

Inequality Regimes Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations
Author(s): Joan Acker
Source: *Gender and Society*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Aug., 2006), pp. 441-464
Published by: Sage Publications, Inc.
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/27640904
Accessed: 25-08-2016 04:20 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at http://about.jstor.org/terms



Sage Publications, Inc. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Gender and Society*

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

INEQUALITY REGIMES
Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations[1]

JOAN ACKER
University of Oregon

In this article, the author addresses two feminist issues: first, how to conceptualize intersectionality, the mutual reproduction of class, gender, and racial relations of inequality, and second, how to identify barriers to creating equality in work organizations. She develops one answer to both issues, suggesting the idea of "inequality regimes" as an analytic approach to understanding the creation of inequalities in work organizations. Inequality regimes are the interlocked practices and processes that result in continuing inequalities in all work organizations. Work organizations are critical locations for the investigation of the continuous creation of complex inequalities because much societal inequality originates in such organizations. Work organizations are also the target for many attempts to alter patterns of inequality: The study of change efforts and the oppositions they engender are often opportunities to observe frequently invisible aspects of the reproduction of inequalities. The concept of inequality regimes may be useful in analyzing organizational change projects to better understand why these projects so often fail and why they succeed when this occurs.

Keywords: *gender; class; race; intersectionality; organizations*

Much of the social and economic inequality in the United States and other industrial countries is created in organizations, in the daily activities of working and organizing the work. Union activists have grounded their demands in this understanding, as have feminist and civil rights reformers. Class analyses, at least since Harry Braverman's 1974 dissection of *Labor and Monopoly Capital* have often examined the doing of work, the labor process, to understand how class inequalities are produced and perpetuated (Burawoy 1979). Feminists have looked at the gendering of organizations and organizational practices to comprehend how inequalities between women and men continue in the face of numerous

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *I want to thank Don Van Houten with whom I did the research that inspired this analysis, Barbara Czarniawska who helped me to rewrite the article to make it more comprehensible, Sandi Morgen who has been an invaluable research partner, and all the many other feminist scholars whose work has made mine possible.*

GENDER & SOCIETY, Vol. 20 No. 4, August 2006 441-464
DOI: 10.1177/0891243206289499
© 2006 Sociologists for Women in Society

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

attempts to erase such inequalities (Acker 1990; Collinson and Hearn 1996; Ferguson 1984; Kanter 1977). Scholars working on race inequality have examined the production in work organizations of racial disparities that contribute to society-wide racial discrimination and disadvantage (Brown et al. 2003; Royster 2003).

Most studies of the production of class, gender, and racial inequalities in organizations have focused on one or another of these categories, rarely attempting to study them as complex, mutually reinforcing or contradicting processes.[2] But focusing on one category almost inevitably obscures and oversimplifies other interpenetrating realities. Feminist scholars of color have argued for 30 years, with the agreement of most white feminist scholars, that much feminist scholarship was actually about white middle-class women, ignoring the reality that the category gender is fundamentally complicated by class, race/ethnicity, and other differences (Davis 1981; hooks 1984; Joseph 1981). Similar criticisms can be made of much theory and research on race and class questions: "race," even when paired with "ethnicity," encapsulates multiple social realities always inflected through gender and class differences. "Class" is also complicated by multiple gendered and racialized differences. The conclusion to this line of thinking—theory and research on inequality, dominance, and oppression must pay attention to the intersections of, at least, race/ethnicity, gender, and class.

The need for intersectional analyses has been, for the past 15 years at least, widely accepted among feminist scholars (Collins 1995; Crenshaw 1995; Fenstermaker and West 2002; Weber 2001). How to develop this insight into clear conceptions of how dimensions of difference or simultaneous inequality-producing processes actually work has been difficult and is an ongoing project (Holvino 2001; Knapp 2005; McCall 2005; Weber 2001). Different approaches provide complementary views of these complex processes. For example, Leslie McCall (2001, 2005), using large data sets, shows how patterns of gender, race, and class inequality vary with the composition of economic activity in various areas of the United States. The analysis I suggest contrasts with McCall's approach, as I propose looking at specific organizations and the local, ongoing practical activities of organizing work that, at the same time, reproduce complex inequalities. The organizing processes that constitute inequality regimes are, of course, related to the economic decision making that results in dramatically different local and regional configurations of inequality across the United States. Exploring the connections between specific inequality regimes and the various economic decisions that affect local economies would be still another approach to these complex interrelations. Here, my goal is limited—to develop the analysis of organizational inequality regimes.

I base this analysis on the voluminous research, including some of my own (Acker 1989, 1991, 1994; Acker and Van Houten 1974), on the organization of work and power relations in organizations. This analysis has its origins in my earlier arguments about the gendering of organizations, reconceptualizing that

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

approach to add class and race and extending the discussion in various ways (Acker 1990, 1992).[3]

INEQUALITY REGIMES

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 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.[4] 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.

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

In the following sections, I discuss in some detail the varying characteristics of inequality regimes, including the bases of inequality, the shape and degree of inequality, organizing processes that create and recreate inequalities, the invisibility of inequalities, the legitimacy of inequalities, and the controls that prevent protest against inequalities. I also discuss efforts to reduce inequality in organizations, including consideration of what elements in inequality regimes impede and/or further change. Finally, I speculate about changes in inequality regimes that are emerging as a consequence of globalizing processes.

WHAT VARIES? THE COMPONENTS OF INEQUALITY REGIMES

The Bases of Inequality

The bases for inequality in organizations vary, although class, gender, and race processes are usually present. "Class," as I use the term, refers to enduring and systematic differences in access to and control over resources for provisioning and survival (Acker 2006; Nelson 1993). Those resources are primarily monetary in wealthy industrial societies. Some class practices take place as employment occurs and wages are paid. Thus, class is intrinsic to employment and to most organizations. In large organizations, hierarchical positions are congruent with class processes in the wider society. The CEO of the large corporation operates at the top of the national and often global society. In smaller organizations, the class structure may not be so congruent with society-wide class relations, but the owner or the boss still has class power in relations with employees. "Class" is defined by inequality; thus, "class equality" is an oxymoron (Ferguson 1984).

Gender, as socially constructed differences between men and women and the beliefs and identities that support difference and inequality, is also present in all organizations. Gender was, in the not too distant past, almost completely integrated with class in many organizations. That is, managers were almost always men; the lower-level white-collar workers were always women. Class relations in the workplace, such as supervisory practices or wage-setting processes, were shaped by gendered and sexualized attitudes and assumptions. The managerial ranks now contain women in many organizations, but secretaries, clerks, servers, and care providers are still primarily women. Women are beginning to be distributed in organizational class structures in ways that are similar to the distribution of men. Gender and class are no longer so perfectly integrated, but gendered and sexualized assumptions still shape the class situations of women and men in different ways.[5]

"Race" refers to socially defined differences based on physical characteristics, culture, and historical domination and oppression, justified by entrenched beliefs. Ethnicity may accompany race, or stand alone, as a basis for inequality. Race, too,

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

has often been integrated into class hierarchies, but in different patterns than gender. Historically, in the United States, women and men of color were confined to the lowest-level jobs or excluded from all but certain organizations. People of color were totally excluded from the most powerful (white, male) organizations that were central in shaping the racialized and gendered class structure of the larger society. For example, the twentieth-century U.S. military was, until after World War II, a racially segregated organization dominated by white men. Other examples are the elite universities such as Harvard and Yale.

Other differences are sometimes bases for inequality in organizations. The most important, I believe, is sexuality. Heterosexuality is assumed in many organizing processes and in the interactions necessary to these processes. The secretary is or was the "office wife" (Kanter 1977). Homosexuality is disruptive of organizing processes because it flouts the assumptions of heterosexuality. It still carries a stigma that produces disadvantages for lesbians and gays. Other bases of inequality are religion, age, and physical disability. Again, in the not too distant past, having the wrong religion such as being a Jew or a Catholic could activate discriminatory practices. Today, having a Middle Eastern origin or being a Muslim may have similar consequences. Currently, age seems to be a significant basis for inequality, as are certain physical inabilities. I believe that although these other differences are important, they are not, at this time, as thoroughly embedded in organizing processes as are gender, race, and class.

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.[6] 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

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

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

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

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.[7] 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 (Wacjman 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.

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

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

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

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

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

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.

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

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 aspiranter 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 2003; 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).

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

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

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

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[8] 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.

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

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.[9] 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.[10] Pleasure in the work is another internalized control, as are fear and self-interest. Interests can be categorized as economic, status, and identity

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

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.

CAN INEQUALITY REGIMES CHANGE?

Inequality regimes can be challenged and changed. However, change is difficult and change efforts often fail. One reason is that owner and managerial class interests and the power those interests can mobilize usually outweigh the class, gender, and race interests of those who suffer inequality. Even where no obvious economic interests are threatened by changes, men managers and lower-level employees often insist on maintaining ongoing organizing patterns that perpetuate inequalities. For example, white masculine identity may be tied to small relative advantages in workplace power and income. Advantage is hard to give up: Increasing equality with devalued groups can be seen and felt as an assault on dignity and masculinity. Several studies have shown that these complicated motives on the part of white men, in particular, can scuttle efforts at organizational change, even when top management is supporting such change. For example, Cynthia Cockburn (1991) analyzed the multiple ways that men resisted equality efforts in four British organizations in spite of top-level support for these efforts. In the Oregon pay equity project (Acker 1989), some male unionists could not believe that women's work might be as skilled as theirs and thus deserve higher pay. The men maintained this objection even though their own wages would not be lowered if the women's wages were increased. It was as though their masculine self-respect depended, to a degree, on the differences in pay between women and men, not the actual level of pay.

Successful change projects seem to have had a number of common characteristics. First, change efforts that target a limited set of inequality-producing mechanisms seem to be the most successful. In addition, successful efforts appear to have combined social movement and legislative support outside the organization with active support from insiders. In addition, successful efforts often involve coercion or threat of loss. Both affirmative action and pay equity campaigns had these characteristics. Affirmative action programs sought to increase the employment opportunities for women of all races and men of color in organizations and jobs in which they had very low representation. The federal legislation required such programs, and similar equality efforts, in organizations that received government funds. Employers who did not follow the law were vulnerable to loss of funds. Pay equity projects, intended to erase wage inequality between women-predominant jobs and men-predominant jobs of equal value, were authorized

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

primarily by state and local legislation and took place primarily in public-sector organizations. In both types of efforts, the mobilization of civil rights and women's movement groups was essential to success.

When the political climate changed, beginning in the 1980s, pressures against such equality-producing initiatives grew.[11] By 2006, affirmative action programs had become mere bureaucratic paper shuffling in most organizations, undermined by a lack of outside enforcement and inside activism and by legal attacks by white men claiming reverse discrimination.[12] Pay equity efforts were undermined by industrial restructuring, attacks on labor unions, delegitimation of the public sector, and legal attacks.[13] Industrial restructuring began to undermine blue-collar, well-paid, male employment and to turn unions away from pay equity to the problems of their white male members and the defense of unions themselves against employer attacks. Unions had been prime actors in the pay equity movement; their relative weakening undermined the movement. Furthermore, government organizations came under attack in the era of private-sector, free market celebration, and funds for various programs including wage reforms were cut. When pay equity campaigns succeeded, wage gains were often modest, as, for example, the Oregon case showed (Acker 1989). The modest gains that did occur resulted from political compromise to keep costs down: The potential costs of raising clerical and other service workers' pay to comparable levels with skilled blue-collar workers or the pay of female-typed professions to the pay of male-typed professions were enormous. These potential costs were, I believe, the underlying reasons for legal challenges to pay equity (Nelson and Bridges 1999). Real pay equity extending into the private sector would have imposed huge increases in labor costs at the very time that employers were cutting their workforces, turning to temporary workers, outsourcing, and off-shoring jobs to save on labor costs.

The history of pay equity projects reveals a fundamental contradiction facing many efforts to reform inequality regimes: The goals of inequality reduction or elimination are the opposite of some of the goals of employing organizations, particularly in the United States at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In the private sector, management wants to reduce costs, increase profit, and distribute as much as possible of the profit to top management and shareholders. In the public sector, management wants to reduce costs and minimize taxes. Reducing costs involves reducing wages, not raising them, as pay equity would require. While wage inequality is not the only form of inequality, eliminating that inequality may be basic to dealing with other forms as well.

Another lesson of this history is that a focus on delimited areas of inequality, such as gender and racial imbalance in job categories or pay gaps between female and male jobs of equal value, do nothing to address underlying organizational class inequality. Both of these models of intervention work within the organizational class structure: Affirmative action intends to remove racial and gender barriers to entry into existing hierarchical positions; pay equity efforts

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

compare male and female jobs and sometimes white predominant jobs and other-than-white predominant jobs within organizational class levels, not across those levels.[14]

These interventions also fail to address other underlying processes of inequality regimes: the male model of organizing or the persistent gendering and racialization of interactions in the workplace. Family-friendly policies provide only temporary relief for some people from the male model of organizing. The use of family-friendly policies, primarily by women when they have young children, or the use of part-time work, again primarily involving women, may increase gender inequalities in organizations (Glass 2004). Such measures may reinforce, not undermine, the male model of organizing by defining those who conform to it as serious, committed workers and those who do not as rather peripheral and probably unworthy of promotions and pay increases (Hochschild 1997).

Diversity programs and policies seem to be often aimed at some of the more subtle discriminatory processes dividing organizational participants along lines of race/ethnicity and sometimes gender through education and consciousness raising. Diversity programs replaced, in many organizations, the affirmative action programs that came under attack. As Kelly and Dobbin (1998) point out, diversity programs lack the timetables, goals, and other proactive measures of affirmative action and may be more acceptable to management for that reason. But that may also be a reason that diversity training will not basically alter assumptions and actions that are rooted in the legitimation of systems of organizational power and reward that favor whites, particularly white men. The legitimacy of inequality, fear of retaliation, and cynicism limit support for change. The invisibility of inequality to those with privilege does not give way easily to entreaties to see what is going on. The intimate entwining of privilege with gendered and racialized identity makes privilege particularly difficult to unsettle.

Change projects focused on gendered behaviors that are dysfunctional for the organization provide examples of the almost unshakable fusion of gendered identities and workplace organizing practices. For example, Robin Ely and Debra Meyerson (2000) describe a change project aimed at discovering why a company had difficulty retaining high-level women managers and difficulty increasing the proportion of women in upper management. The researcher/change agents documented a culture and organizing practices at the executive level that rewarded stereotypical "heroic" male problem-solving behaviors, tended to denigrate women who attempted to be heroes, and failed to reward the mundane organization building most often done by women. Although members of the management group could see that these ways of behaving were dysfunctional for the organization, they did not make the links between these organizing practices, gender, and the underrepresentation of women. In their eyes, the low representation of women in top jobs was still due to the failure of individual women, not to system processes.

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

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

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

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 offshoring, 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.

CONCLUSION

I had two goals in writing this article. The first was to develop a conceptual strategy for analyzing the mutual production of gender, race, and class inequalities in work organizations. I have suggested the idea of inequality regimes, interlinked organizing processes that produce patterns of complex inequalities. These processes and patterns vary in different organizations; the severity of inequalities, their visibility and legitimacy, and the possibilities for change toward less inequality also vary from organization to organization. In the United States at the present time, almost all organizations have two characteristics that rarely vary: Class inequality, inflected through gendered and racialized beliefs and practices, is the normal and natural bedrock of organizing, and white men are the normal and natural top leaders.

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

My second goal was to better understand why so many organizational equality projects have had only modest success or have failed altogether. Looking at organizations as inequality regimes may give some clues about why change projects designed to increase equality are so often less than successful. Change toward greater equality is possible, but difficult, because of entrenched economic (class) interests, the legitimacy of class interests, and allegiances to gendered and racialized identities and advantages. When class identities and interests are integrated with gender and racial identities and interests, opposition may be most virulent to any moves to alter the combined advantages. However, top male executives who are secure in their multiple advantages and privileges may be more supportive of reducing inequalities than male middle managers who may lose proportionately more through equality organizing.

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/stats/). 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. For example, a class action lawsuit on behalf of Wal-Mart's 1.3 million women workers is making its way through the courts (Featherstone 2004). The visibility of inequality seems to be increasing, and its legitimacy decreasing. Perhaps this is the opening move in a much larger, energetic attack on inequality regimes.

NOTES

1. Some of the analysis in this article is based on chapter 5 in my book *Class Questions: Feminist Answers* (Acker 2006). I began to develop the concept of inequality regimes in a series of papers beginning in 1999 (see Acker 2000).

2. An outstanding exception to this generalization is Cynthia Cockburn's (1991) *In the Way of Women: Men's Resistance to Sex Equality in Organizations*. Cockburn's study of gender equality programs in four large British organizations integrates understanding of class processes and racial discrimination in her analysis of efforts to achieve sex equality.

3. I base my analysis primarily on organizations in the United States. However, I also use research that I and others have done in Sweden, Norway, and Finland, where inequality issues in organizations are quite similar to those in the United States.

4. At that time, the employees of all banks in Sweden were organized by the same union, Svenskabankmannaforbundet. Thus, a union-management agreement applied to all banks, although

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

they were separate enterprises. Also, at that time, the union cooperated with management on issues of organization of work. In our study, we did observations and interviews in branches of the two largest Swedish banks.

5. See Rosabeth Moss Kanter's (1977) *Men and Women of the Corporation* for an early analysis of the gendered realities faced by managerial women, realities of the workplace that made top jobs more difficult for women than for men. These gendered class realities still exist 30 years later, although they may not be as widespread as in 1977.

6. Women have never been more than a tiny fraction of the CEOs of *Fortune* 500 companies. In 2004, eight women were 1.6 percent of the CEOs of these companies (see http://www.catalyst.org/files/fact/COTE%20Factsheet%202002updated.pdf).

7. In some European and Scandinavian countries in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a push for workplace democracy by social democratic parties and labor confederations that resulted in a number of innovations to give workers, usually through their unions, more voice in organizing decisions. In Sweden, for example, a codetermination law was passed in the late 1970s encouraging the signing of labor-management contracts on employee/union participation in many company and workplace issues (Forsebäck 1980). No such broad initiatives occurred in the United States.

8. An example of such naturalization of inequality occurred in 2005 when Lawrence Summers, then president of Harvard, explained the low representation of women in science by saying that women did not have the natural ability to do mathematics that men had. The local and national uproar over this explanation of inequality indicates how illegitimate such arguments have become.

9. The film *9 to 5* with Dolly Parton, Jane Fonda, and others captured this alternative view from below. Its great success suggests a wide and sympathetic audience that understood the critique of workplace relations.

10. Charles Perrow (1986) calls these "premise controls," the underlying assumptions about the way things are.

11. For a review and assessment of legislation and court antidiscrimination cases related to racial inequality, see Brown et al. (2003, chap. 5).

12. For an analysis of affirmative action and women's employment, see Reskin (1998).

13. Figart, Mutari, and Power (2002) discuss several reasons for the demise of comparable worth, including the privatization of many public services. See also Nelson and Bridges (1999) for a discussion that includes an analysis of court cases undermining pay equity.

14. Cynthia Cockburn (1991) also makes this point.

REFERENCES

Acker, Joan. 1989. *Doing comparable worth: Gender, class and pay equity.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

———. 1990. Hierarchies, jobs, and bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender & Society* 4:139-58.

———. 1991. Thinking about wages: The gendered wage gap in Swedish banks. *Gender & Society* 5:390-407.

———. 1992. Gendering organizational theory. In *Gendering organizational theory*, edited by A. J. Mills and P. Tancred. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

———. 1994. The gender regime of Swedish banks. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 10:117-30.

———. 2000. Revisiting class: Thinking from gender, race and organizations. *Social Politics* (summer): 192-214.

———. 2006. *Class questions: Feminist answers.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Acker, Joan, and Donald Van Houten. 1974. Differential recruitment and control: The sex structuring of organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 19:152-63.

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Adkins, Lisa. 1995. *Gendered work*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
Barker, James R. 1993. Tightening the iron cage: Concertive control in self-managing teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 38:408-37.
Brown, M. K., M. Carnoy, E. Currie, T. Duster, D. B. Oppenheimer, M. M. Shultz, and D. Wellman. 2003. *White-washing race: The myth of a color-blind society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Burawoy, Michael. 1979. *Manufacturing consent*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Charles, Maria, and David B. Grusky. 2004. *Occupational ghettos: The worldwide segregation of women and men*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Cockburn, Cynthia. 1985. *Machinery of dominance*. London: Pluto.
———. 1991. *In the way of women: Men's resistance to sex equality in organizations*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press.
Collins, Patricia Hill. 1995. Comment on West and Fenstermaker. *Gender & Society* 9:491-94.
Collinson, David L., and Jeff Hearn, eds. 1996. *Men as managers, managers as men*. London: Sage.
Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams. 1995. Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. In *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement*, edited by K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller, and K. Thomas. New York: New Press.
Davis, Angela Y. 1981. *Women, race & class*. New York: Vintage.
Ely, Robin J., and Debra E. Meyerson. 2000. Advancing gender equity in organizations: The challenge and importance of maintaining a gender narrative. *Organization* 7:589-608.
Enarson, Elaine. 1984. *Woods-working women: Sexual integration in the U.S. Forest Service*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
Featherstone, Liza. 2004. *Selling women short: The landmark battle for workers' rights at Wal-Mart*. New York: Basic Books.
Fenstermaker, Sarah, and Candace West, eds. 2002. *Doing gender, doing difference: Inequality, power, and institutional change*. New York: Routledge.
Ferguson, Kathy E. 1984. *The feminist case against bureaucracy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Ferree, Myra Max, and Patricia Yancey Martin, eds. 1995. *Feminist organizations*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Figart, D. M., E. Mutari, and M. Power. 2002. *Living wages, equal wages*. London: Routledge.
Forsebäck, Lennart. 1980. *Industrial relations and employment in Sweden*. Uppsala, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell.
Glass, Jennifer. 2004. Blessing or curse? Work-family policies and mother's wage growth over time. *Work and Occupations* 31:367-94.
Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 2002. *Unequal freedom: How race and gender shaped American citizenship and labor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Hearn, Jeff, and Wendy Parkin. 2001. *Gender, sexuality and violence in organizations*. London: Sage.
Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1997. *The time bind: When work becomes home & home becomes work*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
Holvino, Evangelina. 2001. Complicating gender: The simultaneity of race, gender, and class in organization change(ing). Working paper no. 14, Center for Gender in Organizations, Simmons Graduate School of Management, Boston.
hooks, bell. 1984. *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Boston: South End.
Hossfeld, Karen J. 1994. Hiring immigrant women: Silicon Valley's "simple formula". In *Women of color in U.S. society*, edited by M. B. Zinn and B. T. Dill. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Jacobs, Jerry A., and Kathleen Gerson. 2004. *The time divide: Work, family, and gender inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Joseph, Gloria. 1981. The incompatible ménage á trois: Marxism, feminism and racism. In *Women and revolution: The unhappy marriage of Marxism and feminism*, edited by L. Sargent. Boston: South End.
Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. 1977. *Men and women of the corporation*. New York: Basic Books.

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Kelly, Erin, and Frank Dobbin. 1998. How affirmative action became diversity management: Employer response to antidiscrimination law, 1961 to 1996. *American Behavioral Scientist* 41:960-85.
Knapp, Gudrun-Axeli. 2005. Race, class, gender. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 12:249-65.
Korvajärvi, Päivi. 2003. "Doing gender"—Theoretical and methodological considerations. In *Where have all the structures gone? Doing gender in organisations, examples from Finland, Norway and Sweden*, edited by E. Gunnarsson, S. Andersson, A. V. Rosell, A. Lehto, and M. Salminen-Karlsson. Stockholm, Sweden: Center for Women's Studies, Stockholm University.
Kvande, Elin, and Bente Rasmussen. 1994. Men in male-dominated organizations and their encounter with women intruders. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 10:163-74.
Martin, Joanne, and Debra Meyerson. 1998. Women and power: Conformity, resistance, and disorganized coaction. In *Power and influence in organizations*, edited by R. Kramer and M. Neale. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
McCall, Leslie. 2001. *Complex inequality: Gender, class, and race in the new economy*. New York: Routledge.
———. 2005. The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30:1771-1800.
McIntosh, Peggy. 1995. White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies. In *Race, class, and gender: An anthology*, 2nd ed., edited by M. L. Andersen and P. H. Collins. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
Mishel, L., J. Bernstein, and H. Boushey. 2003. *The state of working America 2002/2003*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
Morgen, S., J. Acker, and J. Weigt. n.d. *Neo-liberalism on the ground: Practising welfare reform*.
Nelson, Julie A. 1993. The study of choice or the study of provisioning? Gender and the definition of economics. In *Beyond economic man: Feminist theory and economics*, edited by M. A. Ferber and J. A. Nelson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Nelson, Robert L., and William P. Bridges. 1999. *Legalizing gender inequality: Courts, markets, and unequal pay for women in America*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Perrow, Charles. 1986. A society of organizations. *Theory and Society* 20:725-62.
———. 2002. *Organizing America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Pierce, Jennifer L. 1995. *Gender trials: Emotional lives in contemporary law firms*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Reskin, Barbara. 1998. *The realities of affirmative action in employment*. Washington, DC: American Sociological Association.
———. 2003. Including mechanisms in our models of ascriptive inequality. *American Sociological Review* 68:1-21.
Ridgeway, Cecilia. 1997. Interaction and the conservation of gender inequality. *American Sociological Review* 62:218-35.
Royster, Deirdre A. 2003. *Race and the invisible hand: How white networks exclude Black men from blue-collar jobs*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Salzinger, Leslie. 2003. *Genders in production: Making workers in Mexico's global factories*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Scott, Ellen. 2000. Everyone against racism: Agency and the production of meaning in the anti racism practices of two feminist organizations. *Theory and Society* 29:785-819.
Spalter-Roth, Roberta, and Cynthia Deitch. 1999. I don't feel right-sized; I feel out-of-work sized. *Work and Occupations* 26:446-82.
Vallas, Steven P. 2003. Why teamwork fails: Obstacles to workplace change in four manufacturing plants. *American Sociological Review* 68:223-50.
Wacjman, Judy. 1998. *Managing like a man*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
Weber, Lynn. 2001. *Understanding race, class, gender, and sexuality*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
Wharton, Amy S. 2005. *The sociology of gender*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
Willis, Paul. 1977. *Learning to labor*. Farnborough, UK: Saxon House.

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Joan Acker is a professor emerita in the Department of Sociology, University of Oregon. She has written on class, women and work, gender and organizations, and feminist theory. She has been awarded the American Sociological Association (ASA) Career of Distinguished Scholarship Award and the ASA Jessie Bernard Award for feminist scholarship. Her new book is Class Questions: Feminist Answers *(2006, Rowman & Littlefield). Her most recent empirical research is a large, collaborative study of welfare reform in the state of Oregon,* Oregon Families Who Left Temporary Assistance to Needy Families or Food Stamps: A Study of Economic and Family Well-Being from 1998 to 2000.

This content downloaded from 140.211.127.19 on Thu, 25 Aug 2016 04:20:18 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms