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MGC2021: Lecture 4
Masculinities, femininities and
gendered organisations

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Lecture objectives

1. To contrast classical and critical perspectives on **organisational structure** using gender as an analytical lens

2. To highlight the persistence of **gender inequality** in workplace settings and present structural and **cultural explanations** linked to **hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities** and **femininities**

3. To outline **practical implications** for strategies to achieve workplace gender equality and more gender inclusive organisations



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Objective 1

To contrast classical and critical perspectives on **organisational structure** using gender as an analytical lens



What is the principal challenge of 'organising'?

According to Greenwald (2008), it is “to coordinate the actions of individual human beings” (p. 69)

Organisations promote coordination by assigning **roles** to its members

Roles are prescriptions – a set of duties and a range of acceptable behaviour

Organisational **structure** coordinates the roles

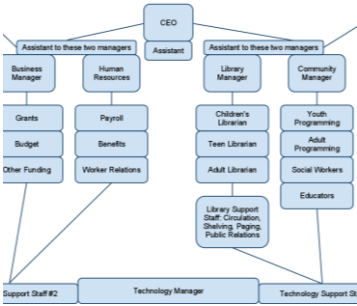
Organisational structure

Formal structure = the official, explicit division of responsibilities, definitions of how work is to be done, and specifically of relationships involving the members of an organisation (Tolbert & Hall, 2008: 20)

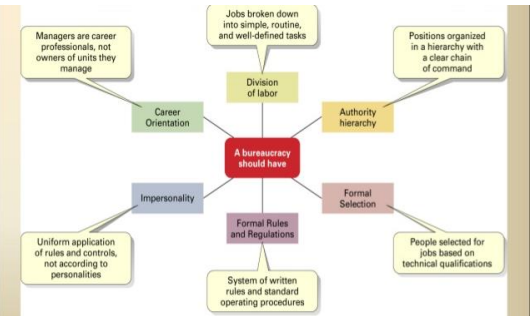
Informal structure = the unofficial divisions, definitions, and relations that emerge over time in an organisation (as above)

Structure: from visual portrayals to organisational behaviour ...

- Affects:
- Instruction
- Correction
- Information
- Resource allocation
- Structural duality



Classical perspective – Weberian bureaucracy



Organisational structure, jobs, and gender

Classical perspective:

- Organisations are meritocratic (jobs are assigned based on merit)

Sample Template
Job Description

Job Details

Title	Job Code
Department	FLSA Status
Reports to	Pay Grade
Classification	Created Date

Purpose of Position

Core Competencies

Title and Definition

Essential Functions and Responsibilities

“Opportunity ladders” – towards a gendered analysis

“Organisations differ in the **degree of opportunity** they offer their members to move into new, more desirable roles. **Opportunity ladders, the pathways by which people move into more desirable roles**, represent a form of accessibility limited to insiders. This form of accessibility reflects the ability of a member to enter roles other than the one he or she initially assumed. This dimension of structure strongly **affects the member’s personal fortunes**, and hence his or her **actions** and **thinking**.

Structural features of work organizations that allow people to move up are known as **job ladders**.” (Source: Greenwald, 2008: 116).

Organisational structure and gender (Acker, 1990)

- Organisations as 'sex' or 'gender' neutral
 - Organisational theory is gender-blind
 - Organisational structures are sex or gender-neutral
 - Gender stands outside it
- Or.....
- Organisational structures are gender structures

Classical

Critical

Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977): A critical perspective

Book: *Men and Women of the Corporation*

"Gender differences in organizational behavior are due to structure rather than to characteristics of women and men as individuals" (Kanter, 1977: 291-292)

"While organizations were being defined as sex-neutral machines, masculine principles were dominating their authority structures" (Ibid, p. 46)

Joan Acker (1990)



- Hierarchical organisations are an important location of male dominance
- The positing of gender-neutral and disembodied organisational structures and work relations is part of a larger strategy of control in industrial capitalist societies

Example: Job evaluations

Documents and contracts portray 'abstract' jobs

Abstract jobs (position description) and hierarchies (org chart) assume a disembodied and universal worker:

"The abstract bodiless worker, who [...] has no sexuality, emotionality, and does not procreate" (p. 151)

The (idealised) worker is actually a man: men's bodies, sexuality, relationship to procreation and paid work are subsumed in the image of the ideal worker

Organisation is a gendered process

"To say that an organization [...] is gendered means that **advantage and disadvantage**, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine. Gender is not an addition to ongoing processes, conceived as gender neutral. Rather it is an integral part of those processes [...]. **Gendering occurs in at least five interacting processes...**" (Acker, 1990: 146)

Acker's 5 interacting processes

1. The construction of divisions along lines of gender
2. The construction of symbols and images that explain express, reinforce or sometime oppose those divisions
3. The interactions between men and women, women and women, and men and men, including all those patterns that enact dominance and submission
4. (Examples of) gendered components of individual identity
5. The fundamental, ongoing processes of creating and conceptualising social structures

Objective 2

To highlight the persistence of **gender inequality** in workplace settings and present structural and **cultural explanations** linked to **hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities** and **femininities**

The structural outcomes of gender inequality

Many countries worldwide, including Australia, have made significant progress towards gender equality in recent decades, particularly in areas such as education. However, women continue to earn less than men, are less likely to advance their careers as far as men, and are more likely to spend their final years in poverty. At the same time, some men find it more difficult to access family-friendly policies or flexible working arrangements than women.

Source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency (www.wgea.gov.au)

Entrenched gender inequality in outcomes

1. Pay equity

- The gender pay gap stood at 18.2% (08/14)
- Amongst top managers in Australian organisations, men are paid on average \$100, 000 pa more than women (WGEA, 2015)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-07/energy-australia-closes-gender-pay-gap-overnight/9524770>

Entrenched gender inequality in outcomes

1. Pay equity

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2. Job segregation and labour markets: vertical and horizontal segregation

3. Women in leadership

- Women held only 12.3% of board positions in ASX200 companies in 2012

Diversity Council Australia, WGEA data

Michael Kimmel (2001)

1. Sex 'versus' gender

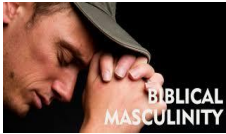
- Sex is biological
- Gender is social
 - Transmitted through gender-specific social roles and simplified gender stereotypes
- Think sex as 'male and female'; gender as 'masculinities and femininities'

Kimmel (2001) cont.

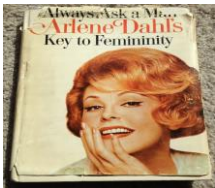
2. Gender - the plural

- "Gender must be seen as an ever-changing fluid assemblage of meanings and behaviors and *we must speak of masculinities and femininities*" (p. 9319; emphasis added)

Masculinities



Femininities



Kimmel (2001) cont.

3. Gender and power

- The gender binary
- Devaluation of the 'feminine'
- Connell's (1987) hegemonic /subordinated masculinities, and emphasised femininity

The gender binary

Traditional Gender Stereotypes.

<i><u>Feminine.</u></i>	<i><u>Masculine.</u></i>
<i>Not aggressive.</i>	<i>Aggressive.</i>
<i>Dependent.</i>	<i>Independent.</i>
<i>Easily influenced.</i>	<i>Not easily influenced.</i>
<i>Submissive.</i>	<i>Dominant.</i>
<i>Passive.</i>	<i>Active.</i>
<i>Home-oriented.</i>	<i>Worldly.</i>
<i>Easily hurt emotionally.</i>	<i>Not easily hurt emotionally.</i>
<i>Indecisive.</i>	<i>Decisive.</i>
<i>Talkative.</i>	<i>Not at all talkative.</i>
<i>Gentle.</i>	<i>Tough.</i>
<i>Sensitive to other's feelings.</i>	<i>Less sensitive to other's feelings.</i>
<i>Very desirous of security.</i>	<i>Not very desirous of security.</i>
<i>Cries a lot.</i>	<i>Rarely cries.</i>
<i>Emotional.</i>	<i>Logical.</i>
<i>Verbal.</i>	<i>Analytical.</i>
<i>Kind.</i>	<i>Cruel.</i>
<i>Tactful.</i>	<i>Blunt.</i>
<i>Nurturing.</i>	<i>Not nurturing.</i>

Kimmel (2001) cont.

4. Gender identity as relational

Non-dichotomous thinking on gender

5. Gender as an institution

Different institutional contexts (e.g., large business organisations) demand and produce different forms of masculinity and femininity

... And gender inequality

Gendered occupations, gendered cultures

A father and son are in a horrible car crash that kills the dad. The son is rushed to the hospital; just as he's about to go under the knife, the surgeon says, "I can't operate—that boy is my son!"

Explain.

Gendered occupations, gendered cultures

- Corporate finance
 - Roth (2007): women on Wall Street
- “Biological female who acts as a social man” (Acker, 1990)
- Ricket & Roman (2013): door supervision and working-class femininities in the UK

Gendered occupations, gendered cultures

- Medicine and nursing:
 - Doctor/science/male – nursing/caring/female
 - ‘Male nurses viewed as either ‘Casanovas or homosexuals’ (Halford & Leonard, 2006, p. 22), or ‘unmanly’ (Bloksgaard, 2011)
 - Specific recruitment practices for male nurses
- In female-dominated/feminised work contexts, men may ‘manage’ their difference in ways that partially subvert and partially maintain masculinities (Pullen & Simpson, 2009)
 - In such gendered occupations, men often benefit!

Men in women-dominated contexts: glass escalator

- Glass escalator effect: Men moving up quickly in women dominated jobs
- Does this work for Black men as well?
- “While white men nurses enjoy the automatic assumption that they are qualified, capable, and suited for “better” work, the experiences of Black professionals suggest that Black men nurses may not encounter these reactions.” (p. 11)
- Intersectionality!

(Wingfield, 2009)

Men, work and masculinities



Men, work and masculinities in organisations

- The 'crisis of masculinity'
- "As the 19th century progressed, many such cultural assumptions about male and female identity morphed into timeless truths."

The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/mar/17/the-crisis-in-modern-masculinity>

Men, work and masculinities in organisations

- **Working-class heroic** masculinities in a UK lorry manufacturer (Collinson, 1988)
- **Managerial** (multiple) masculinities (Collinson & Hearn, 1994)
 - Merchant banking in the city of London: Men manage 'rationally' and 'emotionally' (McDowell, 2001)
- Damaging/dysfunctional **corporate** masculinities (Maier, 1997; Ho, 2009)

Trans-identities at work: The experience of Claire, mid-50s trans woman

Muhr & Sullivan (2013) – gendered expectations and transgressive bodies in leadership

“Just call me trans”: Claire’s gendered body

“Which box can we put her in?”: The difficulty of placing Claire

“Is that John popping up?”: The gendered expectations to Claire’s leadership

Objective 3

To outline **practical implications** for strategies to achieve workplace gender equality and more gender inclusive organisations

Different rationales for achieving gender equality

- “Business case”: Diversity is good for organisational performance and therefore want to hire women (and people from other social backgrounds)
 - Evidence not entirely clear on this topic (Herring, 2009)
 - Tendency to essentialise differences (e.g. all women are nurturing), runs counter critical approaches
 - Focused on ‘counting bodies’, rather than culture and structure
- Social Justice perspective: about fairness
 - Critiques ideal worker images, social norms, and focus on performance (Van Dijk et al., 2012)
 - More space for complexity of effects (Zanoni et al., 2010)
 - Harder to sell to organisations

Towards Gender equality (Source: WGEA)

- Workplaces to provide equal remuneration for women and men for work of equal or comparable value
- The removal of barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce
- Full and genuine access to all occupations and industries, including to leadership roles for women and men
- Elimination of discrimination on the basis of gender, particularly in relation to family and caring responsibilities for both women and men

Examples of initiatives

- Organisational compliance with legislation:
 - Monitoring and reporting
 - Mandatory training in equal opportunities for employees
- Voluntary diversity management approaches that include gender diversity
 - Mentoring, networking, leadership development for women
 - Women and Leadership Australia (<http://www.wla.com.au/>)
 - Women on Boards (<https://www.womenonboards.net/en-AU/Home>)
 - Training for managers and (male) leaders in 'unconscious bias' (see the [Male Champions of Change initiative](#))
 - Pride in Diversity (<http://www.prideindiversity.com.au/>)

Transforming these gender stereotypes from early on

No More Boys And Girls: Can Our Kids Go Gender Free?

- Documentary on changing gender norms at schools in UK
- <http://ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/login?url=https://edutv.informit.com.au/share.php?token=0fe146ed3c20446a938ae5f136d66501>
- <http://ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/login?url=https://edutv.informit.com.au/share.php?token=5b099cbf876d06bae521bb407c884d3a>
- Entire video: <https://edutv-informit-com-au.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/watch-screen.php?videoID=2287937>

Outcomes of gender inequality change strategies (Martin, 2006: 78)

Strategy:	Outcomes:
Fix the woman	A few individuals succeed
Value the feminine	Virtually no change
Add women and stir	Slow, partial change with reversions
Make small, deep cultural changes, dual objectives	Instrumental goals take precedence, gender goals lost
Create new organisational structures	Few survive long term
Transform gendered society	Rare, perhaps South Africa?

For next week

- For **lecture 5** (emotional and sexualised labour) - read the scene-setting piece by Gibson Burrell (1984) on 'sex and organizational analysis' published in *Organization Studies*.
- For **tutorial 5** (Is Monash a gendered organisation?), please have a close re-read of Acker's (1990) article. Then find evidence that allows you to discuss how practices, symbols, visual images, words and other aspects of the University's structure and culture reproduce or challenge gendered differences and inequalities in organisations and society.

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