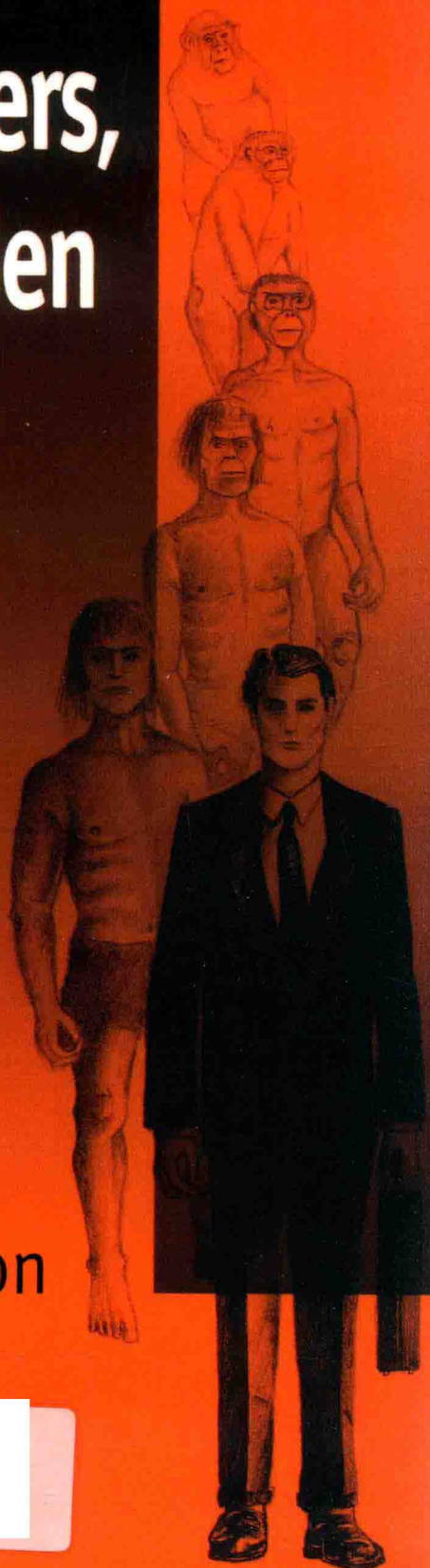


Men as Managers, Managers as Men

*Critical
Perspectives
on Men,
Masculinities
and
Managements*

edited by
David L. Collinson
and Jeff Hearn



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SAGE Publications
London • Thousand Oaks • New Delhi

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First published 1996

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SAGE Publications Ltd
6 Bonhill Street
London EC2A 4PU

SAGE Publications Inc
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320

SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd
32, M-Block Market
Greater Kailash – I
New Delhi 110 048

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data

A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-8039-8928-3

ISBN: 978-0-8039-8929-0 (pbk)

Library of Congress catalog record available

**Men as Managers,
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Preface

It is both rather strange and quite predictable that such an obvious matter as the relationship between men, masculinities and managements should be a subject for silence. This cannot be explained by either carelessness or conspiracy: the silence around these issues is built into the very process of their reproduction. The pervasiveness and taken-for-grantedness of this silence reinforce one another. It is another problem that has no name (cf. Friedan, 1963). Having worked separately for many years on questions of gender relations, men, sexuality, organizations and management, we realized in 1989 that we were thinking on very similar lines around the need to focus on the massive links between men, masculinities and managements. This led to the decision to work on these latter questions both in our own joint and separate research and writing and in co-editing this book.

The process of producing this book has run from 1992 to the end of 1995. It has involved contributors drawing upon a diversity of perspectives – from social psychology, sociology, history, accounting, organization analysis and management theory, to women's studies, studies on gender and critical studies on men. All the contributors have been committed to rethinking their work in ways that can analyse both men *and* managements without re-excluding women. This has often been a demanding intellectual, political, practical and personal project. Accordingly, we would like to thank all the contributors for their willingness to engage in this process over the past few years. Addressing men, masculinities and managements *simultaneously* does seem to produce the effect of questioning concepts, assumptions and disciplinary boundaries.

Finally, we would like to thank Sue Jones for her encouragement and support of the initial idea, and Margaret Collinson for her constructive criticism throughout.

*Leamington Spa
December, 1995*

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Breaking the Silence: On Men, Masculinities and Managements

David L. Collinson and Jeff Hearn

Most managers in most organizations in most countries are men. Yet the conditions, processes and consequences of men's historical and contemporary domination of management have received little scrutiny. There has been a strange silence, which we believe reflects an embedded and taken-for-granted association, even conflation, of men with organizational power, authority and prestige. This book examines why and how the association of men and managements persists both in 'theory' and 'practice' and explores the consequences of these interrelationships for organizations, employees and managers themselves. Acknowledging the multiple and diverse meanings of management, the volume brings together a wide variety of contributions from three continents to examine management theories, the institution and occupation of management itself, and the power, functions and practices of men as managers and managers as men. By highlighting the interrelations of men, masculinities and managements, this book seeks to break the silence and to develop new perspectives, understandings and approaches that can more adequately analyse the conditions, processes and consequences of 'man'-agerial work.

It is important to begin by examining the scale of men's 'occupation' of management from the boardroom to junior levels. Women comprise less than 5 per cent of senior management in the UK and US while in Australia and many other countries, it is closer to 2 per cent (Sinclair, 1995). A Hansard Society Commission survey (Hansard Society, 1990) found that only 5 per cent of the UK Institute of Directors and less than 1 per cent of chief executives were women.¹ Despite slow but steady progress by women into more junior managerial hierarchies within UK corporations in the 1980s, recent research suggests a reversal in these trends. The 1994 National Management Survey (Institute of Management, 1995), for example, found a fall in the number of women managers from 10.2 per cent in 1993 to 9.8 per cent in 1994. While women constituted only 2.8 per cent of directors, they were: concentrated in junior managerial grades, twice as likely as their male counterparts to have resigned in the previous twelve months and paid less than their male counterparts by an average of 15.2 per cent. A 1992 survey of forty-three broadcasting organizations across the twelve member states of

the European Community found that women comprised under 11 per cent of management at the top three levels (Equal Opportunities Commission, 1992).

Research in the United States suggests that those few women who reach senior managerial positions are much more likely than their male counterparts to report feeling stressed and burned out, as a result of juggling work and a disproportionate load of family obligations (*New York Times*, 1993). They are also less likely than their male counterparts either to receive training (Tharenou et al., 1994) or to be assigned tasks with high responsibility, visibility and the opportunity to demonstrate the levels of competence needed for future advancement (Ohlott et al., 1994). Moreover the few women in US corporations who become company directors are often channelled into 'peripheral' committees like public affairs while their male counterparts sit on committees deemed central to corporate governance such as executive and finance committees (Bilimoria and Piderit, 1994). Hence, although not all managers are men, the male domination of most hierarchical levels within management tends to persist not only historically, but also across different societies. The development of transnational organizations, international trade, communication and world financial systems is likely to reinforce the globalized nature of these male-dominated networks and processes.

Reflecting and reinforcing this numerical dominance is a masculine or masculinist imagery that frequently pervades the managerial function and perceptions of it. This gendered imagery is reflected in the etymology of the verb to 'manage' derived from the sixteenth-century Italian word *menagerie*, which meant handling things and especially horses (Williams, 1976). As Mant (1977: 20) argues, 'In this derivation it was ultimately a masculine concept, to do with taking charge, directing, especially in the context of war.' Indeed throughout the history of management thought and practice there has been a recurrent association between gender, hierarchy and organization on the one hand and militarism and warfare on the other. Early management writers tended to draw on military experience and language when making sense of organizational problems (Morgan, 1986; Shaw, 1990). Central to such thinking was the prioritization of the leader and manager as heroic warrior (Grint, 1995). The masculinity of this imagery is illustrated more recently by a 'Heathrow management text' (Burrell, 1992b) that applies to contemporary business the 2,500-year-old teaching of Sun Tzu on military strategy and the management of warfare (Krause, 1995). Its prescriptions on the 'Art of War for Executives' and the ruthless 'Principles of Success' regarding competitive strategy and 'defeating the enemy' are deeply imbued with masculine images and assumptions.

Biographies and autobiographies of famous twentieth-century entrepreneurial male managers/owners such as Ford (Ford, 1923; Sward, 1948; Beynon, 1980), Iacocca (Iacocca, 1984), Geneen (Geneen, 1985) and Maxwell (Davies, 1992) often reveal an evangelical, personal and lifelong preoccupation with military-like efficiency, ruthless practices and autocratic

control. Many of these accounts of dictatorial business leaders also demonstrate how the managerial search for efficiency can become an all-engulfing obsession. Equally, they implicitly disclose the masculine assumptions and practices that frequently predominate in management. Morgan argues that from an early age Frederick Taylor (1947) was an obsessive anal-compulsive character 'driven by a relentless need to tie down and master almost every aspect of his life' (1986: 204). Scientific management, one of the most influential managerial theories of the twentieth century, is found to be the product of 'a disturbed and neurotic personality' (ibid.: 205). The life history of Howard Hughes, the American innovator, entrepreneur and tycoon, is an extraordinary example of these obsessive tendencies towards control and mastery (Drosnin, 1987). Driven by a fear that his father did not respect his achievements, Hughes created a massive business empire that increasingly reflected and reinforced his concern with personal control and efficiency. He prescribed in minute detail the rules of behaviour to which his employees should adhere. Hating emotion of any kind, Hughes sought to control not only the women in his personal life, but also those who starred in his films, closely defining and monitoring their daily routines. His detachment, isolation and obsession with control grew to the point where he could no longer bear to breathe the air of other human beings because they might be germ carriers. Consequently, Hughes had his headquarters hermetically sealed and in his later years he lived totally alone in a room that was neither cleaned nor ever saw the light of day. His life history illustrates the self-defeating consequences that can ensue from an obsession with personal control through autocratic management. We would argue that the preoccupations of all these famous male entrepreneurs with work, discipline and emotional control are also indicative of highly masculine modes of thought and behaviour that prioritize 'mastery' over self and other.

In the 1980s especially, journalistic profiles of male executives or 'captains of industry' consistently presented 'heroic', 'macho'² images emphasizing qualities of struggle and battle, a willingness to be ruthless and brutal, a rebellious nature and an aggressive, rugged individualism (Neale, 1995).³ Managers and senior executives were frequently depicted and portrayed themselves as 'hard men', virile swashbuckling and flamboyant entrepreneurs who were reasserting a 'macho' management style that insisted on the 'divine right of managers to manage' (Purcell, 1982; see also Mackay, 1986; Edwards, 1987; Denham, 1991). Masculine, abrasive and highly autocratic managerial styles were widely valued and celebrated as the primary means of generating corporate success. 'Man'-agement came to be defined in terms of the ability to *control* people, events, companies, environments, trade unions and new technology. In the 1990s, managers and their performance are increasingly being evaluated. One central criterion of these evaluation practices is the masculinist concern with personal power and the ability to control others and self.⁴ Such masculine discourses are also embedded in conventional managerial language which is

frequently gendered, for example both in terms of highly (hetero)sexualized talk about 'penetrating markets' and 'getting into bed with suppliers/customers/competitors', and in the extensive use of sporting metaphors and sexual joking in making sense of and rationalizing managerial decisions and practices (Scase and Goffee, 1989; Collinson et al., 1990). Designed to measure performance, annual revenue, sales and productivity figures are often treated as symbols of corporate and managerial virility (Gherardi, 1995). Equally, managerial presentational styles (especially those of management consultants) which emphasize 'professional', 'competent' and 'rational' self-images infused with an air of total confidence, detachment and control frequently reveal masculine assumptions, particularly when presenters use sexist and racist jokes as 'icebreakers' (Cockburn, 1991). Participation in male-dominated sports can significantly shape managerial interactions and indeed career progress within and between organizations, networks, labour markets and professional alliances where men seek to relate to one another as colleagues, employees, clients and customers, as well as competitors and team-mates (Jackall, 1988). A considerable amount of business is also conducted through the 'entertainment' of client 'guests' in male-dominated sporting spheres such as tennis and golf clubs, in 'executive boxes' at football grounds and in the men-only business clubs of which many managers and executives are members (Elliott, 1959; Rogers, 1988; Allison, 1994).

Despite – possibly even because of – this frequently pervasive association between men, power and authority in organizations, the literature on management (and indeed organization theory) has consistently failed to question its gendered nature. Here again images of middle and senior management seem to be imbued with particular notions of masculinity. Whether we refer to the 'ideal'⁵ *prescriptive* models of management of early academic writers (for example Barnard, 1938; Fayol, 1949; Simon, 1945), *descriptive* accounts of managerial work (for example Mintzberg, 1973; Stewart, 1976a; Drucker, 1979) or even more *critical* contemporary analyses (for example Willmott, 1987; Reed, 1989; Mangham and critics, 1995), the masculine imagery of management and managers seems to be taken for granted, neglected, and thereby reproduced and reinforced.⁶ This neglect is illustrated by the unreflexive use of book and chapter titles such as: 'The organization man' (Whyte, 1956); 'Men who manage' (Dalton, 1959); 'A thinking man's management', 'Manager for himself' (Sampson, 1965); 'The men at the top' (Elliott, 1959; Burns and Stalker, 1961); 'The man and the corporation' (Guzzardi, 1966); and 'The manager and his work' (Drucker, 1979). Failing to consider the gendered questions to which their titles seem to allude, all of these studies tend to say a great deal more about management than they do about men.

Yet, there is another derivation of the verb to manage, drawn from the French *ménager*, an eighteenth-century meaning which Mant (1977: 21) sees as 'a more gentle, perhaps feminine usage' emphasizing careful house-keeping and domestic organization.⁷ Developing this theme, Wensley (1996)

has recently identified several important implications of Mrs. Beeton's (1861) *Book of Household Management* for the analysis and practice of corporate management in the 1990s. This alternative meaning makes a point which is central to this volume, namely that management, as a function, profession and practice, need not *inevitably* be dominated by masculine styles, discourses or processes generally, or by men in particular. Feminist writers have questioned the inevitability of this association between men, management and power by demonstrating how management often excludes women, especially those who are black and/or from ethnic minorities (DiTomaso, 1988; Bell and Nkomo, 1992). This book attends to the Other side, that is taken for granted in malestream discourses, and is theorized implicitly and sometimes explicitly in feminist discourses; the problem of men, masculinities and managements, of men's continued domination of management.⁸ Its purpose is to examine critically the conditions, processes and consequences of men's persistent dominance of management. Why, when we 'think manager' do we still tend to 'think male' (Schein, 1976)? In order to highlight how such questions are neglected in the literature, this first chapter reviews some of the studies that conceptualize management, gender, men and/or masculinities in the workplace from prescriptive, descriptive and particularly from critical perspectives. Seeking to demonstrate the importance of breaking the silence, we begin by briefly considering the ever-proliferating dominant discourses on management.

Dominant discourses

Facilitated by the separation of ownership and control (Berle and Means, 1932), the growth of management and large-scale organizations has been one of the most significant features of modern society (Burnham, 1945; Chandler, 1977; Pollard, 1965). Indeed Mintzberg (1989) has characterized the twentieth century as the 'age of management'. The emergence of management as the central organizational activity of modern corporations is reflected in the burgeoning literature, especially from the United States, that explores the assumptions, responsibilities and practices of contemporary managements (for example Likert, 1961; Sayles, 1964; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Child, 1969; Mintzberg, 1973, 1989; Drucker, 1979; Kotter, 1982; Cole, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Stewart, 1986; Kreitner, 1989; Bennis, 1989; Hannaway, 1989). Adopting a prescriptive and/or descriptive perspective, conventional discourses rarely question managerial power, the elitist nature of most decision making in organizations or the terms and conditions of employment that are associated with the function. While these dominant modes of analysis are immensely varied, most share a reluctance to explore questions of gender that would otherwise tend to disrupt taken-for-granted ways of thinking about management.

This neglect can be seen in the development of management theory, from scientific management to human relations, systems and contingency theories, and more recently population ecology and institutional perspectives. It is also evident in recent broad-ranging reviews of the management literature (Hales, 1993; Thomas, 1993). In conventional organizational psychology, where the major contribution to the prescriptive study of leadership has emerged (for example Fiedler, 1967; Vroom and Yetton, 1973), a pervasive domain assumption has been that leadership is synonymous with men and that gender is not an issue worthy of exploration (Hearn and Parkin, 1988). A recent review of the leadership literature in organizational psychology (Hollander and Offerman, 1990) devotes only two sentences to women in organizations and totally neglects issues of men and masculinity in relation to power and leadership. Within the foregoing dominant discourses, management is usually presented as if it is a gender-neutral activity, whereas in reality it is clear that managerial hierarchies remain largely dominated by men in most organizations and sectors.

The empirically based descriptive work of Mintzberg (1973, 1975, 1983, 1989) has been particularly influential in the dominant discourses on management. Challenging the prevailing highly rational, objective and 'scientific' view of management, Mintzberg reveals a less ordered, inherently subjective reality characterized by political alliances and strategies played out by managers in their search for power, influence and organizational security. In many ways, such descriptions of managerial work are similar to those of Dalton's (1959) classic study which graphically examines the hidden agendas of intra-managerial collusion and conflict. While both authors may be writing primarily (or even exclusively) about men, they fail to analyse men and masculinities as socially produced, reproduced and indeed changeable. We are given no indication of how men managers are socially constructed *as men* through either the practice of managing or the impact of other social forces such as the processes of boys becoming adult men, the organization of domestic life or broader cultural and religious practices. Mintzberg uses 'manager' and 'he' interchangeably throughout his influential text, and even when he critiques the 'Great Man' theory for revealing 'almost nothing about managerial work' (1973: 12) he remains silent about its inherently gendered imagery and assumptions. Hence while both writers explore the alliances, interrelations and conflicts within management, neither questions the gender of those about whom they write or the hierarchical power of management, nor do they locate the function in its structural position within the organization. Yet relations between men in senior organizational positions, whether conflictual, co-operative or both, are frequently highly gendered. As this text seeks to illustrate, within, between and across managerial and organizational hierarchies, masculine discourses and practices are often a crucial basis for alliances, divisions and conflicts between men in senior positions.

Having highlighted this tendency to ignore gender completely in the dominant discourses on management, we also emphasize that this book is

not intended to be an extension of the 'women in management' literature that characterizes much of the debate on gender and organizations (for example Loden, 1985; Jelinek and Adler, 1988; Helgesen, 1990; Rosener, 1990; Sekaran and Leong, 1992; Fagenson, 1993). Such analyses have also tended to neglect a critical examination of the hierarchical and/or gendered power and practices of either men as managers or managers as men. Their recurrent emphasis upon women's different ways of organizing, managing and leading and the need to develop women's skills to fit into contemporary managerial hierarchies reflects a focus primarily upon women that is always in danger of blaming the victim and/or essentialism. Recent research has found few consistent differences between female and male managers in terms of managerial behaviours, commitment, decision style, stress or subordinates' responses (Powell, 1988; Donnell and Hall, 1980; Boulgarides, 1984).

Primarily concerned to prescribe more effective techniques of managerial control, dominant discourses on management fail to address two interwoven forms of organizational power: the first related to hierarchy and management and the second related to gender and men. By contrast, more critical studies have questioned the conditions, processes and consequences of various aspects of control within the workplace. In particular, they have generally examined and problematized either *managerial* power, control and ideology or *men's* power, control and ideology. Possibly reflecting the difficulties of integrating their respective insights, these two critiques have tended to develop quite separately, their interrelations and overlaps remaining relatively underexplored. The next two sections of this chapter will briefly review the respective insights of critical studies: of management and of gender. Each of these overall perspectives provides a partial critical analysis of the interrelations between hierarchical and gendered forms of power and control in organizational practices. The third section considers the relatively few critical studies that have sought to develop a more integrated analysis of gender, men and managements.

Management without gender

Critical analyses of management emerge from critiques of dominant discourses. They seek to make explicit and then to question management's extensive power and control. Inspired by Braverman's (1974) analysis of the labour process, writers such as Friedman (1977), Edwards (1979) and Burawoy (1979, 1985) highlighted the structural economic imperatives of capitalist production and emphasized how managerial practices are shaped by a primary concern to control the labour process based on the separation of conception and execution. This perspective regards managers as the bearers of an economic logic in which labour is controlled and directed for the benefit of profit and sectional interests (Nichols, 1970; Marglin, 1974).