observed change might be in the type of occupation they enter rather than a gender-based change. In addition, many transmen seek graduate or postgraduate degrees posttransition, and higher education degrees afford more authority in the workplace. As Table 2 shows, of the transmen I interviewed, many had higher degrees working as men than they did when they worked as women. For some, this is due to transitioning while in college and thus attaining their bachelor’s degrees as men. For others, gender transitions seem to be accompanied by a desire to return to school for a higher degree, as evidenced by the increase in master’s degrees in the table.

A change in educational attainment does contribute to getting better jobs with increased authority, as men benefit more from increased human capital in the form of educational attainment (Valian 1999). But again, this is an additive effect, as higher education results in greater advantages for men than for women. In addition, gender advantage alone also is apparent in these experiences of increased authority, as transmen report seeing an increase in others’ perceptions of their competency outside of the workplace where their education level is unknown. For example, Henry, who found he was “right a lot more” at work, also notes that in daily, nonworkplace interactions, he is assumed, as a man, to know what he is talking about and does not

Table 2 Highest Level of Education Attained

<i>Highest Degree Level</i>	<i>Stealth FTMs</i>		<i>Open FTMs</i>	
	<i>As Female</i>	<i>As Male</i>	<i>As Female</i>	<i>As Male</i>
High school/GED	7	2	3	2
Associate’s degree	2	3	3	3
Bachelor’s degree	2	4	7	4
Master’s degree	0	1	2	4
Ph.D.	0	1	1	2
J.D.	0	0	1	2
Other	0	0	1	1
Total	11	11	18	18

Note: FTM = female-to-male transsexuals.

have to provide evidence to support his opinions. Demonstrating a similar experience, Crispin, who had many years of experience working in construction as a woman, relates the following story:

I used to jump into [situations as a woman]. Like at Home Depot, I would hear . . . [men] be so confused, and I would just step over there and say, “Sir, I work in construction and if you don’t mind me helping you.” And they would be like, “Yeah, yeah, yeah” [i.e., dismissive]. But now I go [as a man] and I’ve got men and women asking me things and saying, “Thank you so much,” like now I have a brain in my head! And I like that a lot because it was just kind of like, “Yeah, whatever.” It’s really nice.

His experience at Home Depot shows that as a man, he is rewarded for displaying the same knowledge about construction—knowledge gendered as masculine—that he was sanctioned for offering when he was perceived as a woman. As a further example of this increased authority outside of the workplace, several FTMs report a difference in their treatment at the auto shop, as they are not assumed to be easy targets for unnecessary services (though this comes with an added expectation that they will know a great deal about cars). While some transmen report that their “feminine knowledge,” such as how to size baby clothes in stores, is discounted when they gain social identities as men, this new recognition of “masculine knowledge” seems to command more social authority than prior feminine knowledge in many cases. These stories show that some transmen gain authority both in and out of the workplace. These findings lend credence to the argument that men can gain a gender advantage, in the form of authority, reward, and respect.

BARRIERS TO WORKPLACE GENDER ADVANTAGES

Having examined the accounts of transmen who feel that they received increased authority, reward, and recognition from becoming men at work, I will now discuss some of the limitations to accessing workplace gender advantages. About one-third of my sample felt that they did not receive any gender advantage from transition. FTMs who had only recently begun transition or who had transitioned without using hormones (“no ho”) all reported seeing little change in their workplace treatment. This group of respondents felt that they were still seen as women by most of their coworkers, evidenced by continual slippage into feminine pronouns, and thus were not treated in accordance with other men in the workplace. Other transmen in

this group felt they lacked authority because they were young or looked extremely young after transition. This youthful appearance often is an effect of the beginning stages of transition. FTMs usually begin to pass as men before they start taking testosterone. Successful passing is done via appearance cues, such as hair-styles, clothes, and mannerisms. However, without facial hair or visible stubble, FTMs often are taken to be young boys, a mistake that intensifies with the onset of hormone therapy and the development of peach fuzz that marks the beginning of facial hair growth. Reflecting on how this youthful appearance, which can last several years depending on the effects of hormone therapy, affected his work experience immediately after transition, Thomas reports, “I went from looking 30 to looking 13. People thought I was a new lawyer so I would get treated like I didn’t know what was going on.” Other FTMs recount being asked if they were interns, or if they were visiting a parent at their workplace, all comments that underscore a lack of authority. This lack of authority associated with looking youthful, however, is a time-bounded effect, as most FTMs on hormones eventually “age into” their male appearance, suggesting that many of these transmen may have the ability to access some gender advantages at some point in their careers.

Body structure was another characteristic some FTMs felt limited their access to increased authority and prestige at work. While testosterone creates an appearance indistinguishable from bio men for many transmen, it does not increase height. Being more than 6 feet tall is part of the cultural construction for successful, hegemonic masculinity. However, several men I interviewed were between 5’ 1” and 5’ 5”, something they felt put them at a disadvantage in relation to other men in their workplaces. Winston, who managed a professional work staff who knew him only as a man, felt that his authority was harder to establish at work because he was short. Being smaller than all of his male employees meant that he was always being looked down on, even when giving orders. Kelly, who worked in special education, felt his height affected the jobs he was assigned: “Some of the boys, especially if they are really aggressive, they do much better with males that are bigger than they are. So I work with the little kids because I am short. I don’t get as good of results if I work with [older kids]; a lot of times they are taller than I am.” Being a short man, he felt it was harder to establish authority with older boys. These experiences demonstrate the importance of bringing the body back into discussions of masculinity and gender advantage, as being short can constrain men’s benefits from the “patriarchal dividend” (Connell 1995).

In addition to height, race/ethnicity can negatively affect FTMs' workplace experiences posttransition. My data suggest that the experiences of FTMs of color is markedly different than that of their white counterparts, as they are becoming not just men but Black men, Latino men, or Asian men, categories that carry their own stereotypes. Christopher felt that he was denied any gender advantage at work not only because he was shorter than all of his men colleagues but also because he was viewed as passive, a stereotype of Asian men (Espiritu 1997). "To the wide world of America, I look like a passive Asian guy. That is what they think when they see me. Oh Asian? Oh passive. . . . People have this impression that Asian guys aren't macho and therefore they aren't really male. Or they are not as male as [a white guy]." Keith articulated how his social interactions changed with his change in gender attribution in this way: "I went from being an obnoxious Black woman to a scary Black man." He felt that he has to be careful expressing anger and frustration at work (and outside of work) because now that he is a Black man, his anger is viewed as more threatening by whites. Reflecting stereotypes that conflate African Americans with criminals, he also notes that in his law enforcement classes, he was continually asked to play the suspect in training exercises. Aaron, one of the only racial minorities at his workplace, also felt that looking like a Black man negatively affected his workplace interactions. He told stories about supervisors repeatedly telling him he was threatening. When he expressed frustration during a staff meeting about a new policy, he was written up for rolling his eyes in an "aggressive" manner. The choice of words such as "threatening" and "aggressive," words often used to describe Black men (Ferguson 2000), suggests that racial identity and stereotypes about Black men were playing a role in his workplace treatment. Examining how race/ethnicity and appearance intersect with gender, then, illustrates that masculinity is not a fixed construct that automatically generated privilege (Connell 1995), but that white, tall men often see greater returns from the patriarchal dividend than short men, young men and men of color.

CONCLUSION

Sociological studies have documented that the workplace is not a gender-neutral site that equitably rewards workers based on their individual merits (Acker 1990; Martin 2003; Valian 1999; Williams 1995); rather "it is a central site for the creation and reproduction of gender differences and gender inequality" (Williams

1995, 15). Men receive greater workplace advantages than women because of cultural beliefs that associate masculinity with authority, prestige, and instrumentality (Martin 2003; Padavic and Reskin 2002; Rhode 1997; Williams 1995)—characteristics often used to describe ideal "leaders" and "managers" (Valian 1999). Stereotypes about femininity as expressive and emotional, on the other hand, disadvantage women, as they are assumed to be less capable and less likely to succeed than men with equal (or often lesser) qualifications (Valian 1999). These cultural beliefs about gender difference are embedded in workplace structures and interactions, as workers and employers bring gender stereotypes with them to the workplace and, in turn, use these stereotypes to make decisions about hiring, promotions, and rewards (Acker 1990; Martin 2003; Williams 1995). This cultural reproduction of gendered workplace disparities is difficult to disrupt, however, as it operates on the level of ideology and thus is rendered invisible (Martin 2003; Valian 1999; Williams 1995).

In this article, I have suggested that the "outsider-within" (Collins 1986) perspective of many FTMs can offer a more complex understanding of these invisible interactional processes that help maintain gendered workplace disparities. Transmen are in the unique position of having been socially gendered as both women and men (Dozier 2005). Their workplace experiences, then, can make the underpinnings of gender discrimination visible, as well as illuminate the sources of men's workplace advantages. When FTMs undergo a change in gender attribution, their workplace treatment often varies greatly—even when they continue to interact with coworkers who knew them previously as women. Some posttransition FTMs, both stealth and open, find that their coworkers, employers, and customers attribute more authority, respect, and prestige to them. Their experiences make glaringly visible the process through which gender inequality is actively created in informal workplace interactions. These informal workplace interactions, in turn, produce and reproduce structural disadvantages for women, such as the glass ceiling (Valian 1999), and structural advantages for men, such as the glass escalator (Williams 1995).

However, as I have suggested, not all of my respondents gain authority and prestige with transition. FTMs who are white and tall received far more benefits posttransition than short FTMs or FTMs of color. This demonstrates that while hegemonic masculinity is defined against femininity, it is also measured against subordinated forms of masculinity (Connell 1995; Messner 1997). These findings demonstrate the need for using an

intersectional approach that takes into consideration the ways in which there are crosscutting relations of power (Calasanti and Slevin 2001; Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1989), as advantage in the workplace is not equally accessible for all men. Further research on FTMs of color can help develop a clearer understanding of the role race plays in the distribution of gendered workplace rewards and advantages.⁸

The experiences of this small group of transmen offer a challenge to rationalizations of workplace inequality. The study provides counterevidence for human capital theories: FTMs who find themselves receiving the benefits associated with being men at work have the same skills and abilities they had as women workers. These skills and abilities, however, are suddenly viewed more positively due to this change in gender attribution. FTMs who may have been labeled “bossy” as women become “go-getting” men who seem more qualified for managerial positions. While FTMs may not benefit at equal levels to bio men, many of them do find themselves receiving an advantage to women in the workplace they did not have prior to transition. This study also challenges gender socialization theories that account for inequality in the workplace. Although all of my respondents were subjected to gender socialization as girls, this background did not impede their success as men. Instead, by undergoing a change in gender attribution, transmen can find that the same behavior, attitudes, or abilities they had as females bring them more reward as men. This shift in treatment suggests that gender inequality in the workplace is not continually reproduced only because women make different education and workplace choices than men but rather because coworkers and employers often rely on gender stereotypes to evaluate men and women’s achievements and skills.

It could be argued that because FTMs must overcome so many barriers and obstacles to finally gain a male social identity, they might be likely to overreport positive experiences as a way to shore up their right to be a man. However, I have reasons to doubt that my respondents exaggerated the benefits of being men. Transmen who did find themselves receiving a workplace advantage posttransition were aware that this new conceptualization of their skills and abilities was an arbitrary result of a shift in their gender attribution. This knowledge often undermined their sense of themselves as good workers, making them continually second guess the motivations behind any rewards they receive. In addition, many transmen I interviewed expressed anger and resentment that their increases in authority, respect, and recognition came at the expense of women colleagues. It is important to keep in mind,

then, that while many FTMs can identify privileges associated with being men, they often retain a critical eye to how changes in their treatment as men can disadvantage women.

This critical eye, or “outsider-within” (Collins 1986) perspective, has implications for social change in the workplace. For gender equity at work to be achieved, men must take an active role in challenging the subordination of women (Acker 1990; Martin 2003; Rhode 1997; Valian 1999; Williams 1995). However, bio men often cannot see how women are disadvantaged due to their structural privilege (Rhode 1997; Valian 1999). Even when they are aware that men as a group benefit from assumptions about masculinity, men typically still “credit their successes to their competence” (Valian 1999, 284) rather than to gender stereotypes. For many transmen, seeing how they stand to benefit at work to the detriment of women workers creates a sense of increased responsibility to challenge the gender discrimination they can see so clearly. This challenge can take many different forms. For some, it is speaking out when men make derogatory comments about women. For others, it means speaking out about gender discrimination at work or challenging supervisors to promote women who are equally qualified as men. These challenges demonstrate that some transmen are able, at times, to translate their position as social insiders into an educational role, thus working to give women more reward and recognition at these specific work sites. The success of these strategies illustrates that men have the power to challenge workplace gender discrimination and suggests that bio men can learn gender equity strategies from the outsider-within at work.

NOTES

1. Throughout this article, I endeavor to use the terms “women” and “men” rather than “male” and “female” to avoid reifying biological categories. It is important to note, though, that while my respondents were all born with female bodies, many of them never identified as women but rather thought of themselves as always men, or as “not women.” During their time as female workers, however, they did have social identities as women, as coworkers and employers often were unaware of their personal gender identities. It is this social identity that I am referencing when I refer to them as “working as women,” as I am discussing their social interactions in the workplace. In referring to their specific work experiences, however, I use “female” to demonstrate their understanding of their work history. I also do continue to use “female to male” when describing the physical transition process, as this is the most common term employed in the transgender community.

2. I use “stealth,” a transgender community term, if the respondent’s previous life as female was not known at work. It is important to note that this term is not analogous with “being in the closet,” because stealth female-to-male transsexuals (FTMs) do not have “secret” lives as women outside of working as men. It is used to describe two different workplace choices, not offer a value judgment about these choices.

3. “Bio” man is term used by my respondents to mean individuals who are biologically male and live socially as men throughout their lives. It is juxtaposed with “transman” or “FTM.”

4. A note on pronoun usage: This article draws from my respondents’ experiences working as both women and men. While they now live as men, I use feminine pronouns to refer to their female work histories.

5. This change in how behavior is evaluated can also be negative. Some transmen felt that assertive communication styles they actively fostered to empower themselves as lesbians and feminists had to be unlearned after transition. Because they were suddenly given more space to speak as men, they felt they had to censor themselves or they would be seen as “bossy white men” who talked over women and over women and people of color. These findings are similar to those reported by Dozier (2005).

6. It is important to note that not all FTMs who worked blue-collar jobs as women had this type of experience. One respondent felt that he was able to fit in, as a butch, as “just one of the guys.” However, he also did not feel he had an outsider-within perspective because of this experience.

7. Open transitions are not without problems, however. Crispin, a construction worker, found his contract mysteriously not renewed after his announcement. However, he acknowledged that he had many problems with his employers prior to his announcement and had also recently filed a discrimination suit. Aaron, who announced his transition at a small, medical site, left after a few months as he felt that his employer was trying to force him out. He found another job in which he was out as a transman. Crispin unsuccessfully attempted to find work in construction as an out transman. He was later hired, stealth, at a construction job.

8. Sexual identify also is an important aspect of an intersectional analysis. In my study, however, queer and gay transmen worked either in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender work sites, or were not out at work. Therefore, it was not possible to examine how being gay or queer affected their work-place experiences.

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Introduction to Reading 37

In her presidential address to the Pacific Sociological Association, Amy S. Wharton provides an overview of changes in the institutions of work, family, and gender. She frames this address within the 50 years since the passage of the Civil Rights Act. In this piece, she describes the changes that have been made and the patterns that remain problematic. Using her own research on academic institutions, Wharton helps to explain why the social institutions of work, family, and gender are so resistant to change.

1. What was the intent of the Civil Rights Act? In what ways did it succeed? In what ways did it fail?
2. What does she mean by the “stalled revolution”?
3. What is meant by “egalitarian essentialism,” and will it usher in further change in equity in institutions?

(UN)CHANGING INSTITUTIONS

WORK, FAMILY, AND GENDER IN THE NEW ECONOMY

Amy S. Wharton

As sociologists, we are all students of change. In fact, at the most abstract level, change is central to sociological thinking and practice. The study of social life at all levels involves close attention to the reciprocal and interdependent relations between social reproduction and transformation, or between continuity and disruption. Both forces are simultaneously present in the social world—whether at the societal level, the organizational level, in social interaction, or within individuals. In the larger society, change and the forces that produce it receive much more attention than continuity or stability, and this is perhaps not that surprising. However, our agenda in sociology is to capture both the ongoing reproduction

of social life and its moments of disturbance or disorder. An interest in exploring those relations as they are expressed in the interconnected realms of work, gender, and family motivates this address.

The timing is right for this discussion. The year 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the War on Poverty, which was launched by President Lyndon Johnson in his 1964 State of the Union Address. One of the most significant pieces of legislation passed that year was the Civil Rights Act. For those like myself who study workplace inequality, this law's most critical element is the fact that it outlawed discrimination by race, color, religion, national origin, and sex in employment. . . .

Wharton, A. S. (2015). (Un)Changing institutions: Work, family, and gender in the new economy. *Sociological Perspectives*, 58(1): 7–19. Reprinted by permission of SAGE Publications Inc.

In his book *Inventing Equal Opportunity*, Frank Dobbin (2009:22) notes that the Civil Rights Act was a “broad brush” attempt to forbid discrimination and promote equal opportunity, but it left open exactly what this meant and how it was to be done. Dobbin’s argument is germane to this address in a number of important respects. First, the story of civil rights legislation is relevant for underscoring the important role of organizations, particularly work organizations, as a critically important arena where large-scale societal changes are played out. Second, the history of civil rights as told by Dobbin also underscores the messiness of organizational change and the factors that thwart or make it possible for change to occur. Among these factors is the process whereby legislation or other initiatives move from the realm of language to the realm of implementation and practice.

Finally, this history calls attention to the multifaceted and changing societal definitions of gender equality. The civil rights era made equal opportunity central to the meaning of this concept (Burstein, Bricher, and Einwohner 1995), and this emphasis remained predominant over decades of change in women’s and men’s lives. For example, almost 30 years after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, President George H. W. Bush signed the Civil Rights Act of 1991 to strengthen laws prohibiting sex discrimination in the workplace, but he vetoed family and medical leave bills (Burstein and Wierzbicki 2000). Today, equal opportunity is viewed as a necessary but not sufficient condition for gender equality, while work-family issues and new narratives about equality and choice have become more central.

To examine these ideas, I begin at the societal level, reviewing progress toward and away from gender equality. Next, I turn to the topic of organizational change. Societal changes are played out in the workplace, but organizations have their own change dynamics. These dynamics are important in understanding why and how organizational change fails. Finally, I use an example drawn from my own research on the academic workplace to examine leaders’ gender narratives during a time of organizational change.

SOCIETAL CHANGES IN GENDER, WORK, AND FAMILY

The last half-century or more has been a time of fundamental change in gender, work, and family (Goldin 2006). In North America, Western Europe, and indeed throughout the globe, women’s participation in the

paid labor force rose steadily during the latter half of the twentieth century (Heymann and Earle 2009). In the United States, the increase in women’s labor force participation occurred across all educational levels and among almost all racial and ethnic groups. During this time, women made inroads into jobs traditionally dominated by men and they made progress closing the gender earning gap. This pattern was fueled (and reinforced) by women’s increasing levels of educational attainment—from primary school to college and to professional and graduate programs (Buchmann and DiPrete 2006). With respect to caregiving and household work, trends suggest a similar pattern of relatively continuous change over the past several decades and across a wide geographic area. Women spend fewer hours working at home, while more men spend more (Geist and Cohen 2011).

Gender attitudes have changed as well. Survey data show relatively consistent movement toward more liberal gender attitudes in the United States between the mid-1970s and 1990s (Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2011). Majorities of both women and men came to agree that a mother’s employment was not damaging to her children, that women’s role was not simply to care for the home, and that men did not necessarily make better politicians. North America, Europe, and other developed economies show similar patterns. In fact, attachment to women’s and men’s “traditional roles” has weakened among both women and men across the globe (Pew Research Global Attitudes Project 2010).

That progress toward gender equality in one area is connected to progress in another is not surprising. Thus, rather than a series of distinct changes, many note a pattern of convergence toward greater gender equality. One form of convergence is cross-national. For example, Claudia Geist and Philip N. Cohen (2011) found that in the last few decades, the amount of housework shouldered by women declined faster in more traditional countries than in those that were less traditional. This created a cross-national convergence of sorts as countries moved at different rates as they converged toward the same outcome: greater equality in the domestic division of labor. Economist Claudia Goldin (2014) conceives of convergence in a slightly different way, referring to “the converging roles of men and women,” which she views as among the most important advances in society and the economy in the last century. As evidence for this, she points to the shrinking gap between women and men in labor force participation, hours of paid and unpaid work, labor force experience, occupational attainment, and education.

Uneven Gender Change and the Stalled Revolution

The evidence for twentieth century change (and convergence) in gender, work, and family is thus powerful and compelling. Increasingly, too, is the evidence that progress toward gender equality has gone through a period of deceleration or “stalling,” as David A. Cotter, Joan M. Hermsen, and Reeve Vanneman (2004) referred to it in their report for the Russell Sage Foundation (see also England 2010). However, while there is some evidence of a global slowdown in progress toward gender equality, the United States is distinctive in certain respects (Lee 2014).

Cotter et al. (2004) show that the slowdown in the United States occurred across a number of domains. For example, U.S. women’s rates of labor force participation leveled off in the late 1990s and have declined from their peak in 1999. This leveling off appears to have occurred across all categories of education, presence of children, and marital status (Lee 2014). With respect to the gender wage gap, the pattern is roughly similar. The wage gap narrowed steadily through the 1970s and 1980s, but progress slowed in the 1990s and early 2000s (Blau and Kahn 2007). During the 10-year period between 2004 and 2013, the gender wage gap barely changed, declining by only 1.7 percent (Institute for Women’s Policy Research 2014).

Sociological research has revealed other, more nuanced looks at the stalled progress toward gender equality. In their study of occupational sex and race segregation from the 1960s to the present, Kevin Stainback and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey (2012) find that desegregation slowed considerably after political pressure by the civil rights and (later) the women’s movement eased. Similarly, U.S. women’s entrance into management positions increased steadily in the second half of the twentieth century, only to slow in the 1990s (P. N. Cohen, Huffman, and Knauer 2009). Although most women do not hold management positions—especially higher level positions—this slowdown has broader relevance. Several studies have shown that the demographic mix of managers shapes many aspects of the work environment, including the behaviors of managers themselves. The percentage of women in management jobs in an organization is positively related to the percentage of women in non-management jobs, and it affects the percentage of new jobs in an organization that are filled by women relative to men (L. E. Cohen and Broschak 2013).

Women in almost all industrialized countries earn a higher proportion of college degrees than men (Buchmann and DiPrete 2006; Charles and Bradley 2009).

In the United States, the proportion of degrees received by women surpassed men in the early 1980s, and the gender gap has been growing steadily ever since, as men’s college graduation rates decline. Despite their advantage in college graduation rates, other aspects of education show a more complicated picture with respect to movement toward gender parity or equality. In particular, the increase in women’s share of college degrees in industrialized countries has been accompanied by a robust pattern of gender segregation by field of study (Charles and Bradley 2009). Paula England (2010) found a similar type of pattern when she looked at trends in doctoral degree attainment. Women’s share of doctoral degrees went up fairly steadily over the last several decades (since the 1970s), but there has not been much change in the relative femaleness of different fields. Fields of study that were more female relative to others in the 1970s remain more female than others; fields of study that were less female than others 40 years ago remain less female than others today (England 2010).

Compared with data on employment and education, the evidence with respect to gender attitudes is more equivocal, especially with respect to recent trends. Cotter et al. (2011) show that support for more egalitarian views leveled off somewhat in the mid-1990s, and this leveling occurred among both women and men, of all ethnicities (except Asians) and across all levels of income and education. They found a small “rebound” in more egalitarian attitudes since 2000, but note “a growing but decelerating social liberalism among recent generations” (Cotter et al. 2011:282). However, in more recent analyses, these authors suggest that this rebound has been more robust, as indicated by steady increases since 2006 in popular support for gender equality and women’s labor force participation (Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2014).

The Rise of Egalitarian Essentialism

Although many forces have contributed to the “stalled revolution,” the role of cultural factors has received particular attention. Central to these arguments is the claim that a new frame or narrative about gender has gained prominence in politics and popular culture. Sociologists refer to this cultural frame as “egalitarian essentialism” (Cotter et al. 2011:261; see also Charles and Grusky 2004). This frame is distinct from traditional notions of “separate spheres,” a dominant perspective in the first half of the twentieth century. It is also distinct from feminist egalitarianism, a frame that emerged from and helped to fuel the feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Egalitarian essentialism

is a hybrid, containing an endorsement of the principle of gender equality, while defining equality as the right of individual women to choose what is best for them.

This emphasis on choice aligns with other efforts to describe new “post-feminist” standpoints. The most prominent is “choice feminism,” a position described as being “concerned with increasing the number of choices open to women and with decreasing judgments about the choices individual women make” (Kirkpatrick 2010:241). When combined with a belief in essential gender differences, an emphasis on the value of individual choice tends to reinforce the status quo. Maria Charles and Karen Bradley (2009) show how this cultural frame has helped to perpetuate gender segregation in higher education, especially in industrial societies where beliefs in individual self-expression and choice are deeply entrenched. In addition to reinforcing the status quo, these narratives have been critiqued for their political implications. Choice feminism, in particular, has been described as an attempt to represent feminism as non-threatening and “seem appealing to the broadest constituency possible” (Ferguson 2010:248).

In sum, recent history reminds us that that social reproduction and social transformation are inextricably linked. The steady and mostly broad-based progress toward gender equality that marked the last half of the twentieth century has been disrupted or slowed. However, change and stability are relative concepts, and there is room for debate about whether and to what degree gender inequality has increased in recent years. Whether egalitarian essentialism, choice feminism, or similar cultural logics have contributed to this pattern is also in need of further study. Nevertheless, these gender narratives remain alive and well in popular debates about professional women “opting out” of the workforce and have become deeply embedded in work-family debates more generally (Kirkpatrick 2010; Stephens and Levine 2011).

Societal forces, including cultural logics and ideologies, also penetrate organizations, where they are expressed in the perspectives and practices of workers and employers. Organizations have their own change dynamics, however, which shape how cultural narratives are deployed.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND CHANGING ORGANIZATIONS

Organizational change receives a tremendous amount of attention from researchers. Perhaps one reason for this is that so much of what we understand to be true

about organizations emphasizes their immobility or immovability. Rules, routines, and hierarchy are defining features of bureaucratic organizations and help to explain the tremendous inertia (and dysfunction) that is often associated with them (Perrow 1986). Organizations also act to prevent or deflect change. For example, loose coupling is a means by which organizations can create a firewall between outside demands and their normal operations and ways of doing business. Organizations portray themselves to outside constituencies in ways that signal movement, while leaving existing practices and routines untouched (Meyer and Rowan 1977).

The case of work-family policies provides a good example of this process. Many organizations have adopted formal work-family policies around flexibility, parental leaves, and so forth, but implementation often lags (Williams, Blair-Loy, and Berdahl 2013). The policies themselves face resistance or indifference among key organizational gatekeepers, such as managers or supervisors. Meanwhile, workers who may want to use these policies avoid doing so, as they recognize that their employer’s commitment is more symbolic than real (Blair-Loy and Wharton 2002; Jacobs and Gerson 2004). The gendered culture of work and its ideal worker norms persist despite even well-intentioned efforts to make work accommodating to parents.

Organizations can face pressures to change from the outside, yet the external environment is more often a source of organizational continuity rather than disruption. Imitation is a major principle of human and organizational action (March 1996). Whether seeking solutions to immediate problems, or attempting to chart aspirations for the future, organizations (as well individuals) look not only to their own past performance but also to the past performance of relevant others (March 1996). Imitation contributes to the diffusion of ideas, knowledge, policies, or practice. It not only helps to increase predictability and continuity but also constrains large-scale change and transformation. Thus, when considering some of the basic principles that drive organizations, continuity often wins.

The continuity-change tradeoff is not always resolved in favor of continuity, however. Organizations do change and sometimes change in the direction of greater gender equality. When we look sociologically at these cases, however, the prime movers are often “behind our backs”—unexpected, unanticipated, and difficult to explain. In their study of work on offshore oil rigs, Robin J. Ely and Debra E. Meyerson (2010) identified an unforeseen effect of organizational efforts

to enhance safety and performance. Expressions of hegemonic masculinity most often associated with dangerous, predominately male, jobs were significantly reduced. New workplace practices around safety ushered in new kinds of masculine identities and behaviors. In this way, the organization inadvertently “disrupt[ed] the gender status quo through practices that encourage[d] men to let go of conventional masculine scripts” (Ely and Meyerson 2010:28).

In contrast to unplanned or inadvertent transformation, organizations sometimes intentionally seek change. Yet, these experiences sometimes end up validating the most change averse among us. This is because a planned organizational change often goes badly awry (Hannan, Polos, and Carroll 2003). Organizational actors may miscalculate the risks and rewards of change; leaders underestimate how long a change will take and its costs, both monetary and in human terms. Furthermore, as sociologists, we are only too familiar with the unintended consequences of changes, whether planned or unplanned, and sometimes the failure of what seem like self-evident fixes.

Cautionary tales abound. Research by Alexandra Kalev, Frank Dobbin, and Erin Kelly (2006), for example, shows that one of the most ubiquitous approaches to increasing diversity in the workplace—diversity training—has been among the least effective in increasing the racial and gender diversity of managers in U.S. firms. Emilio J. Castilla and Stephen Benard’s (2010) study of merit-based reward systems finds that these practices, which are enthusiastically embraced as a means to insure that pay is based on performance—not gender, race, or other considerations—may not be doing what many hoped. Instead, Castilla and Benard have uncovered what they call “the paradox of meritocracy.” Organizations that emphasize meritocracy can (under some conditions) unintentionally create conditions that lead to more bias, not less, in the evaluative process.

Another example of well-intentioned organizational change that produces unintended negative consequences derives from the work-family literature. In their 20-nation, cross-national study of the effects of family-friendly policies on women’s wages, Hadas Mandel and Moshe Semyonov (2005) found that these policies were associated with a larger gender earning gap, not a more egalitarian earning distribution. The reasons for this are complex, but these researchers suggest that it can be partly attributed to the fact that mothers more so than fathers are likely to take advantage of policies that facilitate work-family integration. This leaves mothers (and women in general) subject to

discrimination by employers who penalize them for their work interruptions (such as long maternity leave).

This is not an argument against change efforts or work-family policies but rather another reminder that organizational changes—in the form of practices aimed at reducing inequality and discrimination or to increase work-family flexibility—are much more complicated than they seem. The mechanisms that facilitate change, like those that undermine it, operate at more than one level and sometimes work at cross purposes. For example, formalization is encouraged as a way to reduce bias and discrimination (such as the case of pay for performance or other mechanisms), yet while this may help mitigate the effects of cognitive bias, formalization can introduce biases of its own. Well-intentioned and planned organizational change can be resisted, deflected, or transformed in ways that undermine rather than facilitate desired outcomes.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE ACADEMIC WORKPLACE

The academic workplace is a useful site for examining the dueling forces of continuity and change and understanding the role that gender narratives play in these dynamics. While bureaucratic organizations of all types may resist change, academic institutions are perceived as especially resistant (Lane 2007; Lucas 2000). Yet, as we have seen, higher education has not been immune from the broader set of forces reshaping gender, work, and family over the last several decades. One particular way these forces have affected the academic workplace is through federally funded initiatives designed to increase the gender diversity of the faculty. Much of this interest derives from concerns about the future of STEM disciplines (i.e., science, technology, engineering, and math) in the academy and the barriers faced by women and underrepresented minorities in these fields (Committee on Women in Science and Engineering 2006).

In 2001, the National Science Foundation created its ADVANCE Program to address these issues. The goals of ADVANCE are to increase the representation of women in academic science and engineering careers, develop ways to promote gender equity in STEM, and increase the diversity of the STEM workforce. This program has not been modest about its investments or intentions. Since 2001, ADVANCE has spent over 130 million dollars to support ADVANCE

projects at over 100 colleges and universities and some non-profit (National Science Foundation 2014). The most visible and well-funded ADVANCE award is its Institutional Transformation award. Averaging about 3.5 million dollars, these institutional grants are intended to transform universities in ways that make academe and STEM in particular more accommodating to women and other underrepresented groups.

ADVANCE-funded institutions have pursued many strategies to accomplish this goal (Bilimoria and Liang 2012; Bystydzienski and Bird 2006; Laursen and Rocque 2009). In general, ADVANCE initiatives fall into three broad categories, including those focused on policy reform and creation, departmental or institutional climate, and training of faculty and administrators (Stewart, Malley, and LaVaque-Manty 2007). This investment in institutional change has been fueled by and helped foster an outpouring of sociological research on gender, work, and family in the academe, both within and outside of STEM. This research has included studies of work-family issues in the academy (e.g., Fox, Fonseca, and Bao 2011; King 2008; Mason and Goulden 2004; Misra, Lundquist, and Templer 2012), as well as research on gender inequality in academic life (e.g., Bird 2011; Ecklund, Lincoln, and Tansey 2012; Jacobs and Winslow 2004; Misra et al. 2011; Roos and Gatta 2009; Winslow 2010). Climate, especially departmental climate, has also received significant attention in ADVANCE institutions, and climate studies have become useful diagnostic tools for universities trying to understand the experiences of women and other underrepresented groups (Callister 2006; Maranto and Griffin 2011; Settles et al. 2006).

Leadership and Organizational Change

These studies have helped to explain women's underrepresentation in STEM fields and the barriers that remain to be overcome. Less attention, however, has been paid to the organizational change process itself and particularly the forces that derail or deflect change efforts. My own research examines this issue with a focus on departmental leaders.

Leaders are vitally important to the change process. Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev (2007:280) argue that "In the corporate world, as in academia, programs that establish clear leadership and responsibility for change have produced the greatest gains in diversity." Similarly, Sara I. McClelland and Kathryn J. Holland (2014:3) suggest that leaders' sense of accountability and personal responsibility for diversity initiatives are critical to the success of these efforts. Michael Schwalbe et al. (2000:435) highlight leaders' role in

"regulating discourse" through formal or informal mechanisms. By filtering and framing information, leaders shape perceptions of their subordinates (Dragoni 2005). Leaders' beliefs about gender may be especially powerful, given the role of these beliefs in reproducing gender inequality (Ridgeway 2011).

Leadership in academe is multi-layered, but for faculty, the departmental leader is most critical. That institutional transformation in academe requires attention to departmental processes is widely acknowledged, making departmental practices, policies, routines, relationships, and dynamics important topics. Chairs influence all these aspects of departmental life (Bilimoria et al. 2006). In this way, they also shape faculty's satisfaction with their careers, colleagues, and work environment (Bensimon, Ward, and Sanders 2000). Chairs seem to have a particularly important influence on women's work lives in the academy (Settles et al. 2006). Recognition of their role has made departmental leaders a key audience for various types of training opportunities, and climate surveys typically ask faculty about their perceptions of their chair and other leaders. Ironically, however, while we know much about faculty perceptions, chairs' own beliefs are less well understood.

In 2010, I was part of a four-person research team at an ADVANCE institution that set out to investigate departmental leaders' perspectives on their own roles and responsibilities with respect to diversity and organizational change. During the course of this project, graduate student Mychel Estevez and I became attuned to the ways that chairs framed issues of gender and gender inequality, especially as these topics were invoked in the context of the university's broader efforts at improving gender equity and increasing women's representation in STEM fields (see Wharton and Estevez 2014, for a full discussion of this research). Some data from this project, in addition to more recently published research by other scholars, have revealed how leaders' narratives about gender, work, and family can slow or undermine change efforts. Leaders may deflect responsibility for change by emphasizing the choices of others, particularly female faculty, and many fail to act out of a belief that gender change is inevitable and progressive.

* * *

Choice and Change

Choice is personally empowering, connoting independence, freedom, and autonomy. It has many positive consequences for those who have choices or believe themselves to have them (Savani, Stephens,

and Markus 2011; Stephens and Levine 2011). This is especially true in American society and, as we have seen, in academe, where the ability to control the conditions of one's work is highly valued. Although having the ability to choose is personally beneficial, it is socially disadvantageous. Experimental research shows that exposure to a choice perspective weakens support for policies designed to advance collectivities or society as a whole (Savani et al. 2011). As Nicole M. Stephens and Cynthia S. Levine (2011:1235) note, Americans' strong embrace of a choice framework helps explain why they "readily dismiss gender barriers as a vestige of the past in the face of evidence to the contrary." Choice fortifies notions of personal responsibility and thereby assigns blame to others for their disadvantages while minimizing the role of external forces or constraints.

Marieke van den Brink and Yvonne Benschop (2012:89) argue that change in the academy is slow because practices and beliefs that perpetuate inequality "may hinder, alter, or transform equality measures." This summarizes the story told here, as good faith and intentional efforts to make change are deflected, rearticulated, and transformed. Leaders perceive work-family issues through the lens of choice, treating these matters as the responsibility of the individual (women) faculty members, and not the institution. This belief in choice also shapes chairs' perceptions of gender inequality more generally. They do not necessarily believe that gender inequality has been eliminated, yet are reluctant to view problems as structural or systemic. The need for change is depoliticized and viewed as inevitable, incremental, and "naturally" occurring over time through generational replacement. Most important, by assigning responsibility for change to others, chairs' willingness, capacity, and resolve to act are substantially weakened.

CONCLUSION

The passage of the Civil Rights Act and the pursuit of equal opportunity it endorsed were about improving the chances for women and other underrepresented groups to compete in an essentially unchanged workplace. Paul Burstein and colleagues (Bricher 1997; Burstein et al. 1995; Burstein and Wierzbicki 2000) note that what they call the "work-family accommodation" frame was more far reaching politically. This frame contained an implicit critique of the organization of work and drew attention to its impact on women's and men's family responsibilities and commitments. This broader vision of gender equality

has yet to gain popular support or a foothold in the political arena. The resurgence of a choice framework—in the form of egalitarian essentialism or choice feminism—has likely played a role in depoliticizing the work-family agenda and undermining the case for change. It has also served as a reminder that narratives about gender are a central ingredient in the broader system of practices that reproduce inequality.

The strong forces of change in the gender system that occurred during the twentieth century were set into motion by numerous forces—including by conscious, political efforts to reduce gender inequality. These changes were not inevitable, nor can they be assumed to be permanent and ongoing. This makes it all the more important that we return our attention to the ways of change. These include the recognition that the forces of continuity and change are simultaneously present in society and the organizations that comprise it, that beliefs and practices that maintain continuity or the status quo restrain and circumvent those that promote equality practices and beliefs, and that many forces tip the balance in favor of continuity.

It is impossible to predict the twists and turns that are in our future. The past decade may look like a small blip 20 years out or may in fact represent a major turning point of some kind. Most of us here are not waiting to see how things turn out or believe (naively) that evolution or generational replacement will by itself pave a way toward greater gender equality. Instead, we seek change—to transform the workplace, to eliminate discrimination and reduce inequality, and to restart the stalled gender revolution. Fulfilling these goals requires us to look carefully at the ways in which inequality practices and beliefs may be undermining our efforts.

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TOPICS FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION

- Look up the most recent research on women and work done by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research

(<http://www.iwpr.org>) and the current activism under way at 9 to 5 National Association of Working Women (<https://9to5.org/>). Check out workplace policies related to the topics discussed in this chapter, for example, family-work leaves and practices related to workplace discrimination.

- Using the Web, find a list of the top executives in a sample of the largest firms in this country and calculate a gender ratio of women to men. (Hint: Fortune 500 is one such list.)
- Find information on workplace discrimination policies in your state or country. Search the Web to find workplace discrimination policies in another country to compare with those where you live.

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