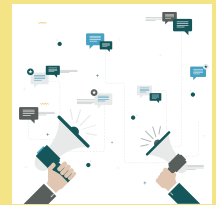
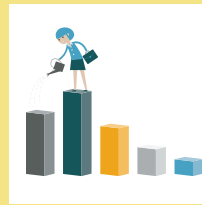
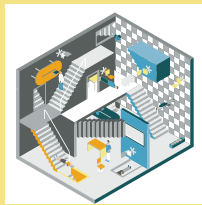


# Handbook of Organizational Gender Consultation and Intervention

Zeev Lehrer

Hadass Ben Eliyahu



HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG  
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המרכז לקידום נשים בזירה הציבורית

  
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**Hadass and Zeev**

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## **ABOUT THE HANDBOOK**



## Women's Point of View

Women who are actively involved in the promotion of gender equality in organizations are frequently frustrated by the disparity between their ability to identify, understand, and analyze exclusionary organizational practices and their capacity to find simple and effective ways to mitigate them, not to mention the immense difficulty they encounter in trying to effect change. Agents of gender equality who advocate for the advancement of women, individuals tasked with prevention of sexual harassment, diversity monitors, and feminist activists speak of an exhausting struggle to make their points of view and arguments heard amid a cacophony of objections, humiliations, contempt, and apathy. The point of view they are trying to put on the organizational agenda with regard to practices and procedures in their workplaces is neither present nor considered worthy of being present in the decision-making processes that establish an organization's day-to-day reality. The prevailing assumption that organizational decision-making is rational, objective, and gender neutral obscures the fact that, in most cases, women's points of view, experiences, interests, and priorities do not feature in these decision-making processes, let alone in meaningful and impactful ways. Replete with gendered arguments and implications, these processes are certainly not gender neutral.

The main claim in this handbook is that **the process of change for gender equality in organizations is a process of representation, recognition, and validation of women's point of view on the practices of the organization.**<sup>1</sup> We propose that **what is excluded or disempowered in organizations are not necessarily women as such, but their point of view.** By "women's point of view" we mean: the collective way women participate in, experience, and give meaning to organizational practices. Organizational practices that exclude women are reproduced and persevere over time primarily because of the exclusion of the point of view of women from arenas of power in the organization and from planning and decision-making processes that shape an organization's day-to-day realities. Women are excluded when their point of view is neither reflected in nor shaping actual, day-to-day organizational practices.

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1 In this handbook, we employ the term Point of View (POV) to bring to light the different experiences, voices and perspectives of women from diverse social groups and organizational positions. This usage overlaps with the concept of intersectionality, frequently utilized in the academic literature and public discourse to refer to the interlocking of gender, race, ethnic, class, and other social locations. Our preference for POV over the more familiar concept of intersectionality derives from the understanding that POV allows us to translate the more abstract notion of intersectionality into organizational practices. The concept of intersectionality is therefore inherent in the POV approach.

Hence, the long journey toward gender equality in organizations is also the long journey of women's point of view from the margins of organizational "attention" to the corridors of power and meeting rooms where decisions are made.

In this long journey, the women and men who are agents of gender equality may be seen as "travel agents" for the feminist perspective on organizational practices. The agent's actions are intended to accrue validity and power for this perspective, to recruit allies to support and recognize it, and to transform it into a significant and valid actor at the decision-making table. The journey takes place inside a network of organizational actors saturated with power relations in which women are often actively silenced. Organizational actors respond to women's point of view in various ways: from lack of interest to objections, from draconian tests of feasibility to mockery and hostility. The effect of all of these is the same: the marginalization and silencing of women's point of view.

This handbook provides a map to navigate this journey. We address the question of how to bring women's point of view from the margins of the organization to its center. To this end, we propose theoretical knowledge and practical strategies to promote gender equality in organizations. We analyze a broad array of organizational practices as exclusionary gendered practices: from human resource recruitment to work procedures and job assignments, from intra-organizational tracking and promotion to the prevention of sexual harassment, from practices of pay and compensation to organizational leadership. We examine various aspects of organizational life with the aim of identifying and understanding the exclusionary gender implications implicit in each, and propose remedial inclusive practices and the interventions needed to realize them and implement them in the organization. These are planned initiatives and are led by agents of gender equality – be they formal or informal – within the organization. Dealing with gendered organizational practices requires an infrastructure of organizational knowledge, recruitment of allies who will successfully represent women's point of view, and recruitment of various stakeholders in the organization to work on solutions in processes and sites of decision-making.

**This handbook is intended for women and men who serve as agents of gender equality or agents of social change in organizations.**<sup>2</sup> They may do so in their formal roles as gender equality officers or as advisors regarding gender equality or sexual harassment. They may assume these roles on their own initiative out of a sense of solidarity with their women colleagues or out of a desire to deal with their difficulties and improve their own situation. These agents often undertake the task with inadequate training and without a suitable foundation of knowledge in the field of gender in organizations.

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2 In the handbook we refer most often to women as the agents of change, although both women and men can be agents of gender equality.



In the absence of this foundation, there is significant difficulty in strategic planning toward gender equity. It is also difficult to ensure that these activities yield significant organizational changes that enable women to participate in more significant and more equitable ways in the organization. This disparity between the agents' motivation to engage and the knowledge and tools they have at their disposal compounds the inherent difficulty of promoting gender equality in organizations. Unfortunately, the result is often a proliferation of ritualistic activities due to the absence of an overall focus or strategy.

The previous handbook we published, *From Gendered Practice to Practice of Equality* (2015), presented a broad overview of **the practical approach to gender equality change**. This handbook describes a series of organizational interventions for the promotion of gender equality - i.e., deliberate and pre-planned initiatives and actions to address exclusionary gender practices in organizations and replace them with inclusive practices that are beneficial to both women and men. We call this a "practical approach" because it is both implementable and practical, focusing on routine organizational practices, and because we base it theoretically on what is known as "the practice turn in the social sciences" and the pragmatic approach in sociology (Schatzki *et al.* 2001).

In this handbook, we provide a well-equipped toolbox for agents of gender equality and social change – both women and men – who initiate, lead, or coordinate planned collective action to promote gender equality in organizations. Each one of the proposed interventions is designed to give a voice and amass organizational power to the point of view of women in the organization. Taken as a whole, these interventions can provide a basis for a wider process of organizational change. The interventions are presented in three sections: deciphering and representing women's point of view, recruitment of allies for this point of view, and interventions to challenge exclusionary organizational practices.

**Section One** presents tools the agent of gender equality may utilize in order to decode and represent the point of view of women in the organization. This provides the foundation for the agent's work and provides a road map for changing gendered practices in the organization: where to intervene, what to promote, what to change, and how to set priorities. Women experience organizational practices as a personal rather than a collective experience, and thus interpret the difficulties they encounter as their own private problem rather than a general problem of the organization.

We offer several means of translating personal experiences into organizational practices. These include providing women with opportunities to express their personal and everyday experiences in the organization, find common ground with other women, decode and conceptualize these experiences as encounters with exclusionary organizational gendered practices, and imagine and design inclusive alternatives to the existing situation. Chapter 3, “The Point of View (POV) Group,” presents methodology for identifying exclusionary gendered practices in the organization from women’s point of view, while creating a common language and solidarity among members of the group. Chapter 4, “Catalog of Gendered Practices in Organizations,” supports translation of women’s personal experiences in the organization into an effective tool that visually represents the various gendered practices as perceived from their point of view. Chapter 5, “Assessing the Status of Gender Equality in Organizations: Quantitative Monitoring,” is a further layer in representing women’s point of view, this time by means of quantitative data from the organization. The importance organizations attribute to statistical data is well known and agents of gender equality can take advantage of this by formulating an organized and detailed portrayal of gender disparities in the organization. The three chapters in this section provide a broad foundation for designing and leading a strategic program for gender equality intervention in organizations, anchored in the experiences and points of view of women working in those organizations.

As noted, processes of gender equality change occur in organizational contexts that are saturated with political and power relations; these power relations are the main obstacle blocking the path to gender equality in organizations. Given this, **Section Two** of the handbook addresses recruiting allies for women’s perspective with a focus on the obstacles encountered by agents of gender equality as they work toward effecting change and implementing inclusive organizational practices. The chapters in this section deal with the core issues at the heart of gender equality change in organizations: recruiting power and giving women’s point of view weight and influence that can become compelling and even coercive in decision-making processes within the organization. Chapter 6, “Mobilizing Allies,” offers tools for recruiting allies, both from within the organization and from outside sources, to act and advance the process of change. This chapter is based on the understanding that a point of view is as strong and powerful as the organizational actors committed to its promotion. Therefore, one of the main roles of gender equality agents is to negotiate with different actors in the organization – supporters, opponents, and the apathetic – in order to promote the inclusive practices they aim to implement.

The chapter analyzes the recruitment process and presents different methods of recruiting allies and partners. Chapter 7, “Regimes of Justification, Controversies, Resistance, and Support,” focuses on one of the main obstacles that agents of social change and gender equality must overcome: regimes of justification. In the chapter, we explain in detail what they are, how they silence and invalidate women’s points of view, their role in the recruitment process, and how they can be dealt with in various contexts. Chapter 8, “The Leadership Group: Developing Leadership from a Gender Perspective,” the last in this section, focuses on recruiting women with power and influence in the organizations as agents of gender equality. The chapter presents a gender-sensitive conceptualization of the concept of leadership and practical ways to recruit women to join an intra-organizational feminist leadership group or forum. This group is a powerful tool for promoting gender equality change in organizations in partnership with a formal agent of gender equality. The section in its entirety provides a variety of strategies for achieving legitimation and support for activities directed at gender equality change in organizations.

**Section Three** of this handbook presents concrete activities and interventions for promoting gender equality in organizations. The success of these interventions rests on significant and compelling representation of women’s point of view and on recruiting the power of various organizational stakeholders and actors to the cause. The chapters offer a series of interventions in gendered practices common in organizations: decision-making, professional tracking, sexual harassment, silencing in speech acts, work-family balance, gender gaps in pay and compensation, and gender budgeting. Each chapter presents a detailed analysis of exclusionary gendered practices: their origin, how they function, how they are maintained, and their exclusionary implications for women. In addition, we offer organizational interventions aimed at remedying the exclusion inherent in the various practices and provide inclusive alternatives to these practices.

Our approach to promoting and achieving gender equality in organizations is based on theoretical approaches and an abundance of research in the fields of feminism, gender and organization, and the sociology of organizations. We chose to write this handbook in a non-academic format to make it more accessible to a broad and diverse group of readers and users. In this vein, the main body of the text contains few references to academic sources; instead, a list of resources for further reading can be found at the bibliography included at the end.

We wish you a useful and enjoyable reading experience,

**Hadass and Zeev**

# Chapter 1. Practice, Gender, and Organization

We developed the practical approach to gender equality in organizations on the basis of the experience we accumulated over many years of pursuing gender equality in diverse organizations and professional fields. Our experience has taught us that existing approaches and theories are effective in deciphering organizational realities - i.e., they help identify existing power mechanisms in organizations and explain them and their origins, and even offer solutions that might be implemented to advance women and improve their situation in organizations. However, as other agents of social change, we experienced a vast discrepancy between our ability to identify gendered barriers and our capacity to successfully implement insights and solutions in organizational realities saturated with gender power relations. The transition from analysis and identification of obstacles facing women to implementation of solutions for promoting equality for women is not at all simple, as anyone who has worked in the field of organizational gender equality can attest. The existing theoretical approaches did not provide us with practical tools to solve the fundamental problem, which is the difficulty to change gender power relations in organizations. As a result of this experience, we sought to formulate an approach that would address the issue of promoting gender equality in organizations, as well as provide practical tools for realizing it. This chapter presents the central principles of this approach.

## Organizational Practice: Principal Characteristics

Several common images of organizations can be found in the research literature (Morgan 1997). Some see the organization as a systematic and organized system of processes (the bureaucratic approach), others view the organization as an organism that interacts with the environment (the open systems approach), and some see it as a system designed to derive legitimacy from the environment (the institutional approach). Yet others view organizations as a cognitive phenomenon derived from shared imaginations of people (the cultural approach). Contemporary approaches do not see organizations as functions of any one principle or image but as an array of practices. A practice is a permanent and repetitive pattern of connections and interactions between different elements (both human and non-human actors) that takes place routinely beyond a specific place and time, and constitutes the way things are done. For example, the organizational practice of a job interview includes several human actors: the director of the department, a representative of human resources, and the candidate.

The practice also includes non-human elements such as the candidate's resume, the prerequisites for the position, laws that dictate what can and cannot be asked in an interview, a questionnaire for the director to complete, the interview room, the table at which they sit during the interview, and more. The practice also includes a set of rules that define the possible interactions between the various elements in the interview situation: who sits on either side of the table, who can ask what questions of whom, what answers can be given.

Another example is the organizational practice of a board meeting. This too involves a clear, perhaps tacit, set of rules regarding the possible interactions between the various elements in the situation, human and non-human. For example, when the CEO speaks and when other executives can speak, what they can and cannot say, what is projected on the screen, the role played by the tables and chairs in the room, the role of the secretary who comes in, what she can or cannot say. To put it simply, organizational practice is a kind of routine script according to which "things are done" in the organization. This script is sometimes rooted in formal rules and regulations, but in many cases it is not explicitly stated and organizational actors follow it without being aware of its existence. The result is that organizational practices are usually tacit and implicit – simply "the way we do things." Some organizational theories regard organizational practices as the foundation of what is referred to as "organizational culture."

## Exclusionary Gendered Practices (EGPs)

**The key to organizational change toward gender equality is the organizational practice.** Specifically, gendered organizational practices that have discriminatory implications for women in the organization. Many researchers in the field of gender and organizations (Acker 1990, 2006; Yancey Martin 2006) have noted that routine organizational practices are not really natural, objective, or gender-neutral. They have different implications for the men and women who participate in them. Thus, for example, women experience differently the practice of early morning meetings, the practice of placing stylish wooden decks at the entrance to the workplace, the practice of men's talk at a board meeting, the practice of work shifts that start at 6:30 a.m. or 3:30 p.m., the practice of air conditioners set to low temperatures in offices, the practice of using the number of hours spent at the office or the number of field assignments taken as criteria for promotion, and so forth.

Women's participation in organizational practices and their experience of them differs from that of men because they usually come from a different gendered position and a different set of constraints. They attend the 7:00 a.m. meeting after finding someone to take the children to preschool. They walk unsteadily on the stylish deck in high heels that are part of the organizational dress code. They sit in chilly air-conditioned rooms despite their physiological differences and the more revealing clothing they are expected to wear. They attempt to scale the wall in the obstacle course of a fitness test despite having less climbing experience and being physically smaller. They recognize themselves as the targets of boardroom jokes. They attempt to pursue promotion even though parenting constraints prevent them from being available and present at all times or from taking on a field position that is a prerequisite for promotion. **Organizational practices, ostensibly neutral and unbiased, become gendered when the social order, which imposes different life situations and identities on women and men, differentiates between women and men in how they participate in and experience those organizational practices.** Gendered organizational practices become exclusionary when participating in them limits women's (or a certain group of women's) opportunities or causes discomfort, distress, self-doubt, or embarrassment and humiliation to the point of loss of confidence. Ultimately, this leads to self-exclusion based on a feeling of lacking entitlement to participate in important, profitable, and prestigious undertakings in the organization. Women who experience this will not apply for senior positions, will struggle to fulfill them, and will not be compensated for their organizational capital. They will not be present, considered important, or compensated in the same way as men are. The gendered practices characteristic of the modern organization create and perpetuate the situation in which women are a disadvantaged group in the labor market and within organizations. They are rendered less "worthy" as a result of a limited presence in decision-making forums and less representation in the prestigious and significant branches of the organizations. Their daily experience of work is distressed, they suffer from a harassing and belittling gender climate, and they are not as well compensated. One might consider the average wage gap between men and women in organizations – ranging from 20% to 30% – as a microcosm of the world of exclusionary organizational practices.

## The Intractability of Exclusionary Gendered Practices

Why does it happen? Why is the modern organization still replete with exclusionary gendered practices? Is it the result of malicious male chauvinism? Perhaps these power relations are social and cultural and reach beyond the organization and its practices. For example, can be attributed to patriarchy? Are women the problem? Are they not experienced, competent, or capable enough?

Do they not object enough or make the right choices? We reject these explanations. We see them as diverting attention from the source of gender discrimination, the organizations themselves. Even if these explanations are understandable, they are not practical because they do not offer us practical solutions or modes of action for bringing about social change. What can be addressed and changed at the organizational level is the organizational practice itself.

One of the accepted explanations for the difficulty women (and other social groups) experience in dealing with existing organizational practices is that these practices were designed, historically, to suit the social group that participated in the practice - i.e., the working (white) man. According to this explanation, organizational practices are "masculine" - i.e., designed for the personage, body, identity, and lifestyle of men, because the modern organization was formed after the industrial revolution on the basis of separation between the public and the private spheres (Davidoff 2003; Pateman 1988). Even if, as Hanna Herzog (2006) claims, definitions of what is private and what is public and the boundaries between them are constantly changing, the public remains "public" even when the boundaries between public and private are blurred. And since it was primarily men who participated in the public sphere and the paid labor market, current organizational structures and practices are based on the assumption that they apply to men.

According to this explanation, women's disadvantage in the paid labor market derives from the fact that the more involved women became in the public sphere, the greater the discrepancy between their situations and constraints (for example, body, socialization, and motherhood) and the practices that were constructed and adapted for men, who operate under a different set of constraints. In other words, the discrimination reflects women's difficulty in adjusting to or dealing with historical organizational practices.

This explanation, too, is partial. In practice, the rate of women participating in the labor market has been high for decades. If practices were indeed "designed for men," one might expect them to have changed and been adapted to the situation, experiences, constraints, and identity of women, thus enabling them to participate in organizations in more significant, respected, and valuable ways. This change, however, did not come about. The persistent phenomenon of exclusionary organizational practices seems immune to change, or at least very resistant to it, even when it is entirely clear that such practices are unsuited to the identity, situation, constraints, or life experiences of women working in organizations.

The fact that exclusionary gender practices still exist in modern organizations, even after the second, third, and even fourth waves of feminism, and despite the resounding success of the feminist project as a whole, may be a function of who holds the power to shape daily life in organizations. To put it simply, women entered the organizational world in massive numbers, but their entrance did not change gendered power relations within them. They almost never appropriated organizational power and they had no ownership over the organizational forces that shape, assemble, disassemble, or reassemble organizational practices.

## **Power and the Organization: Subject and Object in Organizational Practice**

According to approaches that regard the organization as a political arena (Morgan 1997), organizational practices are formed within a mesh of power relations. The organizational arena consists of intra- and extra-institutional functionaries who meet, compete, struggle, negotiate, and enlist support, in order to shape the character of the organization and its practices. The assembly and reassembly of practices is at the heart of the organizational processes of planning, decision-making, and allocation of resources, as well as of organizational politics. Organizational practices are the “capital” that various functionaries in the organization compete for. The competition and negotiation among institutional actors reflect their points of view with regard to organizational practices. By points of view, we mean that there is a different professional logic to the actions of various organizational actors, as well as different interests and needs. They are embedded in the practices in different ways. For example, in the decision-making process in a large industrial company prior to the decision to establish a new campus, certain actors will be invested in cutting costs, others will want larger workspaces, others will see how the new campus will provide extra positions in their departments, while others will see the new campus as a means of obtaining public legitimacy for the company.

Thus, the assembly and reassembly of a practice is a process of competitive engagement between points of view of different actors in the organization. The process also reflects the relative power and weight of the different points of view involved in designing the practice. Those who operate from a particular logic, be it economic, legal, bureaucratic, medical, or regulatory, will have different amounts of power to impose their point of view on the design of the practice.



Decision-making in organizations reflects the degree to which various functionaries can enforce their points of view, their logics, and their needs and interests on the assembly of a practice. The power to determine practices is the power to recruit justification regimes - i.e., systems of rules that are considered coercive and compelling - to the task of designing practices. Thus, for example, actors who represent an economic logic of action will invoke budget, workflow, profitability, and loss as factors in order to persuade other actors to shape the practice according to their logic, or to compel and coerce them to do so. Actors who represent a legal point of view and are invested in a different outcome will recruit regimes of justification such as rules and regulations that require the practice to be designed in a different manner. Determinative power rests not only on the coercive and compelling power of the regime of justification, but also on the actors' ability to enlist others as allies and to add their power to the shaping of the practice according to the logic and interests of those actors.

Hence, those who have power in the organization are actually subjects in shaping organizational reality. Subject does not imply subjective. A subject is an actor whose thoughts, intentions, and needs bear weight and power in the shaping of practices. In other words, the subject is one whose point of view influences the assembly and design of the practices. All other actors, groups, and individuals are not subjects in the shaping of the practice but objects: they are activated by the practice and are part of it but do not participate in its design.

The persistence of exclusionary gendered practices in modern organizations, despite the massive participation of women, derives mainly from the fact that women's point of view is one that has no power in the determination of practices. Women are the object of practices rather than subjects who determine them. In other words, women themselves are not excluded from organizations – they are present, they work and participate – but their points of view as those who participate in the daily experiences of these practices are excluded. The restrictions, distress, inconvenience, humiliation, lack of confidence, difficulty in functioning, and so forth are not represented as a powerful point of view that carries weight and significance in the sites of determination within which practices are dismantled, shaped, and reassembled. Women's point of view is not included among those points of view that are permitted access to the sites of determination and do not participate in them with any authority. The gender point of view is not considered as legitimate as the economic, political, medical, legal, budgetary, and managerial points of view. It is not part of the hierarchy of points of view, and it is not represented, maintained, or promoted by powerful actors in the site of determination in the manner that other points of view are.

## Exclusion by Justification

Women's point of view - i.e., women's daily, authentic experience of organizational practices - is not excluded from decision-making processes because of oversight, neglect, or a lack of attention or importance. This argument might have been made if women did not reveal their point of view directly, either in person or via agents of gender equality in the organizations. The reality is that women's point of view is indeed expressed and indeed represented on various occasions, but for the most part it does not pass the entry threshold to the sites of determination and is not considered significant within them. Our argument is that there is an active and forceful process in organizations that excludes this point of view leaving it silenced and marginal, not that the women's point of view is forgotten. This process might be called "silencing by justification." An agent of gender equality who expresses a limiting or difficult experience caused by a practice in any organizational forum, and seeks to change the situation causing this experience (i.e., the practice) always encounters a plethora of aphorisms, sayings, arguments, and slogans that cast doubt on the point of view she is expressing and resist changing the existing situation. For example, "it's the same for women and men," "the women in my department never complained," "you chose to leave early to be with the kids," or "I've never encountered that." These expressions are called regimes of justification (see chapter 7). Various actors repeating these phrases to the agent of gender equality who attempts to represent women's point of view and reach decision-making forums is the organization's means of silencing and excluding the point of view of women as a social group and rendering it marginal and without influence. At a time when exclusionary practices in the workplace are not permitted by law and direct exclusion is illegitimate, the organizations' way to exclude women's perspective from determining organizational reality is by doubting their point of view, belittling it, and subjecting it to interminable questioning by means of regimes of justification. The regimes function as tests that require the agent of gender equality to validate, demonstrate, elaborate, provide evidence, and explain herself instead of accepting her and other women's authentic experience as legitimate and valid. The regimes of justification put the point of view to tests that cannot be overcome. The difference between an equitable organization - i.e., one in which women's point of view has an impact on the assembly of practices - and an exclusionary organization replete with exclusionary gendered practices is that the latter is filled with organizational actors that uphold regimes of justification, silence the gender point of view, and render it powerless, irrelevant, and without influence.

## The Role of a Gender Equality Agent

For gender equality to exist, organizational practices must be inclusive - i.e., shaped and determined by the point of view of women in the organization. When women's point of view and perspective on a particular practice is taken into account on an equal basis in formulating the practice, the practice is transformed from exclusive to inclusive. Gender equality can therefore not be measured only in terms of the ratio of women in senior positions in the organizations, their ratio among core functionaries in the organization, equal pay, or the absence of sexual harassment. **Gender equality in organizations exists when women's point of view has power and carries weight in the decision-making processes that shape various organizational practices.**

This also sheds light on the role of the agent of gender equality in the organization: her role is to transform women in the organization from passive objects to active subjects. In other words, her role is to function as an amplifier of women's point of view on the organization's main practices, to represent it in the organization, to accrue power to this point of view, and to make it into a compelling force in sites of determination in the organization. The ultimate goal is to render the organization's gendered practices inclusive of the women's point of view.

## Chapter 2. Definitions of Terms

- 1. Women's point of view.** The common experience of a group of women participating in a particular social or organizational practice, the manner in which women actively participate in practices, and the meaning they collectively impart on this participation. In the case of exclusionary gendered practices, the experience may include functional aspects (difficulties in performing a job, workload, functional limitations), emotional aspects (distress, humiliation, anxiety, helplessness, pressure), and statements (various turns of phrase and regimes of justification) that are part and parcel of participation in the practice. Thus, for example, when as part of a gender harassment practice, men use belittling language toward women in professional occupations and say things like "the girls here don't understand," many women feel humiliated, helpless, compelled to justify themselves, or lose their ability to make significant and authoritative contributions to the discussion. This is the women's point of view of this practice.
- 2. Organizational practices.** Permanent, repetitive patterns of affinities and interactions between human and non-human actors that take place as a matter of course in the organization. Job interviews, board meetings, time reports, and even pay slips are all organizational practices. Human elements include, among others, employees, managers, various stakeholders, clients, suppliers, and competitors. Non-human actors are, for example, rules and regulations, laws, devices, tools, structures, dress codes, technologies, machines, data, and research findings. Organizational practices, fixed and recursive processes, exist in all aspects of the organization's operation: recruiting, screening, and tracking of employees; work procedures and assignments; remuneration regimes; use of equipment, devices, and technologies; types of interactions in various organizational contexts (for example, between employees and their managers, among colleagues); and even regimes of justification - e.g., the ideologies and narratives that accompany these organizational patterns. Practices link all these together in fixed scenarios that are internalized and shared by members of the organization as practical know-how systems, both explicit and implicit. An individual event (a situation) becomes a practice when it recurs in the organization, or in a particular community, extending beyond the individuals immediately involved, and when it is acknowledged, recognized, and defined as meaningful by members of the organization or community.

A familiar example of an organizational practice is the sequence of actions a candidate is required to complete in order to be considered a potential employee: she has to submit a resume, fill out forms, participate in group evaluation, undergo psychometric tests, be interviewed by different stakeholders, fill out forms, etc. Another example of an organizational practice is the manner in which customers are received at a company's customer service station: opening hours, equipment, and accessories used to direct and organize the customers (such as rope barriers and number generators), the form the queue takes (sitting or standing), the location of the counters, the excuses people use to try to bypass the queue, the facial expressions of the employees and their manner of speech in replying to various requests.

3. **Exclusionary organizational practice.** An organizational practice that is perceived by those involved in it as constraining, withholding of opportunity, a functional obstacle or derivative thereof, helplessness or inability, or perceived lack of entitlement or ability to participate in the practice in contradistinction to other participants. Exclusionary practices include screening processes that use language-based tests in hiring even if some of the candidates belong to a minority that speaks a different language; long work hours that make it difficult for mothers to participate because of their family obligations; heavy equipment that women find more difficult to lift or operate; and esoteric humor used by a particular group.
4. **Embeddedness of practice.** Embeddedness is the practical manner in which people participate in and experience organizational practice. Embeddedness includes the network of links between an individual and the practice, and that individual's role within it: what he/she does, feels, says, earns, loses, and justifies in the course of participation and in relation to it. When a social group is embedded in a practice in a manner that causes the members of the group to experience one or more of the difficulties listed above, the group's embeddedness in that practice is exclusionary. For example, when a social group participates in a screening practice at the entrance to a nightclub, members of the group beg the door monitor to let them in; wait for a long time; feel rage, anger, and frustration at being rejected; make repeated attempts to persuade the door monitor; and eventually make do with drinking alcohol in the parking lot. This is exclusionary embeddedness.

- 5. Agents of change.** Women or men who undertake to initiate, launch, and coordinate systematic and deliberate attempts to change exclusionary organizational practices and make them more inclusive of both women and men. The agent can act in her official capacity - e.g., a gender officer, member of a gender equity committee, or person tasked with promoting gender equity, or out of a sense of obligation and solidarity with other women, or even because of a sense of injustice. The agent can work alone or as part of a group of agents that organizes within the organization, with or without formal recognition by the organization.
- 6. Point of view (POV) decoding.** Finding out how women experience organizational practice and rendering their private experience public by articulating and sharing it. Decoding of the point of view is necessary because often the authentic experiences and feelings, as well as the functional difficulties, are repressed and obscured by the organization's regimes of justification. Only once the point of view has been decoded, taking into account all its aspects and implications and ensuring that it is free from the regimes of justification, can the transition from a private to a group experience be made and deliberate action taken.
- 7. Representation of the gendered point of view.** The process whereby agents of change transform the personal point of view of women in the organization into an influential force with a view to making the gendered point of view a significant consideration in shaping the organizational environment and the assembly and reassembly of organizational practices. Representation of the point of view is not limited to its verbal articulation or reporting to decision-makers. Representation is achieved by formulation of the point of view, using it to create inclusive alternatives to exclusionary organizational practices, enlisting support from other organizational functionaries or recruiting them to action, and making it present in terms of importance and influence in processes of planning, decision-making, and change management in organizations.
- 8. Recruiting to the point of view.** Recruitment is part of the complex of actions taken by agents of change in order to promote the assimilation of inclusive (alternative) gender practices. It involves recruiting people to work toward embedding the women's point of view and transforming it from weak and silenced to powerful and influential in decision-making.

- 9. Sites of determination.** The organizational situation within which an idea, argument, or request can come to fruition and be transformed into practice. The site of determination can be a formal organizational situation, such as a decision-making forum, or an informal situation. It can be the decision of a single person (manager, boss) who has the authority and power to impose the necessary steps and means of realizing the practice on other individuals. It can also be an established institution of decision-making such as a board meeting, general meeting of an association, parliamentary vote or court ruling. The site of determination is not necessarily related to position in the organizational hierarchy. Thus, for example, in hierarchical bureaucratic organizations, sites of determination can occur at lower levels of the organization, as in the case of the clerk who has the authority to authorize a particular vital aspect of an alternative practice or when opposition from the union or moderation by middle management limits the power the CEO has to realize an inclusive alternative practice.
- 10. Regimes of justification.** Arguments mounted to explain people's positions with regard to exclusionary (or alternative inclusive) practices with a view to convincing others of their validity. Agents of change recruit other elements (human and non-human) by means of regimes of justification and use them as coercive and compelling forces in the controversy surrounding practice and at sites of determination.
- 11. Disruption.** A challenge to the arguments upon which exclusionary organizational practice is based that renders that practice questionable, controversial, and a problem that needs to be solved. For example, it is a longstanding and acceptable practice in a law firm to "compliment" female lawyers on their dress and appearance. When someone disrupts this practice by daring to react, demanding that this be stopped, her response simultaneously exposes and disrupts the practice. The common expression "that dress looks good on her" is no longer normative, but becomes an act that needs to be explained or apologized for. In other words, disruption is an act that upsets the fixed, silent, and blatant pattern of relations among those who uphold the exclusionary gender practice. Bruno Latour calls this act "opening the black box." Disruption is essential to instigating processes of change because it generates disagreements between various actors. Opening dialogue is what is needed to further the processes of change in the organization.

- 12. Disagreements.** An emergent dynamic that reflects the points of view, logics of action, and interests of various parties in the context of a practice (both the existing one and the proffered alternative). With regard to changing gender practices, disagreements are positive rather than negative phenomena. They help identify parties (human and non-human) that can help or interfere with the process of change and expose the points of view and arguments (regimes of justification) of each. They thus help the agents of change to decode the web of parties relevant to the change they seek to promote. Disagreements create interest and involvement among parties that can facilitate their enlistment in seeking to effect change. Overall, disagreements create organizational tension, dissensus, a need to make determinations, and solve problems, and all these can be used to further the process of change. In other words, the interests and involvement of parties can be understood as deriving from disagreements, which generate energy that furthers the process of change.
- 13. Coercive and compelling forces.** Forces that determine the relationship of a particular individual to an organizational practice (whether exclusionary or inclusive). The assumption is that individuals do not freely choose their position with regard to practice, but do so in response to various forces that coerce and compel their positions. These coercive and compelling forces might be a person's organizational role, subordination or obligation to other parties, fear of other parties, and even time or resource constraints. In other words, every individual is situated in relation to parties that propel and compel his or her relation to the practice and define his/her role in its existence. Effective recruitment makes the individual a compelling and coercive force for the decision-maker in the site of determination; participation in a decision-making situation compels – even coerces – an individual to support and/or implement the alternative practice. Human parties create coercion and compulsion as a result of hierarchical power, their commitments, the arguments they generate in a particular situation, their status in the organization, and the alliances that exist among them. Non-human factors, such as rules, public image, budget, or success models, can also be coercive and compelling forces for the decision-maker in the site of determination.



**SECTION ONE**

**GENDER DIAGNOSIS: DECODING  
AND REPRESENTING WOMEN'S POINTS  
OF VIEW IN THE ORGANIZATION**

## Chapter 3. The Point of View (pov) Group

A key to gaining a gender understanding of an organization is a point of view (POV) group. The group is composed of women who work in the same organization or in a common professional field. They hold a series of meetings in which they develop the ability to decipher the organization's gendered practices, generate alternative inclusive practices, and read the organizational-political structure and power relations that maintain the existing exclusionary practices. The group develops the necessary gender understanding of the organization from the point of view of women who experience the organization's practices – a required first step in the process of achieving gender equality in the organization. In addition, the group serves as a platform for forming a collective of gender equality agents who work in collaboration and solidarity to enact change toward gender equality in the organization. The term “point of view” refers to women's view of organizational practices - i.e., the manner in which women experience organizational practices and the manner in which they participate in them. Forming a collective of women who act as gender equality agents in the organization is a political action that challenges existing power relations in the organization. Hence, the POV group is an organizational intervention in and of itself. Organizing as a group facilitates the transition from the personal to the political: from personal experience to organizational practices, and from a collection of personal experiences to an understanding of the gendered structure of the organization. Collective organizing grants power and legitimacy to women's point of view, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of their colleagues, and creates a foundation for the promotion of gender equity in the organization.

### Exclusionary Gendered Practice

The POV group addresses the gendered situation in which women's perspective is weightless and ineffective in shaping organizational day-to-day reality and practices. Exclusion of women's POV from the shaping of the organizational everyday reality, determining procedures, allocating resources, setting priorities, and so forth is a gendered practice that exists in almost all organizations. As proposed in the introduction to this handbook, failure to acknowledge women's POV regarding an organizational practice is not the result of oversight or lack of awareness, but an active and deliberate organizational practice. Beyond exclusion and silencing, this practice serves as an obstacle to creating solidarity among women in the organization.

When women's POV is not acknowledged there are no opportunities for and no legitimization of collective identification and articulation of this POV. Therefore, there is no foundation for acts of solidarity among women from various positions and sectors in the organization. The POV group is a gender intervention meant to decipher and articulate women's POV on organizational practices and it is the first step in contending with the exclusion and silencing of women's experiences and voice.

## **Intervention: Mobilizing and Managing a POV Group**

A POV group has several objectives. First, it is a means to systematically identify a wide array of gendered practices in the organization. Women who are members of the group bring their perspectives on exclusionary gendered practices, born of their personal experiences in various organizational situations. Second, the group engenders and augments solidarity among agents of gender equality, partly because it provides power and legitimacy to their POV in the organization. Collective deciphering of gendered practices in the organization creates a common language among women, and the translation of their personal experiences into organizational patterns and practices creates a foundation for collective action. Third, the group lends strength and justification to processes of organizational change that aim to promote gender equality, because needs and priorities that arise from within the group validate women's POV and the necessary actions for bringing about change. In practical terms, the POV group gives its members tools with which to act as agents of social change and gender equality and enables them to prioritize and select which gendered practices they wish to address.

We recommend that the first action a formal agent of gender equality (such as an advisor for gender equality or women's advancement) should take is to convene a POV group. Such a group provides an authentic picture of the main exclusionary gendered practices in that specific organization. At the same time, it forms an action group of women who are committed to promoting gender equality and cooperating with her in her efforts to realize change in this area. These women are recruited to the group and are able to enhance the formal agent's influence in the organization. Moreover, experience indicates that action by a single gender equality agent is less effective than organized group action based on a shared language and the shared goals of members who participate in the assignments and share risks, successes, and failures. Single agent action is also more dangerous for that agent's organizational position than is group action. Following is a list of steps for establishing and directing a POV group, as well as for its collective action:

1. **Recruiting a POV group.** This will be a group of women who are willing to take the first step toward improving their situation in the organization. Though the women are not required to publicly declare themselves agents of gender equality or identify as feminists, the goal is that members of the group will eventually self-identify as active gender equality agents as the process advances and the group develops. It is therefore important to understand the position and power relations affecting the women we are attempting to recruit and remember that joining the group may not be suitable for all women in the organization.

The POV group is made up of women and is focused on women's point of view, and hence has only women participants (mixed men-women discussion groups are, of course, possible, but they are not the POV group). The all-women composition of a POV group does not mean that men in the organization are not relevant to the process of promoting gender equality. On the contrary, their role as allies is vital (see chapter 6 on allies).

We must stress that a POV group is action-oriented, unlike other types of groups, such as dynamic groups or groups aimed at self-empowerment of the participants. Being part of a POV group entails being committed to regular attendance and active participation at meetings, devoting time between meetings to gather necessary information or data, as well as reading materials, conducting discussions with other women in the organization, and so forth.

2. **Gender decoding of the organization.** As noted, the main objective of a POV group is to identify and map gendered practices in the organization from the point of view of the women participating in the group. Each one of the participants sees and experiences the organization from a different perspective and their coming together creates a rich and nuanced picture of the gendered practices. Group members learn the methodology of deciphering gendered practices in both theoretical and practical ways. Next, group members share their own experiences and personal stories, as well as those of other women in the organization, and translate them into concrete exclusionary gendered practices (based on the Exclusionary Gendered Practice test addressed in chapter 4). These personal experiences have both a functional and an emotional layer. Namely, when a woman describes her encounter with a practice that limits her ability to fulfill her job or causes a feeling of distress and humiliation or a sense of inferiority of some kind, we identify the practice as an exclusionary gendered practice (EGP) and mark it as a potential object for change.

Thus, for example, a group of women might identify a formal requirement for promotion, such as a training retreat or a post-doctorate abroad, as an EGP from their POV. Expressing personal experiences as practices decodes the gendered power relations members of the group, as well as other women in the organization, are subject to in their professional lives and facilitates understanding them. The personal experiences of members of the group are a means to deciphering the gendered situation in the organization, but they are not the only means. In many cases, it is important to have the group consider the POV of women who cannot or do not want to take part in the group personally, in order to enrich the mapping of practices and augment the legitimacy of the group. Sources of information about additional gendered practices include discussions with women from various sectors and levels of the organization who are not group participants, observation of organizational events and the manner in which women participate in them (such as board meetings, team discussions, social gatherings, or professional conferences), analysis of relevant organizational documents (for example, promotion procedures and regulations, if they exist). The group's first tangible product is a systematic catalog of authentic EGPs they identified in their organizational context (see chapter 4).

- 3. Designing gender interventions.** Gender mapping constitutes a foundation for determining priorities in selecting EGPs to address. The group can discuss and jointly formulate the priorities on the basis of simple criteria such as the number of women who would be affected by the change in practice or the impact on women in a wide array of positions and sectors in the organization. We would like to emphasize that there are no objective external criteria for determining priorities for action. Instead, the priorities of women from the group and their experiences are what motivates the direction of change and dictates the group's course of action. Moreover, the participants often feel that their choice of EGP to address should take into account the feasibility of such a change. Nevertheless, we encourage participants to ignore feasibility considerations such as financial cost, time needed, the existence of required technology, or other such considerations because feasibility is influenced by existing power relations and regimes of justification that the participants have internalized and that constitute an obstacle to determining priorities that faithfully represent their goals and points of view.

**4. Creating inclusive alternatives.** After the gendered practices have been identified, the next step in planning a gender intervention to address a specific EGP is to create inclusive alternatives. There is a variety of possible solutions that could serve as inclusive practices - namely, solutions that directly target the inequality inherent in the EGP, and transform the situation into a gender-inclusive one. For example, women employees who work in shifts indicated that the start and end times of shifts were an EGP because they did not take their constraints as mothers into account. They proposed an inclusive alternative that involved changing shift assignments and the start and end times of the shifts so that they were suited to both men and women. The alternative practice is a mode of operation that can replace the EGP. When it is implemented in the organization, both women and men can work and participate in the organization without any limitation, imposition, or barrier. Gender interventions in organizations are intended to bring about the realization and implementation of alternative practices in various areas, in accordance with the priorities determined by gender equality agents in that organization.

The development of inclusive alternatives is a creative yet structured brainstorming process. Members of the group make a list of wide-ranging ideas and suggestions without criticism or judgment from other participants and with no consideration for the practicality or feasibility of their idea. Questions of budget, time, regulations, and even legal aspects are not legitimate at this stage in the group's discussions. The need to ignore all feasibility considerations or suspend them is not an easy task in a group discussion, since we all have the tendency or habit of judging and ranking alternative solutions according, first and foremost, to their feasibility. However, in the context of organizational change, these considerations serve as feasibility regimes that perpetuate the given gendered situation. As noted above, because regimes of feasibility inherently reflect the gendered power mechanisms, judging the alternatives shuts down the discussion by silencing voices, ideas, and suggestions. The group's discussion requires thinking outside the box along with systematic rebuttal of feasibility regimes and preventing them from infiltrating the discussion. After brainstorming, the group uses the collection of ideas to build an alternative practice for implementation. The proposed alternative practice is re-examined by the group members: Does it indeed challenge the exclusionary situation? Will it bring about new exclusion or difficulties?

## Moderation of a POV Group

As noted above, the POV group provides the organization's formal agent of gender equality (e.g., an advisor for gender equality) an opportunity to create an action group that will join her in the effort to promote gender equality in the organization and thus empower her and enhance her activities. The advisor leads the women and establishes their commitment to the group and the actions it entails. If the organization does not have a formal agent of gender equality, a group of women can themselves form and lead a POV group. Here are some moderation and management issues the leaders of the group should be aware of:

1. A POV group should hold a series of 6–8 meetings in order to complete the process of identifying gendered practices that is the foundation for further actions. Each meeting lasts 2–3 hours. It is important to advertise the dates of the meetings in advance and to make sure they take place on regular days at regular times. Consistent attendance and active participation are critical for the success of the group. However, experience shows that POV groups are not closed groups in the sense that only the women who came to the first meeting can participate later on. In most cases, there will be women who will join the process at different stages and this can certainly be accommodated. Likewise, there will be women who will stop coming to the meetings for various reasons and it is important to understand their reasons in order to examine whether they can be recruited again.
2. There are several important rules to observe during group meetings. First, discretion: what is said in the group stays in the group. The participants are not entitled to reveal the content of the group's discussions to anyone who is not a participant unless they have received permission from the members of the group or doing so is part of a planned action. Second, there can be no judgment. Understanding women's POV on organizational practices requires participants to refrain from judging any personal experiences related to the group or the women relating them. Because the goal is to give voice to women's POV, the POV of all group members must be validated. This validation creates trust and solidarity among the women and enables them to bring their gender perspective to more and more sites and areas of action in the organization. Therefore, even if an experience told by one of the participants seems irrelevant to another, or reflects a lack of understanding of organizational culture, a personal difficulty of the teller, or an incorrect interpretation of a particular situation, other participants must refrain from any judgmental response.

The means by which the group members decide whether a practice is an EGP is the test described in chapter 4. Third, and directly related to neutralizing judgment, it is very important that the participants do not respond to other women's stories with suggestions or recommendations as to how to solve the problem described or what to say or do next time the situation arises. The objective at this stage is not to identify or formulate recommended solutions or actions, but to decipher and expose women's POV on gendered practices. Fourth, everyone talks. Not everyone who comes to a meeting will feel comfortable or confident enough to share her experiences. Sometimes there are even power relations among the women in the group (for example, if senior and junior women managers participate together) that can prevent participants from sharing their experiences and points of view. However, it is important to ensure that every participant can speak and participate in order to build solidarity among the women, validate a variety of perspectives, and identify as wide a range of gendered practices as possible. This can be achieved by adhering to an order of speaking or encouraging those who have not yet spoken to do so. Fifth, documentation is extremely important; the central goal of a POV group is to identify EGPs and create a detailed catalog of them. It is usually not possible to process and analyze everything that was said during the meeting itself, and it is therefore important to document things as comprehensively as possible so that members of the group can process them between meetings and make notes about EGPs, assignments, responsibilities within the group (if relevant), decisions taken, etc.

3. Intrinsic to the group's discussions are objections that members of the group might have to interpret situations or experiences as exclusionary gendered practices. In the context of gender power relations within the organization, women's POV on organizational practices is usually excluded and silenced and therefore its exposure – the very attempt to translate personal experiences into EGPs – undermines these power relations. Members of the group are not inured to the gender power relations in the organization and sometimes objections to issues that come up in the discussions directly reflect their position within these power relations. Thus, for example, there are women who function as the organization's gatekeepers and they bring men's POV to the meeting and consistently express concern for men and their situation. There are women who will claim never to have seen or experienced EGPs in contradistinction to the reports of other women (whether sexual harassment, pay discrimination, lack of voice in a discussion, or any other EGP) – "It's never happened to me," they will say.



Another type of objection is “blaming the victim” - i.e., telling another participant in the group that “it’s in your hands,” “it was your choice,” “anyone who works hard enough can achieve it,” etc. This type of objection will usually be accompanied by recommendations to another participant on how to handle things differently. In practice, this type of reaction might silence the speaker because it detracts from the validity of her POV and turns back the experience from the organizational to the personal dimension. Conceptualizing these types of responses as “objections” is itself a type of judgment. From our POV, this type of response embodies practices of silencing and exclusion of women’s voices and POVs, and therefore constitutes objection to identifying EGPs and exposing gender power relations in the organization. Contending with objections that arise among women in the group is challenging but essential to the creation of a common language and solidarity among the participants. Sometimes other members of the group will address the objections, but the group leaders must respond when needed. Sometimes stressing the principle of non-judgment will suffice. Other times, we must reiterate the principle of exposing personal experiences and POVs as both a means and an end. In certain cases, one might interpret the “it didn’t happen to me” response as an expression of a privileged position in the organization and stress the importance of recruiting this privilege and the power it entails for the good of other women in the organization.

## Conclusion

The POV group is the foundation for the advisor or agent’s actions toward gender equality in the organization. The group provides the agent with a detailed and reliable map of EGPs and serves as the starting point for the validation and empowerment of women’s POV so that it will play an influential part in shaping organizational practices and realities just as much as the financial, political, or men’s POVs do. The methodological emphases for moderating a POV group presented in this chapter are vital for turning the group into an influential force in the organization. Participation in a POV group establishes and enhances women’s trust in the gender equality agent and optimism with regard to the process of change. However, this trust is a check that must be cashed through determined and informed action to realize and implement in the organization inclusive practices generated by the group.

## Chapter 4. Catalog of Gendered Practices in Organizations

Formulating a gender perspective of an organization begins with a comprehensive decoding of the various exclusionary gendered practices found throughout its structure. Practically speaking, a comprehensive picture of the gendered practices in an organization is the cornerstone and foundation for the gender equality agent's action plan. It facilitates planning and prioritizing the necessary actions for addressing the severest of these practices and generates a common language among women working together toward gender equality in the organization.

This chapter presents the methodology used to obtain such a picture, based on extensive deciphering of existing gendered practices from women's point of view. This organizational picture is organized using what we call a **"catalog of practices,"** a tool that allows for the orderly presentation of various types of gendered practices. The catalog is a key tool in instigating action for gender equality, but it can also serve as part of a wider and more extensive depiction of gender equality (or lack thereof) in the organization that includes monitoring of quantitative indicators, as is discussed in chapter 5.

### The Purpose of a Practices Catalog

Cataloging practices in a systematic and orderly manner is important for several reasons. First, the catalog is constructed through a participatory and collaborative process of deciphering and exposing women's POV on organizational practices. This is not a research study, but a process in which women from various sectors and levels of the organization decode and express the manner in which they experience various aspects of the organization. In doing so, they learn to examine all aspects of organizational life through a gender lens. As noted, the process of creating the catalog is a participatory one and the participation of as many groups of women as possible is itself an empowering process. It provides participating women with tools to identify and understand the gender power relations that affect them and to be active in having their point of view and perspectives represented and acknowledged. Overall, the process of creating a catalog of gendered practices is a solidarity-building exercise for women in organizations.

Second, the catalog is an authentic expression of women's POVs and of the manner in which they experience organizations and their work within them. Because understanding women's POVs is the foundation of actions to promote gender equality in organizations, systematic and comprehensive presentation of these POVs by means of a catalog of practices is of great importance.

Third, the status of gender equality in the organization revealed by the catalog is the basis for prioritizing and planning how to effect gender equality change. Participating women can use the catalog to find common language and criteria to select and prioritize the issues that are to be addressed. Moreover, the catalog of practices can serve as a platform for quantitative monitoring of gender equality in organizations and guide the development of measurement tools and quantitative indicators that facilitate the long-term monitoring of change (see chapter 5). It is important to note that developing such a catalog is an ongoing process. In theory, within every interaction or discussion between women in the organization, new types of gendered practices can be identified and additional sectors of the organization may be viewed from a gender perspective to reveal additional gendered practices.

## Constructing a Catalog of Gendered Practices

### 1. Structure of the catalog

The catalog of practices is made up of generic categories of exclusionary gendered practices. Though every organization will have its own spectrum of gendered practices, research and experience have shown that there are common categories, or generic families of practices, that exist in almost all organizations. In other words, because of the similarity between organizations in terms of structure, organizational processes, work regulations, organizational culture, and other aspects of organizational life (isomorphism),<sup>3</sup> the same categories will almost always be relevant. However, each organization is also unique and has a specific context in which it operates. It is therefore very important to decode the organization's specific and concrete expressions of gendered practices from the point of view of women who are employed by that organization. Thus, for example, almost every organization recruits new personnel from time to time, but the practices used by universities in recruiting academic faculty are different from those used by an international technology company or by the police. In each organization, the gendered practices that appear in the catalog must be based on concrete situations and the unique internal language of that organization.

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3 Isomorphism is the process whereby organizations mimic one another, becoming similar in their practices. See, for example, Meyer and Rowan 2010.

Figure 1 illustrates generic categories of organizational practices within which specific gendered practices can be identified and classified. A customized depiction of the gender equality situation can also be laid out. Each category is elaborated upon briefly below the figure.

**Figure 1. Categories of organizational gendered practices**



- ❖ **Recruiting and tracking practices.** Definitions of human capital and demographic characteristics required for the job (e.g., education, language, professional and employment experience, personal traits, place of residence, military experience, availability for non-standard work hours, etc.), methods and platforms for advertising available positions, screening tools and the cultural biases inherent in them, and even women's perception of a gender-restricted structure of opportunities and self-exclusion from certain jobs or tenders.
- ❖ **Pay and compensation practices.** Various types of employment agreements (e.g., personal contract, collective agreement, executive contract, etc.), job description and evaluation, available bonuses, compensation for part-time work, for work from home and for invisible work, internal labor markets' tracking, and gender or sectorial negotiating power.
- ❖ **Sexual and gender harassment practices.** Sexual harassment constitutes an organizational practice because it takes place within and under the aegis of the organization. Such practices allow for the treatment of women as (sexual) objects instead of subjects, thus perpetuating gender power relations in the organization.

A wide variety of practices are included in this category: from sexual remarks, propositions, and allusions and watching pornography openly during work hours to imposed physical contact (for elaboration, see chapter 11 on prevention of sexual harassment in the organization). Gender harassment practices include exploitation and degradation of women just because they are women, even if there is no explicit sexual dimension. Two common examples are: “Women shouldn’t be managers,” and “You drop your pen at 3pm and don’t care about work afterward.”

- ❖ **Professional work practices.** Every organization has practices pertaining to professional performance. In schools, these include instruction; at a newspaper, they are writing and editing; in tech, they are R&D and programming; in the army, it is combat. Each of these has gendered aspects that must be identified and deciphered according to the experience of women who participate in them. For example, a news report about a woman murdered by her husband could be reported as an “honor killing” or as “gender-based domestic violence.” Another example is Google Translate, which by default translates the English word “doctor” into the Hebrew masculine form of the word and “secretary” into the feminine form.
- ❖ **Work-Life balance.** This category is rich in practices that hinder and even prevent women, especially mothers, from participating in certain organizational sectors or positions. Among others, this category includes start and end times for the workday, availability of flexible and part-time positions or shifts, hours in which team meetings are conducted, international travel requirements, expectations to work during weekends and holidays, vacations and sick leave, participation in social events, parenting policy, working from home, etc.
- ❖ **Power and silencing in speech acts.** Speech acts are organizational situations in which the act of speaking demonstrates knowledge, expertise, ability, professional authority, and power, and gives the speaker the opportunity to accrue organizational capital. The situation could be a team meeting, panel discussion, lecture, department seminar, board meeting, classroom, customer presentation, etc. Practices of gender silencing in these forums include sayings, modes of expression, tone, or body language used by one of the participants to belittle, silence, or marginalize the voice, authority, and self-confidence of a woman. These practices include, among other things, mansplaining,<sup>4</sup> interruption, dismissive gestures, having only one woman in a forum of men, failure to give credit, idea appropriation, and more (for elaboration and expansion, see chapter 12, which presents interventions for disrupting or counteracting such practices).

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4 Mansplaining is when a man explains something to a woman even though she knows more about the subject than he does. For a detailed explanation, see Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mansplaining>.

- ❖ **Evaluation and promotion practices.** The variety of practices that influence women's chances of promotion in organizational and professional hierarchies. Among other things, these include the manner in which promotion tracks are defined and the organizational capital required for promotion, potential mobility between various organizational positions and internal sectors, the evaluation tools that are employed, networking, etc.
- ❖ **Training practices.** Opportunities to acquire knowledge and education or receive professional training, the language in which the training and textbooks are delivered, various teaching aids, types of tutorial and instruction (e.g., theoretical versus practical, personal versus group-based), types and characteristics of tests, how excellence is defined, and the manner in which success is assessed.
- ❖ **Physical and spatial infrastructure practices.** Physical equipment, accessibility by public transport, public bathrooms (are there enough? are they clean? are they near enough to workstations? are there feminine hygiene products available?) parking availability, devices and aids used during work, lighting, existence of a milk expressing room, etc.
- ❖ **Organizational symbols and culture.** Practices that reflect the ideology and meaning that justify and replicate gendered power relations through organizational culture. These include the tacit rules of how things are done, norms and expected behaviors, speech styles, nonverbal behaviors, etc. These rules generate gendered practices that define who the ideal employees and managers are, what it means to excel at work, what the ideal skills are, level of suitability for the job, how commitment and loyalty to the organization are expressed.

## 2. Constructing the Catalog of Gendered Practices

- a. **Decipher and identify.** Uncovering EGPs in organizations can be done in several ways:
  1. **POV group.** A group of women from various sectors and positions in the organization who participate in a series of structured meetings to examine and decode the gendered aspects and implications of various organizational practices from their point of view. To locate and identify EGPs, members of the group can use the EGP test (see below). The POV group methodology was presented in detail in chapter 3.

- 2. Interviews and conversations with women from various parts of the organization.** Interviews can be conducted as part of a formal research process, as part of the evaluation of the organization the gender equality agent conducts at the beginning of her appointment, or as an ongoing activity in the organization. Likewise, women who participate in the POV group can speak with other women in the organization who are not part of the group to add their POVs on gendered practices to the catalog.
  - 3. Participation in everyday organizational activities.** Participation and observations are a rich source of information that the agent of gender equality can use to identify EGPs in the organization. These include professional discussions, work meetings (teams and management), social gatherings, and other events. Her personal participation enables her to identify a wide array of gendered practices just by observing everyday situations through a gender lens.
  - 4. Analysis of quantitative data.** Some EGPs are reflected in quantitative data that is routinely collected in the organization. For example, human resource data, pay data, or data on organizational structure can be used to identify gendered differences in recruiting, promotion, compensation, and position in the organization. Therefore, these constitute indicators of EGPs (see chapter 5 for more on quantitative monitoring of EGPs and generating a picture of gender equality in the organization).
- b. Document.** Systematic documentation of materials from POV group discussions, interviews, and observations is essential for constructing the catalog of gendered practices. It is important to maintain discretion while documenting and not reveal the identity of specific women who have shared their experiences and POVs.
- c. Perform the EGP test.** The raw material for the catalog of gendered practices is a varied collection of personal experiences from the various sources described above that is documented by the gender equality agent. How is the transition from personal experience to identification of EGP achieved? The answer lies in the EGP test, which is a tool for identifying recurring patterns that position women and men differently, with negative implications for women. This test consists of three simple questions:
- 1. Is the experience that was described part of an organizational practice?** When an experience is not a one-time or coincidental event but rather recurs at various times, to various women, in various sectors in the organization, it is an organizational practice.

2. **Is the practice gender-based?** If the practice (situation) that is described creates a systematic and lasting difference between men and women (or between a certain group of women and a certain group of men), then it is a gendered practice. There may be differences between women and men in the organization, including the degree and nature of representation in various ranks and sectors; the amount of power, authority, autonomy, and responsibility; the communication patterns and social interactions; the codes and demands related to external appearance, distribution of work, employment conditions, equipment and resources, physical location in the office, etc.
  
3. **Does the gendered practice have exclusionary implications?** If the differences between women and men have hierarchical implications - i.e., renders women employees inferior, presents them with difficulties, restricts their opportunities or hampers functioning, gives them a sense of being disrespected, etc. - then it is an exclusionary gendered practice. The implications can be concrete (lower compensation, no promotion, lack of representation, fewer resources), symbolic (lower professional status, less prestige), and emotional (sense of being exploited, humiliated, belittled, or marginalized).

The purpose of the questions in the “test” is not to judge whether the exclusionary practice is genuine. Rather, the questions of the EGP test are a means of observing the entire organization through the gender lens, exposing power relations from the POV of women and creating a common language and a sense of solidarity among women in the organization.

Likewise, it is important to emphasize that a personal experience shared by a participant in the POV group should not be put to a statistical or legal test. A woman who shares her experience has no need to provide proof that the gendered practice indeed has negative implications for her or that a certain percentage of women in the organization have experienced the same. As noted above, the objective of the catalog of practices is to reveal, give voice to, and embody the POVs of women in the organization with regard to organizational practices. These POVs do not need to meet any external criteria beyond the personal interpretation of the women who experienced the practice and the exclusionary gender implication that she attributed to it (for more on the importance of lack of judgment, see chapter 7, which deals with regimes of justification, and chapter 3 on the POV group).



- d. Represent practices in the catalog.** Every gendered practice that is brought up by women in the organization will be presented in the catalog as a clear, concrete behavioral situation. It will include the sequence of events, language used, and a description of its gendered implications from the POV of the woman describing it. The practice is not described in abstract or general terms, such as discrimination, socialization, education, stereotypes, patriarchy, organizational culture, environment, or discourse. We recommend presenting the various practices by dividing them into the aforementioned generic categories. For example, earmarking hi-tech programming jobs for men can be described thus:

When receiving resumes of new candidates for a programming job in a high-tech company, the recruiter from the department of human resources puts women's resumes to one side, assuming that women are less suited and less desirable for this job because it is very demanding in terms of hours and requires a lot of travel abroad. In the ten years that the company has existed only two women have been hired for this position.

A visual representation of the main categories in the catalog can also be used, as was demonstrated in Figure 1. The illustration serves to assist the POV group in the process of locating and mapping gendered practices and can also aid in presenting the catalog to various actors and stakeholders in the organization.

- e. Classify practices.** After a large number of gendered practices have been collected, it must be decided how to classify them in the catalog. There are two possibilities for classification. The first is using pre-existing categories such as those on the list of generic categories presented above, which is based on accumulated evidence from diverse organizations and from academic research in the field. Alternatively, gendered practices can be classified according to unique characteristics of the organization. For example, in organizations where there are significant differences among different sectors in terms of work arrangements and type of personnel employed - e.g., permanent versus temporary employees or production-line workers versus managers - the relevant categories might be related to those characteristics. In most cases, using both systems simultaneously addresses the range of gendered practices found in the organization.

### 3. Using the catalog of practices

Creating a catalog of gendered practices in an organization is a never-ending task. Every encounter with women in the organization or participation in a professional meeting or social gathering can yield more examples of practices that are not yet included in the catalog. Hence, the catalog is a dynamic working tool that the agent of gender equality can use in designing her action plan. It can help her focus her efforts and prioritize topics that need to be addressed and dealt with and determine how to go about effecting change. Priorities will be determined on the basis of criteria and at the discretion of the agent and her partners in the initiative. The criteria could be practices that:

- ❖ have impact on many women or many groups of women;
- ❖ influence other practices;
- ❖ are important because they have severe negative consequences that must be dealt with urgently;
- ❖ have ethical, moral, or practical importance for the group leading the change.

Oftentimes, the feasibility of the change is perceived as the key criterion, but from our point of view, it is the least recommended. Raising the question of feasibility at such an early stage of the process invokes various arguments (regimes of justification) against the change, and constrains initiation or promotion of the move itself (for more on the subject see chapter 6 on recruiting allies for the process of change).

A rich catalog of gendered practices can be presented in the form of a written report or in a digital format (e.g., a PowerPoint presentation). The publication and presentation of the catalog serve not only the strategic planning of the gender equality agent, but help to empower and gain legitimacy for women's POVs in the organization. The fact that it was created by means of an organized, methodological, and systematic process, and originates from actual experiences of women in the organization, lends it validity even in the eyes of those who did not take part in the process. The catalog transforms the point of view of women from being invisible and silenced into explicit and articulated, and contributes to the validity and legitimacy of women's POV in the eyes of various actors. Presenting it in organizational forums is part of the process of infusing women's POV with weight and power, and it is a basis for establishing dialogue with other women in the organization and recruiting them to contribute to the processes of change toward gender equality.

However, the hierarchical structure of organizations can be misleading because it creates the impression that presenting the gendered picture to decision-makers in the highest positions in the hierarchy is a first or essential step in realizing the organizational change we are seeking. The gendered practices catalog is the foundation for political action in the organization (see chapter 6 “Mobilizing Allies”). Therefore, when and to whom to present it should be carefully considered as part of the overall strategic plan.

## Conclusion

Identifying and mapping gendered practices of the organization is an essential foundation for the work of a gender equality agent. The mapping makes it possible to locate EGPs in various sectors and levels of the organization as well as understand their exclusionary implications for women. Organizing the practices into a systematic catalog creates a detailed and rich picture of the work experience of women in the organization from their point of view. The catalog of gendered practices helps the agent create a strategic plan of action to promote gender equity in the organization and fosters solidarity among women, even recruiting them to become agents of gender equality themselves. The catalog is a dynamic tool because identifying EGPs in the organization is an ongoing process. The more varied the characteristics of the women who join in the process (in terms of position in the organization, seniority, professional occupation, life situations, and social characteristics), the more comprehensive the catalog will be in terms of the points of view it represents.

## Chapter 5. Assessing the Status of Gender Equality in Organizations: Quantitative Monitoring

Agents of social change acting to promote gender equality in various organizational arenas often find they require reliable and systematic statistical data in order to assess the status of gender equality in the organization and to support inclusive gendered practices they aim to promote and implement (see, for example, Demetriades 2010). This need may be raised by the social change agents themselves, as they seek to monitor trends in gender inequality in the organization over time and establish the need for organizational change to reduce gender inequality. Quantitative data is seen as objective and as proof that inequality exists, lending credibility to the gender equality agents' arguments that change is needed. The need for statistical data on gender gaps might also be raised by various stakeholders in the organization seeking quantitative data as "objective proof" of claims of gendered unfairness in specific practices. Therefore, statistical data are non-human actors that bolster the gender equality agent's efforts to enlist allies in support of the change in gendered practices she is promoting in the organization. The power of statistical data lies in its being reliable and up-to-date, its ability to serve as the basis for comparisons with other organizations, and its usefulness in identifying trends of change over time. As a non-human actor, statistical data can assist the gender equality agent in establishing her arguments and in refuting opposing arguments.

When seeking statistical data relevant to the issues of gender equality, we are often disappointed to find that the data we need is not being collected by the organization, or is collected but not segmented by gender, or is collected based on definitions that do not match our needs. In other cases, we may discover that relevant data exists, but is not accessible to us. Therefore, collecting data and creating a credible, rigorous, and up-to-date database to lay the groundwork for a baseline picture on the status of gender equality in the organization is a political act and a change in gendered organizational practices in its own right. Despite all of the difficulties, we find it crucial that we be able to present a quantitative baseline report on the status of men and women in the organization, because it is a powerful tool for highlighting gender gaps, setting priorities for action, and enlisting allies. How, then, shall we compile such a baseline report? What data is required? In this chapter we will discuss these issues from the gender equality agent's point of view.

## Objectives

Constructing a gender equality status report on an organization is an effort requiring significant time and labor resources, and at times even a dedicated budget. What are the main objectives of this report? First, mapping gender disparities in various areas (representation, compensation, power, and so on) can help identify problems and prioritize the issues to be addressed – both vis-à-vis the organization's management and for the social change agent herself. Second, monitoring gender equality (or inequality) in the organization over time allows us to identify any trends of change that may exist and provides feedback to the decision-makers in the organization as to organizational efforts to promote gender equality. Third, a baseline gender report is a tool for giving voice to women's point of view on organizational practices in the organization: the data (indicators) selected to be part of the report are associated with the gendered practices identified by a women's POV group previously; discussion of the findings at different levels of the organization; the need for different organizational actors to provide data for the report. All of these highlight the gender perspective and help generate discussion on the gender situation in the organization in general, as well as generating disruption and controversy around specific practices. Finally, creating a baseline report requires gender-sensitive data to be collected (e.g., gender-segmented statistical data on various issues –regarding both men and women and regarding gender subgroups by age, organizational sector, or other relevant variables), and therefore efforts to create the baseline report can affect the way the organization collects its data.

## Intervention

How should we create the organizational gender baseline report? How should we select relevant indicators to be tracked over time and reported? What data should it include? What does the data mean and how can it be interpreted? We propose a model for creating an organizational gender baseline report, which will be understood as a non-human actor in the organizational network.

### 1. A model for indicator selection

Data collection and monitoring in each organization must focus on the issues relevant and meaningful to that organization. We recommended, therefore, defining an organizational vision regarding gender equality in advance – that is, defining the organization's central aspirations for integrating women in an equal and dignified manner.

This vision may be defined by the organization's leadership, but it can and should also be defined by the agent of gender equality together with a women's POV group. In this way, the organization's vision will reflect the issues meaningful to the women who work in the organization and give voice to their points of view on and experiences with organizational practices. We recommend that this vision address each of four key dimensions.

- ❖ Women participate broadly, meaningfully, and representatively in the various echelons and sectors of the organization.
- ❖ Women influence the organization and participate in shaping organizational realities.
- ❖ Women benefit, earn, and receive equal compensation in the organization.
- ❖ Women feel they are an integral part of the organization, enjoy their work and affiliation with the organization, and feel safe and respected within it.

The data collected and presented in the organizational gender baseline report will become indicators for the status of gender inequality in the organization in each of the dimensions listed above. The data can speak to the situation of women or to a gap between men and women (a gender gap). For example:

- ❖ **Participation.** The proportion of women compared to men in various sectors and echelons, in recruitment and promotion by organizational sector, in internal labor markets and among tender winners, and the level of occupational segregation.
- ❖ **Influence.** The proportion of women compared to men in various levels of management (senior management, middle management, management reserves, executive board, board of directors) and in decision-making forums and sites (both formal and informal).
- ❖ **Compensation.** The rate of women compared to men in various employment arrangements (collective agreements, including second-generation agreements, contract work through temp agencies, personal contracts, etc.), pay grades, accessibility to fringe benefits, full- and part-time positions, extent of unpaid labor, and so on.
- ❖ **Affiliation and security.** Job satisfaction, extent of complaints about sexual and gender harassment, number of calls to the hotline, etc.

Because each organization collects a lot of data and of many different types (such as data on pay and compensation, evaluation and promotion, workers' satisfaction, budget, etc.), we recommend that the choice of data also be made in close association with gendered practices that the women's POV group has identified and mapped (see chapter 4, "Catalog of Gendered Practices in Organizations"). This association will help ensure that the baseline report is compiled truly from the point of view of women, and that its presentation assists in giving voice to this point of view throughout the organizational hierarchy. Thus, for example, if a practice has been identified that makes it difficult for women to join training courses for senior management positions, the quantitative indicator that needs to be collected for creating the report is the proportion of women compared to men among the candidates for these courses or in the courses themselves.

## 2. Collecting Data

As noted, every organization possesses a broad range of data and databases. These are held by various organizational actors (HR, finance department, accounting, external accountants, department heads, commissioner of prevention of sexual harassment, etc.) and in various forms (on the individual level or aggregated statistical data, with or without identifying personal details, gender-segmented or not, data over time or only for a specific year, etc.). In most cases, this data is not directly accessible to the gender equality agents. They must request it from various organizational actors who are not always glad to share it. Providing the data sometimes requires time-consuming preparations and adjustments on the part of the data holder. Queries to data holders in the organization are essentially enlistment efforts – we need the cooperation of the organization's data holders and enlist them to provide data in such form and with such segmentation as appropriate to our goals. Chapter 6, which discusses the enlistment of partners and allies, can be consulted in preparation for such data requests.

Another issue to consider is what data is missing – for example, in what areas no data has been collected whatsoever, or which subgroups in the organization are not sufficiently represented by the data. The gender perspective reveals such data deficiencies and can motivate its collection. This action in itself is a highly significant change in gendered organizational practices, as the lack of gender data is an indicator that the data is not being collected (also) from women's perspective, and that the organization's attention is not focused on those gendered issues for which data was lacking.

In creating the gender baseline report, quantitative data can be combined with the personal experiences women shared in the POV group (qualitative data). This is another way to give voice to women's point of view on organizational practices, especially in areas where quantitative data falls short.

Gender equality agents responsible for compiling a gender baseline report may discover they invest all of their time and energy in acquiring and understanding data, adjusting it to their needs and organizing its presentation. Thus, a tool that was intended to provide a basis for actions and efforts to promote gender equality often becomes the bulk of their activity in the organization. To avoid this, the scope of quantitative monitoring can be limited, both in terms of the number of indicators and their sub-segmentations, and in terms of the number of time points used to identify trends. Additionally, one can outline an ongoing work plan over several years, with indicators gradually added to the quantitative monitoring so that the collection efforts are spread out over a long period of time.

### **3. Interpreting data and identifying its implications**

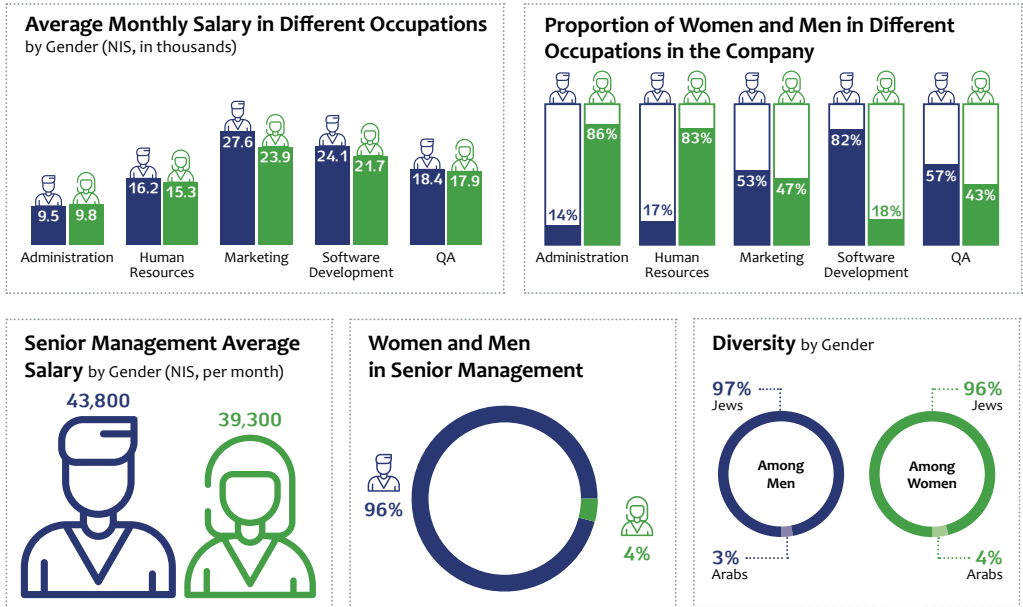
Presenting different kinds of data in an organization opens the way for controversy between stakeholders as to the “correct” interpretation and implications that may be read into the data, as well as addressing the data’s credibility and relevance. There will always be organizational actors who try to challenge the data, interpret it differently, or propose alternative data to promote their own point of view. To preempt such opposition, we recommend presenting the baseline report and the data within it to additional social change agents and to a POV group of women, including relevant experts, to examine and interpret the data before the data is presented in the organization. This can minimize the ability of stakeholders in the organization to challenge the report’s credibility, interpretation, the implications we derive from it, or the recommendations we propose.

### **4. Taking action based on the baseline report**

The data and the gender baseline report are a non-human actor serving the agents of gender equality in the process of enlisting partners to support their efforts to bring about organizational change. We recommend presenting the baseline report in a friendly and easily understood visual format (see, for example, Figure 2). Relating the gender baseline report to the organization’s vision for gender equality can also magnify the power of the report in mobilization and decision-making situations, as it can highlight disparities between the existing reality and the organization’s vision. As noted, the power of the report lies in its data being current and credible, its interpretation incontrovertible, and its ability to reveal trends over time and the gap between the situation within the organization and the situation in other organizations.



**Figure 2. An organizational gender baseline report (illustration)**



## Conclusion

Numbers and data are very powerful in setting organizational processes in motion, and therefore a gender baseline report that presents credible and objective data that is difficult to argue with is a powerful tool for agents of gender equality. The numerical data is perceived as organizational “truth” and becomes a powerful justification regime in itself, potentially forcing the organization to address gendered barriers and disparities. The process of creating the report is a platform for building solidarity among women and mobilizing them, thanks to meet-ups in which diverse women in the organization can participate in interpreting the data and giving the baseline report meaning from their own point of view. This process is also an organizational intervention in and of itself, as many organizations tend not to make data easily accessible, so the very process of locating the needed data and acquiring permission to use it requires the enlistment of various organizational actors, both women and men. This enlistment is a significant achievement in and of itself.

**SECTION TWO**

**RECRUITING ALLIES TO  
WOMEN'S POINT OF VIEW**

## Chapter 6. Mobilizing Allies

The power relations between women's point of view and the experiences it reflects and the variety of organizational actors embedded in the existing practice in various ways are asymmetrical. Exposing women's point of view undermines the existing social and organizational order, as it means disrupting and changing routine, conventional, transparent practices in which many organizational actors are embedded. Usually, the agents of gender equality are few and the organizational actors are many, and they have power the women do not. Their POV establishes organizational practices and realities, and their professional logics, their interests, their needs, and their payoffs are reflected in the way the practice is organized; they have the power to maintain the practice and they have the power to change it. Therefore, the journey of women's point of view to the organization's sites of determination is a journey to build enough power to force the various actors and decision-makers to take into account women's point of view, and give it weight and significance when they make decisions regarding the manner in which organizational practice is organized.

The way to establish women's point of view as a compelling and coercive force is to mobilize the power of additional actors as allies. The more allies the agent of gender equality mobilizes, the greater the compelling and coercive force of the POV at the sites of determination. The more supporters the POV gains, the harder it becomes to resist, ignore, or silence it. One of the greatest fallacies in proactive efforts to promote gender equality is the belief that merely revealing women's POV to the power holders will suffice to cause them to make the necessary changes in the gendered practice and make it inclusive. This approach underestimates the power invested in maintaining the exclusionary gendered practice as it is. For a change to be implemented successfully, there is no alternative to combining efforts to mobilize allies, support, and power for the organizational change process. Therefore, the gender equality agent is also a recruitment agent. This is both a difficulty and a challenge for gender equality and social change agents. We are usually accustomed to acting from, and in the name of, our organizational position according to bureaucratic rules and "through the proper channels." But implementing change for gender equality requires deviation from these formal rules, as well as action on informal levels within the organization. In many cases, this level is important and decisive in decision-making processes within the organization.

In this chapter we describe methods for enlisting allies and gathering support from various actors in the organization, laying out concrete steps to identify actors who are critical for the change in organizational practices we wish to implement and the modes of recruitment appropriate for them. From our experience, gender equality and social change agents balk at taking these steps at the initial encounter with relevant actors. Therefore, we suggest viewing the acquisition of skills and experience with the abilities presented in this chapter as a challenge. These skills ultimately reflect an ability to read and understand other people, to build cooperation and enlist solidarity among actors, and as such they are valuable beyond their importance in promoting gender equality in an organization.

## **Practices for Mobilizing Allies**

The more organizational actors embedded in the exclusionary practice express their support and participate in the transformation of the existing practice to one that is inclusive from the point of view of women, the greater the chance of gathering sufficient compelling and coercive force to effectively change the practice. The way to turn embedded actors into allies is by means of mobilization – recruiting the actor's power to the organizational change process. In the course of mobilizing power for change, important and central actors are enlisted to take action in the transformation effort – action that promotes the implementation of an alternative practice in the organization. The more actors embedded in the practice take action in support of women's point of view, represented by the gender equality agent, the greater the validity, weight, legitimacy, and impact of women's point of view in shaping the organizational practices.

The act of mobilization places organizational actors in a situation in which they are prepared to take an action serving the change of the exclusionary practice into an inclusive one. The action for which an actor is enlisted may be support, encouragement, decision, non-opposition, or taking practical supportive action (talking to someone, convincing someone, looking into something, carrying something out). The ability to mobilize an actor is a complex one: it requires mapping out organizational networks of power relations, deciphering an actor's POV, and choosing mobilization methods according to the actor's embeddedness in the practice, as well as rhetorical competence and quick thinking. Here we sketch a general outline of the mobilization process.

## 1. Identifying actors embedded in the practice

It is not enough for a gender equality agent or POV group to identify and decipher exclusionary practices and propose fair and effective alternatives, in order for inclusive practices to be implemented in the organization – this is only the beginning of the process. Organizations are tangled networks of actors and every practice involves many of them, some inside the organization and some outside it, in its institutional environment. Therefore, realizing change requires contending with the organizational-political networks within the organization and those surrounding it in order to build and accumulate enough power to shift the balance of power that keeps the existing gendered practice in place. That is why the first step in planning an action directed at promoting gender equality in an organization is to identify the organizational actors who uphold, maintain, and preserve the exclusionary gendered practice over time and lay them out in an **organized list of actors**.

In practical terms, one must begin with a list of organizational actors embedded in the exclusionary practice and with those who will be affected by the alternative inclusive practice. “Embeddedness” means that the actors are active in relation to the practice. They are part of it and have an active role in its functioning, preservation, or change. These can be people in positions directly relevant to decision-making regarding the organizational change that the group aims to promote, managers who are part of upholding the currently existing exclusionary practice, or workers who will be required to carry out the alternative practice the group seeks to implement. Of course, there can be a great deal of overlap between these lists, as often the same organizational actors will be part of both the existing practice and the alternative one.

This stage requires deep familiarity and interaction with the organizational practice in particular and the organization in general. Compiling a list of actors requires efforts to find out and collect specific and concrete information about the organization and its structure, culture and internal politics, authority structure, decision-making sites, etc. It is also necessary to be familiar with the organization’s external institutional environment - i.e., bodies and position-holders outside the organization who are relevant to the exclusionary or alternative practice. The list of actors needs to be specific and concrete and would include position-holders – chief accountant, HR manager, development team leader, the head of the purchasing department, a specific supplier, a secretary, etc. and tangible institutions.

As we already noted, despite the great temptation to include them, the list of actors cannot contain such abstract concepts as “education,” “culture,” “habits,” “socialization,” or “tracking,” nor even “chauvinism” or “patriarchy.” Abstract concepts are not subject to local influence or intervention and are generally not a basis for practical work at the level of a POV group or gender equality agent.

The main criterion for including an actor in the list is the **embeddedness test**: whether and how the actor is part of maintaining the existing practice or is relevant to carrying out and implementing the alternative practice. Any kind of connection is relevant for inclusion on the list. An actor may lose or gain something from a change in the existing practice, disrupt or oppose the implementation of the alternative practice or support or promote it, provide justification or support for implementing the alternative practice or for maintaining the existing practice, or provide a resource or other prerequisite for implementing the alternative practice. For every actor, we should try to find out and write down the nature of their embeddedness in the practice – whether existing and/ or alternative. Identifying actors is the basis for planning the process of organizational change. These arrays of actors represent, on the one hand, the forces acting to maintain the existing situation, and on the other hand, they mark where and how we may intervene in order to create change, as will become clear as we outline the next steps.

## 2. Identifying sites of determination

In parallel with identifying relevant actors, the gender equality agent – or group of agents – must identify organizational sites of determination relevant to implementing the alternative practice. Here too, much as she created the lists of actors relevant to the practices, she must create a list of organizational actors (officials) relevant to decision-making at each site of determination. The actors we mobilize throughout the process must act at the sites of determination to promote the adoption and implementation of the alternative practice.

Sites of determination do not have to be formally established organizational events, such as management meetings, board meetings, or votes – although, of course, these are classic sites of determination. A social gathering at a restaurant or pub at the end of the work day may also be a site of determination, as might a short conversation in the office kitchenette or a bicycle ride with colleagues.

Sites of determination may also be the decision of a single relevant person, such as the owner, CEO, or some other executive within the organization. Organizations' formal hierarchical structures draw our attention to the highest echelons, and we tend to treat them as sites of determination, but we often discover that the relevant center of power or site of determination can be found at other levels or sectors in the organization.

When the group of agents identifies a site of determination, it must take note of its **implementation power** - that is, examine whether a decision at this site has enough power to bring about the implementation of the alternative practice. Many times, decisions are made without the power, authority, or responsibility required to change the balance of powers that maintains the gendered exclusionary practice, so the change does not materialize in practice. Sometimes a decision made at a high level is not translated into real change in an organizational practice, as the center of power for implementing the change is in the hands of a stakeholder or group of actors not necessarily beholden to the main center of power, or they have autonomy despite organizational subordination. In any case, the site of determination must be relevant to the specific practice. Often, CEOs who make a commitment to the proposed change toward gender equality and are even willing to back it, encounter resistance or noncooperation on the part of a crucial department head or even workers' union, and then it turns out they lack the authority or organizational power to enforce the change in practice.

There are three main objectives to accurately identifying sites of determination and focusing on the organizational change processes. The first is to prevent efforts from going to waste, including hours of labor and even funds invested in diffuse change processes or ones not focused on the precise site of determination relevant for the specific gendered practice. Common examples are protest actions, such as petitions, demonstrations, and even well-produced public campaigns that do not target the relevant sites of determination or lack the ability to effect changes. The second objective is to mobilize relevant actors to the accurate site of determination. The power of organizational actors to thwart or promote the implementation of the alternative practice is reflected at the site of determination. Therefore, the organizational change process is to a great degree one of enlisting a significant and sufficient number of organizational actors and mobilizing them to the relevant sites of determination at the required times. Finally, the third objective of identifying the site of determination is to focus the enlistment and mobilization efforts on the organizational actors themselves.

The actor's contribution to the change process will be reflected in some action they take en route to the site of determination or within it (such as enlisting additional actors or personally voting in favor). One may want to plan this action based on a deep understanding of the actor's point of view, as explained in the next step.

The site of determination is not a fixed site. We can identify different sites of determination as the change process progresses and shift the focus of our efforts accordingly. Sometimes what may seem like a central site of determination at some point in the process (such as the CEO) loses relevance as the process progresses, in light of new actors joining, or due to different reactions by the actors. It may turn out that the site of determination is located in a different place in the organization (such as the finance or HR department). For these reasons, identifying the site of determination is one of the focuses of a continuous deciphering effort (alongside identifying the network of actors and constructing the alternative practice) throughout the process of organizational change. The identification itself often requires the gender equality agents to research and collect information, as even the agents most deeply involved in the organization, those who know it best, sometimes need to make some inquiries regarding sites of determination.

### **3. Problematization and controversy**

The promotion of gender equality involves unraveling, problematizing, and reorganizing organizational practices, in order to implement and make routine an alternative inclusive practice in the organization. The goal of problematization is to turn the gendered practice, which is usually characterized as natural, invisible, and taken for granted, into a challenged, non-obvious practice – in the words of Bruno Latour (Latour 1987, 2005), “to open the black box.” This action has to be planned and deliberate, draw attention to the gendered practice, and question it. Problematization does not always have to be defiant, although sometimes demonstrative and visible action is needed to draw attention to the gendered practice and its problematic nature. Examples of problematization actions include strikes by workers, public protests, naming and shaming on social media, interrupting sexist jokes at meetings, and even demanding the presence of women on promotion committees. Namely, any action that interrupts the usual course of events in the organization, causes embarrassment, and turns attention to the practice that, in the organization's day-to-day routine, is natural, obvious, and automatic.



The act of problematization has to be powerful enough to undermine the self-explanatory nature of the existing gendered practice. Practices become “black boxes” when the pattern of relations between the organizational actors participating in maintaining the exclusionary situation is automatic, unreflected, taken for granted, and therefore invisible. The act of problematization at the very least undermines the lack of reflection that characterizes participation in the practice. Effective inclusive alternatives, which are practices that actors find hard to oppose, are an important part of the ability to generate effective problematization. Sometimes, familiar and accepted forms of resistance and protest against exclusionary and discriminatory practices become embedded in the practice itself and become part of it. For instance, when a woman directly protests sexist jokes at a work meeting, the response is often: “Oh, come on. We’re just kidding,” or “Don’t you have a sense of humor?” The protest and the response to it have over time become part of the exclusionary gendered practice of a sexist joke. The attempt to protest (which initially problematized the practice) has become expected and routine as part of the situation constituting the practice and neither prevents it nor disturbs its continuation. When there is a good, strong inclusive alternative, the possibility of easily dismissing the act of problematization is diminished. For example, in various POV groups women have noted that an intervention by one of the authoritative participants in the discussion (whether man or woman), who does not cooperate with the “joke” and comments on it, creates an effective problematization within the situation.

If the problematization is effective - that is, if it disrupts the smooth and invisible flow of relations that maintain the practice - and if it offers effective alternatives, many **controversies** will arise around it. Those who create the controversies are organizational actors embedded in the existing practice - that is, actors directly involved in the maintenance of the exclusionary practice and therefore also directly involved in implementing the alternative.

Controversies not only are an indicator of problematization of the gendered practice but also contribute to the organizational change process. First, controversies cause the stakeholders relevant to the change to reveal themselves. Many times, it is difficult at first to identify the full network of organizational actors maintaining the gendered practice, but in situations of controversy, actors move to enlist other actors to settle the controversy. By following the arguments and counterarguments in the controversy, we can identify additional important actors relevant to the organizational change process.

For example, if a certain actor quotes studies and data reflecting resistance to the change, or if another actor presents transportation difficulties as a barrier or difficulty to implementing the alternative, or yet another actor expresses the opposition of a certain group in the organization to the change, they highlight important actors we may not have identified in our initial mapping of the network of human and non-human actors: studies and data, the state of the roads or lack of vehicles, or a specific group of people in the organization.

Second, controversies allow us to identify in advance regimes of justification that will be used in the site of determination. Recall that **regimes of justification** are the form of communication through which players enlist other organizational actors (human or non-human) as compelling and coercive forces in controversies and at sites of determination. In other words, regimes of justification can be understood as the stuff controversies are made of, as each side hurls them at the other. Regimes of justification are therefore a tangible reflection of the power that allows the gendered practice to exist and maintains the exclusion it produces. For this reason, identifying regimes of justification as early as possible can assist agents of gender equality in making use of them in their efforts to bring about organizational change – to neutralize certain regimes of justification or create and promote other regimes of justification to counter them.

Finally, controversies not only reveal the actors and their regimes of justification, but also motivate many actors to take interest and get involved in the process, supporters and opponents alike – interest and involvement without which the process of change will not be able to move ahead. As noted above, this is the energy that is necessary for the organizational change process to evolve; it generates situations in which moves can be made to enlist stakeholders and creates the need to make decisions and settle the matter.

## 4. Deciphering points of view

Deciphering POVs of organizational actors with impact on the alternative practice is an integral part of the POV group's work. Deciphering is intended to help members of the group identify potential ways to mobilize the actor's power for the change efforts, as well as the actor's **action potential** - i.e., the actions the actor can be expected to take to promote the organizational change the group is promoting.

Deciphering a POV is not a deep, comprehensive psychological understanding of the actor's psyche, personality, or personal biography, but rather an understanding of the manner in which they are embedded in the existing or alternative practice. The POV deciphering is an interpretative analysis, offering possibilities for how to identify the actor's point of view and for how to draw attention to relevant elements within it, in order to outline ways to act to enlist them. Deciphering a POV entails addressing four main issues that together represent the manner in which the actor is embedded in the practice.

- a. Organizational situation.** What forces are compelling and coercing the actor's position vis-à-vis the practice? Our premise is that actors do not freely choose their position regarding a practice, but rather this choice is made or formed in reaction to various forces that compel and coerce their attitude toward the practice. These forces can be, for example, their organizational position, subordination or commitment to other actors, fear of other actors, or limitations on time or resources. In other words, actors are subject to relationships with other actors that affect their attitude toward the practice and coerce their role in sustaining it. In light of this, we want to figure out what factors affect the actors' attitudes, positions, and actions vis-à-vis the alternative practice and what the nature of the effect is. In one situation, gender equality agents in a public organization attempted to change the service relations between secretaries and executives, which the secretaries found to be humiliating. As part of the change, an attempt was made to establish a procedure by which secretaries would no longer serve coffee to the executives. Instead, coffee corners would be set up for everyone to prepare his or her own coffee. The head of HR consistently refused to approve the new procedure despite having expressed his support in principle on multiple occasions. The POV analysis suggested he worried about how his fellow executives would react to what they might perceive as a loss of their privilege in the organization. In our terms, his interactions with other senior executives and his standing among them were a compelling and coercive force in shaping his attitude toward the alternative practice.
- b. Logics of action.** What are the logics of action through which the actor views organizational problems in general? Logics of action are actors' permanent patterns of relation and judgment, usually institutional, toward professional tasks and problems. They are usually dictated by an actor's organizational and professional position and reflect the manner in which actors participate in the practice.

For example, legal advisors will treat various issues and problems through legal considerations, finance people will relate to them out of budgetary or resource considerations, HR people will relate to them out of considerations of staffing and promotion needs, business people through profit and loss considerations, university students out of a desire to save time and effort, and politicians in terms of their re-election prospects. Of course, each actor may have more than one logic guiding their actions, and often even conflicting logics.

- c. **Interests.** What, if anything, will the actor gain or lose by implementing the alternative practice? Interests are the practical way the actors will treat the alternative practice in light of their organizational situation and their logics of action. By deciphering interests, the group of gender equality agents tries to identify the consequences of implementing the alternative for the actor, and in that light to understand whether the actor will support or object to the alternative being implemented.
- d. **Regimes of justification.** What are the main arguments actors make to promote their positions concerning the alternative? Regimes of justification are the arguments various actors use to justify their position toward the exclusionary gendered practice and toward the alternative inclusive practice. Each actor's situation, logics of action, and interests will be reflected in the use of various regimes of justification. Regimes of justification might be moral ("it is unfair that women earn less than men"), economic ("if we equalize pay the entire organization will collapse"), legal ("there is no law requiring equal representation of women on work teams"), emotional ("the lack of promotion prospects causes disappointment and a sense of being stuck"), practical ("it cannot be done because it will lead to a disaster"), or any other kind of argument that provides legitimate frameworks by which to judge human actions. At the sites of determination, regimes of justification are themselves power practices – serving to silence or weaken other actors' justifications as well as to enlist and mobilize additional actors.

A significant tool that helps members of the group perform the work of deciphering POVs in all their elements is **role-playing**. Some of the gender equality agents play the key actors and the rest of the participants interview them. Group members can collect further information about the actors' points of view through conversations with various informants: organization members who are familiar with various actors, people who held their positions in the past, people who used to work in the organization. Based on all of the information collected, the group members collectively map out the various stakeholders' points of view.

As noted, the purpose of deciphering actors' point of view is to enable the group to identify an actor's potential for action in the transformation process, and especially the ways the actors and their power may be mobilized to affect promoting the alternative at the site of determination. Based on deciphering the POV, specific expectations can be assessed for each of the actors in the process: Can they be expected to support the alternative at the site of determination? Will they agree to influence other stakeholders (to recruit supporters or neutralize opponents)? Can they help put the issue on the organizational agenda?

## 5. Mobilizing organizational actors

Acts of enlisting human actors are the center of the organizational change process. Enlistment is actually a process of **gathering power** to implement the alternative practice. As noted above, the ability to enlist a broad array of organizational, institutional, and personal allies who support the change, accept it, and even take actions that facilitate its implementation (or avoid action that prevents its implementation) is the essence of the organizational change process. The goal of enlistment acts is ultimately to mobilize and bring together sufficient power, represented by various actors, **at the site of determination**. For instance, the victory in the Alice Miller Supreme Court ruling (1995) forcing the Israeli Air Force to open pilot training to women can be understood as a result of the petitioner's ability to mobilize a large number of influential human actors (activists from feminist and civil society organizations, senior officers who supported the change, expert witnesses, journalists), as well as non-human actors that served to support her petition (the fact that the United States Air Force already had women combat pilots, her civilian flying license, Air Force personnel data, the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty). In fact, the ruling can be read as a reflection of the balance of power between the actors the petitioner was able to mobilize to the site of determination and those the Air Force mobilized in its response to the petition. Another example of mobilization on the organizational level is a process in which two women undergraduate students at a university identified exclusionary practices preventing women from speaking and expressing themselves during classes. They developed inclusive practices and managed to enlist a variety of actors to implement a training program for teaching faculty how to ensure both women and men students would be able to speak in class. Among the actors enlisted were the university president's advisor on gender equality, the university's unit for improvement of instruction, young instructors, and the students' own instructors.

Effective mobilization turns the actors into a **compelling and coercive force** for the decision-maker at the site of determination, so that the presence of the actor in the situation forces the decision-maker to support and/or implement the alternative practice. How do the actors become a compelling and coercive force? A number of situations make it possible. Human actors become compelling and coercive by virtue of their hierarchical power, through obligations to them, with the arguments they manufacture within the situation, due to their organizational status, or because of relations of friendship with them or dependence on them.

## **Modes of Mobilizing Human Actors for the Promotion of Gender Equality**

In what follows, we will describe four main modes of mobilization that can form a basis for recruiting actors in support of implementing inclusive practices in an organization. Each mode of mobilization is based on identifying the nature of the actor's embeddedness in the practice, and a different utilization of women's POV as a means to enlist and mobilize the other side to act in favor of the organizational change. The four modes of mobilization are:

- 1. By means of binding rules.** The gender equality agent attempts to enlist the actors based on an external system of rules that the actor perceives as binding and that the agent accepts as well, such as a certain law, moral rules, or a professional creed. This rule system has compelling and coercive force, and the agent uses it as a justification regime for the required action. Examples include: a gender equality agent asks an official to support a sexual harassment prevention activity for workers by reminding them of the fact that the Law for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment requires each organization to hold an educational activity on the topic every year (the law is a compelling and coercive rule system); an agent explains why a certain organizational change, which would lead to more women being included in a traditionally men-dominated job, would save a great deal of money spent on mediocre personnel (an organizational efficiency rule system); or an agent asks an executive in the organization to support ending a humiliating procedure such as having secretaries personally serve coffee, because the procedure gives the organization a bad name and presents it as a sexist and offensive organization (a legitimacy rule system). In all of these, the actor is mobilized by the compelling and coercive force of accepted rule systems.

Recruitment based on rule systems is the most common mode of recruitment in feminist campaigns and in efforts to promote gender equality in organizations. However, this mode of recruitment is powerful and effective only when the rule system being used as a justification regime for recruitment has compelling and coercive force. If the rule system is not perceived as binding by the actor and has no compelling and coercive force on them, it will have no influence and therefore should not be used. Such situations lead to the failure of many recruitment efforts made in this mode. The gender equality agents present those in power with gender gaps, wrongs and injustices, but these bear no compelling and coercive force in and of themselves, and so the agents run into walls of justifications, judgment tests, and silencing (see chapter 7 on regimes of justification as silencing practices).

2. **By means of a hook.** Revealing the actor's point of view on the practice makes it possible to identify "hooks," which are possible points of connection between the actor (their organizational and personal situation, their logics of action) and his or her actions in the organizational change process. Using hooks, we can "catch" or recruit the actor and mobilize them to implement the alternative practice. Hooks can be institutional (desire for personnel slots or organizational power, competition with other institutional actors, institutional legitimation and respect, budgets) or personal (a desire for personal advancement or personal resources, competition, jealousy, vengeance, fear of certain organizational outcomes, hope, equanimity). The potential hook will usually be discovered by deciphering and deeply understanding the actor's POV. The point of connection may be clear and obvious if the actor has a clear interest that a change in the gendered practice will be realized. For example, in an organizational change process that required the support of doctors, an analysis of the doctors' POV revealed that their central interest was publishing research studies in professional journals. In this case, the promise that the process of change in the gendered practice would be accompanied by medical research secured their support. Recruitment by hook is a powerful and effective practice when the actor's points of motivation are identified correctly, but it requires skill in POV analysis, which is its shortcoming.
3. **By identification.** The two previous modes of mobilization do not make use of the women's POV on the gendered practice as a mobilizing force (only the POV of the organizational actor); in contrast, mobilization by identification recruits the actor by exposing them to the point of view and authentic experience of women vis-à-vis the practice.

In other words, when the gender equality agent manages to reveal to an actor how women experience a certain exclusionary practice and makes the actor understand women's point of view – that is, to understand the emotional, behavioral, and functional implications of the experience – the deep understanding the actor gains has a great mobilizing power, and it is actually a compelling and coercive force. Exposure to the point of view of another social subject and sharing it is effectively the basis for solidary social action in which actors mobilize their power for the benefit of other actors, due to an understanding of the experience they have by virtue of their disadvantaged or marginalized position. Sharing the point of view of another side has mobilized great and powerful social movements – from feminism, socialism, and communism, through the struggle to abolish slavery, opposition to the Occupation, aid for migrant laborers, and support for victims of sexual assault. All of these social movements are founded on solidarity, which is based on identifying, sharing, and deciphering the experience of the disadvantaged, marginalized, or oppressed parties. Mobilization by identification is also successful in the case of enlisting actors for the promotion of gender equality in an organizational field, especially when the actor is not embedded in the practice in such a manner that the act of identification would entail relinquishing power on their part. When power is involved, many barriers are in play, which makes it difficult for the actor to be exposed to the point of view of the other side and share it. In such a situation, the actor will actively avoid getting to know and understand women's POV on the gendered practice and their experiences because of it. In other words, they will avoid recognizing the women as subjects. The actor will do this by means of justification regimes and other judgment tests that they will use on the action required of them and will not try to understand the experience, the feelings, and the difficulties that this action reflects and is intended to solve (see chapter 7, which deals with regimes of justification). Finally, it must be noted that exposing an actor to the point of view is not at all an easy action, nor is the very ability to decipher the point of view of another person. This is a complex human activity leaning on multiple mental actions, such as using the first person ("I"), exposure to the other side's circumstances, using personal experience as a connection point, and more.

- 4. By identity.** In general, when members of a social group decipher their personal situation and understand their day-to-day living experience as influenced by the operation of an exclusionary practice, and not as a personal problem – the groundwork is laid out for mobilization by identity.



Mobilization by identity means creating awareness among women who experience the practice and are excluded by it, and turning them into active social change agents in the process of implementing an inclusive practice. This stands in contrast to recruiting allies external to the group through a rule system, a hook, or identification. When women in the organization who experience the exclusionary practice enlist other women, especially women in positions of power, to lend their power and act to change the practice and turn it into an inclusive one, it is a very powerful mobilization indeed. Women in power, who see the similarity between themselves and other women in the organization and are able to feel feelings of belonging and shared destiny, become active and powerful gender equality agents in the organizational change process. This is the case, for instance, when women CEOs take vigorous action to promote other women in their organizations, or with executive-level women's forums acting together to promote gender equality interests in the organization. These are examples of powerful women mobilized to take action through identity - namely, through a connection to other women's experience of exclusion and distress, and an understanding that it is their own experience as well. There are barriers to mobilization by identity, and this mobilization action is not an easy one either. The powerful actor tends at times to distance herself from the active women's group, as she perceives them as disempowered. When we ask her to see herself as one of them, we are actually asking her to relinquish her feeling of power, her feeling of individuality, and her achievements - all of which she has attained "despite being a woman" - and to lend her organizational capital. The experience in POV groups shows that often women actively resist accepting a gender perspective on practices and an understanding of practices as gendered power relations. Phrases like "I was never treated differently," "Women make their choices and that is why things are the way they are," "It's the women's own fault," and even "Men pay a price too" are not mere resistance, but silencing regimes of gender POV, serving to distance such a POV from the self and move away from it. For this reason, mobilization by identity is neither obvious nor easy at all, even though it is women who are being mobilized. An additional barrier to mobilization by identity is related to the organizational and personal prices the actor pays when she is enlisted and makes her voice heard from a gender perspective on the organizational practice.

This action is threatening and undermines the organizational power structure. As a result, adopting and expressing a gender perspective means personally contending with the people in power, with power relations, and with organizational conventions. As many gender equality agents have experienced, sometimes mobilization through identity means running the risk of paying a personal price in the form of damage to relations of friendship and camaraderie, one's image within the organization and professional standing, and even promotion prospects. For this reason, mobilization by identity requires us to address the sense of threat and personal danger powerful actors experience when gender equality agents attempt to mobilize them.

**The modes of mobilization are not mutually exclusive.** One can and should use multiple modes of mobilization simultaneously. One can also try different modes of mobilization in a dynamic process of trial and error, according to the developing circumstances of the mobilization encounter and according to the point of view it reveals.

## Handling Hostile Actors

The act of mobilizing actors never takes place in a vacuum. As noted in previous sections, mobilization efforts take place in an organizational environment rife with controversies and facing actors who are embedded in the various controversies, acting to mobilize one another to gain and accumulate power in decision-making situations. The gender equality agent mobilizes actors to take action for the change in the gendered practice. However, not all actors can be mobilized: some of the actors are deeply embedded in the existing gendered practice and there is no possibility of mobilizing them to implement the inclusive practice by any of the modes of mobilization presented above. These actors may even vigorously act to mobilize other actors in the network in favor of their position, which is one of opposition to transforming the practice and/or to implementing elements of the alternative practice. Therefore, every mobilization encounter is not only one in which recruitment practices are used, but also one where other mobilizing forces must be addressed.

Contending with other mobilizing forces requires a POV analysis of hostile actors – an analysis of their embeddedness in the practice, of their position, logics, interests, and especially of the regimes of justification they use to mobilize other actors who should support the change. However, refuting opponents' regimes of justification is not necessarily the main coping practice; instead, revealing the hostile actor's POV to the actor to be mobilized is more effective. Exposing the motives, agendas, and interests behind the hostile regimes of justification encourages the actor to be mobilized (or who has already been mobilized) to see the power relations at the basis of the regimes of justification and see whom they serve.

This exposure, insofar as it is honest, authentic, and fact-based, will often suffice to neutralize the influence of hostile actors. For example, in organizations where lack of representation of women is a well-known issue, there are often intra-organizational lobbies and campaigns that attempt to change this situation. Such lack of representation can often be found at senior executive levels, on a company's board of directors, or in specific organizational sectors, such as security organizations in which women are excluded from core positions and senior command positions, as well as in development divisions in high-tech organizations. Actors trying to prevent more equal representation of women recruit a variety of regimes of justification, supposedly scientific and factual – data, tables, and presentations – intended to prove that artificially putting (more) women in these positions and jobs would cause some damage to the organization and that continuing to exclude women from these positions is justified. Exposing the perspectives behind the opposition can help weaken the opponents' mobilization efforts. For example, opposition to affirmative action in promotion to senior positions was revealed to be rooted in a desire to promote cronies. Another example is the religious opposition to integrating women in Israel's military, using arguments about damage to the military's effectiveness, which were revealed to conceal a desire to maintain control over sites of power in the military organization.

## Conclusion

The mobilization steps presented above are never consecutive stages appearing in a fixed linear order, but are rather sites of action that gender equality and social change agents normally engage with simultaneously. Identifying sites of determination, problematization, mapping relevant actors, deciphering their perspectives, and recruitment actions – these all usually take place continuously and concurrently. A successful mobilization effort ends at the site of determination where the decision-makers feel compelled and even coerced to make a decision that implements the alternative inclusive practice. The mobilization process is one of gathering compelling and coercive forces to act in favor of implementing inclusive practices and promoting gender equality. This is not to say that mobilization is a confrontational, cynical, or manipulative act. In addition, a certain actor mobilizing in favor of equality does not mean they become outspoken feminists, nor is this the objective: a deep change of consciousness in the actor's attitude toward women, femininity, or feminism is neither an objective nor a realistic expectation from mobilization efforts. The goal of mobilization is for the actors to take action that uses their power to ensure the implementation of the alternative practice. Mobilization is a means to create an equal, fair, and respectful organization and work environment for women, and not an end in and of itself.

## Chapter 7. Regimes of Justification, Controversies, Resistance, and Support

Promoting gender equality in organizational practices, as every gender equality agent knows from her personal experience, is rife with arguments and controversies between her and various organizational actors and among the actors themselves. In these controversies, each side uses arguments to justify either the need for change or the need to keep things as they are. Such arguments might exhaust gender equality agents who often feel the need to confront counterarguments and convince those who present them with arguments of their own. These arguments are “regimes of justification” that various stakeholders use to promote their position toward the exclusionary gendered practice and the proposed change (the alternative practice). This chapter will examine these regimes of justification – we will present how they function in the dynamic of promoting gender equality in an organization, explain their impact as silencing regimes that block and prevent women’s point of view from being expressed, and describe how they can be identified. Finally, we will offer ways in which gender equality agents can contend with them.

### Regimes of Justification as Exclusionary Gendered Practices

#### 1. What are regimes of justification?

The wall of statements agents of gender equality meet when they expose the gender POV is called “regimes of justification.” This refers to the statements and arguments that serve the various actors to explain their positions and attitudes toward the organizational practice, both the exclusionary and inclusive one, and to convince other actors that they are right. The term “regimes of justification” was used by researchers Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006) to explain how people settle controversies about what is right or wrong to do in different situations. They noticed in their research that a large part of the conversation between people in situations of dispute is devoted to statements whose purpose is to justify the correct and desirable mode of action in the speaker’s opinion. The justifications are derived from systems of rules or logics that we use to judge what is right or wrong – moral or ethical logic, free market rules, efficiency logic, bureaucratic logic, the principle that “the strong prevail,” meritocracy logic, and so on. These logics serve us to determine what is right, appropriate, or just and to reach agreed patterns of action or practices.

Therefore, the justifications are not personal and individual but a reflection of broad and accepted rule systems from which the actors derive statements either to persuade others to accept or support their opinion about the practice or to force it on them.

Regimes of justification play a role in the assembly and maintenance of organizational practices. They serve to justify the relations and interactions between the different elements that comprise the practice. Without such accepted justifications, these relations will be constantly doubted and not taken for granted, and the practice will be disrupted. In any practice several regimes of justification can exist simultaneously. For instance, in the organizational practice of a job interview in an organization, there are repeated patterns of interaction between the different elements of the practice: the interviewer, the candidate, the resume the candidate brings, the questionnaire the candidate fills out, the clothes the candidate wears, the questions asked, the room where the interview takes place, and more. The patterns of interaction between these elements that comprise the practice of a job interview are reinforced by justifications such as: “You have to see a CV to get to know the candidate’s background,” “You have to ask questions about professional background to understand her abilities,” “You have to ask how she is going to manage to balance work and children because we work long hours when we have to meet deadlines,” “It is important to see how she dresses because dress indicates attitude toward work,” “You must always ask for recommendations to find out about her interpersonal relations at her previous place of work.” Therefore, the justification is a statement or argument that explains why it is appropriate for the interaction to take place the way it does. The justification is the glue that holds together the elements of the practice.

## **2. Regimes of justification as regimes of silencing**

In processes of organizational change aimed to promote gender equality, when women’s POV on a gendered practice is exposed and presented, regimes of justification are not only the basis for a philosophical discussion of the advisability of the change and its suitability to the organization, but also play an active role in the organizational change process itself. In fact, they play a dual role. First, regimes of justification play a silencing and exclusionary role toward the point of view. Agents of gender equality who expose and express women’s POV on a particular organizational practice frequently run into a wall of explanations and arguments that explain and justify the status quo and thereby silence the POV they are trying to express.

Second, regimes of justification serve to mobilize other players to join the fray – whether to oppose or support the measures to reduce gender inequality. In the previous chapter, we discussed mobilizing organizational actors as allies and partners to the process on the basis of analyzing their POV on the gendered practice. In this chapter, we wish to discuss regimes of justification as silencing practices, and the ways to overcome them.

When women put on the organization's agenda a problem they experience as workers in the organization – the difficulty of attending late evening meetings, the inability to participate in overnight training programs, the feeling of discomfort when pornographic pictures are distributed through a work team's WhatsApp group, the lack of a private and clean place for workers who are nursing mothers to express milk, and more – one would expect efforts to be made to address and solve the problem. But in many cases, when the problem is presented and women's point of view on an organizational practice is exposed, the women run into a wall of opposing statements and arguments from various actors in the organization: "The change is too expensive," "The change impairs our professionalism," "If you can't make it at that time maybe you shouldn't work here," "Nobody else has complained about that," "It was just a joke; don't be so serious." Women experience such statements as impediments and barriers that prevent them from expressing their authentic experience in the organization and participating in shaping the organization's day-to-day life. These statements silence them. Furthermore, they demoralize them. In many cases, women who run into such a wall of statements stop trying to make the needed effort to bring about an organizational change that expresses their point of view.

### **3. Regimes of justification are an active process of excluding a point of view**

The use of regimes of justification is not just part of a theoretical or philosophical discussion over the veracity or justice of women's arguments. Their use is an aggressive process whose purpose is to remove from the organizational agenda women's resistance to organizational practices that are designed from men's point of view. Following the dynamic of events in an organization when women's point of view about a certain organizational practice is exposed and brought forth, we discover the active nature of the silencing and the efforts by various stakeholders to exclude the point of view, silence it, push it aside, and negate it. This is not a matter of ignoring the point of view of women in the organization or failing to listen to it, but active attempts to silence it.

Every decision-making process about organizational practices involves numerous actors and considerations that impact and shape the practices: budgetary or legal considerations, considerations of efficiency, ethics or public image, and more. These considerations are taken into account when determining organizational conduct, patterns of action and resource allocation, but most of the time, women's point of view and life situations do not become considerations of comparable weight. Regimes of justification are what stand between the exposure of women's point of view on organizational practices and giving that point of view a place of importance and legitimacy in organizational decision-making processes. Regimes of justification are the means used to ensure that women's POV will not pass through the entry gate to the decision-making processes. When the point of view is presented and some kind of regime of justification is immediately thrown at it (see Table 1 below), this in fact erects a roadblock, sometimes an impassable one, on the way to the organizational decision-making sites. The regimes of justification not only silence the POV, but simultaneously maintain and protect the existing gendered practice. A group of gender equality agents must establish and mobilize power and support within a complex field of regimes of justification in order to earn a place at the table where the decisions that shape the practice are made.

## **The Action of Regimes of Justification: Silencing through Trial**

Regimes of justification silence women's POV by putting it on endless trial. When a woman or a group of women try to present their POV on an organizational practice, to reflect their experiences to various actors in the organization and to propose a change in the organization's mode of action, her POV is put through a series of trials by the statements of various actors in the organization. Every regime of justification leveled at the gender equality agent puts women's POV on trial: she needs to respond, justify, and explain in order for the POV to be accepted as truth. Even if the "examiner" is convinced of the "truth" of the point of view, a new trial might emerge immediately, in an endless circle. For instance, a common trial is the "statistical" trial – the rate of women affected by the exclusionary practice or the "equality for all" trial – the practice is equal for all, women and men alike. Therefore, the regimes of justification serve to put to the test the veracity of the experience of women in the organization and to deny, negate, marginalize, or block women's experience and point of view. There are countless trials of various types of the "truth" of women's points of view, and in the following section, we will demonstrate some of them.

## Identifying Trials and Regimes of Justification

How can we identify regimes of justification? Most of the time, regimes of justification are as obvious and taken for granted as the practices they maintain. They are exposed when we “stop playing by the rules,” or disrupt the practice. For example, when we unravel the connections between different elements of the practice by asking why things cannot be done differently or by offering a different mode of action (an alternative practice). In such situations, various actors in the organization will instantly explain to us why the status quo must be maintained and why we must continue doing things the same way, following the existing rules. The statements that they use express the regimes of justification that maintain the existing practice. There can be several simultaneous regimes of justification that justify some connection between the elements that comprise the practice. The following table illustrates different regimes of justification divided into the trials they express.

**Table 1. Trials and regimes of justification**

The trial	Description	Example of regime of justification
<b>Equality with men</b>	Men have to deal with the practice too	“Joe also drops off his children in the morning and he manages to get to work on time.”
<b>Equality with everyone</b>	The practice is equal for everyone, men and women alike	“Everybody has to get here early in the morning.” “In our company everybody has to work overtime to meet our targets.”
<b>Statistics</b>	If the practice only affects a small number of women there is no justification to change it	“How many women agree with you? Get me the numbers.” “Only if at least 50% of the women say it’s a problem will we do something about it.”
<b>Consensus</b>	If not all women agree that there is a problem, there probably is no problem	“My secretary doesn’t agree with you at all.” “My daughter said she doesn’t think there is a problem in that area.”



The trial	Description	Example of regime of justification
<b>Personal choice</b>	Everyone is responsible for the choices she made, and the situation she is in is a result of her choices	“You choose to go home early every day to be with your children, so of course you won’t be promoted to management.” “You choose to wear high heels to work.”
<b>Blaming the victim</b>	The problem that was exposed is the women’s fault and not an organizational problem	“There is a wage difference between women and men because women aren’t assertive enough in their demands.” “Men ask for a raise every year and women don’t so that’s why they get more.” “Anyone who dresses that way shouldn’t be surprised she gets harassed.”
<b>The ulterior motive</b>	There is an ulterior motive behind the exposure of women’s point of view so it is not necessary to respond to it	“You’re just saying it because you’re trying to get accommodations.” “You’re bringing it up now because he got a promotion.”
<b>The financial cost</b>	The cost of the change or the solution is too high so it cannot be realized	“If we raise women’s wages to narrow the gap with men the whole company will collapse.” “We don’t have the budget to add new bathrooms for women.”
<b>Importance</b>	The problem that women’s point of view exposes is not important enough in the organization’s priorities	“It’s a little trivial, don’t you think?” “Do you think with the things going on now it’s so urgent to address that subject?”
<b>The feminist agenda</b>	The POV expresses a feminist agenda and is not objective and neutral	“You’re saying that just because you’re a feminist and not because you care about the organization.” “You’re trying to promote your feminist agenda and you’re not objective.”
<b>The good reason</b>	There’s a good reason for the way things are done, for their current configuration	“For you, it’s a problem that the course is an overnight retreat, but there’s a good reason that has to do with teambuilding. It’s not just for no reason.”

These trials, and many others, doubt the veracity and validity of women's point of view and lead to its dismissal and silencing.

## Who Uses Regimes of Justification?

The use of regimes of justification characterizes several groups of actors according to their position and power relations in the organization. The first group is **organizational actors** who use regimes of justification in order to preserve and maintain the gendered practice. They are embedded in the practice in some way, and by using regimes of justification, they seek to prevent a change in the practice that is inconsistent with their interests or professional logics. Actors from this group, which might also include women, will use regimes of justification for two purposes: to directly silence the gender equality agent who represents women's POV, and to persuade and mobilize other institutional actors not to lend their power and act in favor of the POV represented by the agent. The power of regimes of justification is directly related to the institutional actor's organizational power and authority. Powerful actors, or actors with direct authority concerning the practice (for instance, CEOs or senior executives) can dismiss the agent with a superficial regime of justification without need for corroboration or further proof. This power reflects the actor's privilege not to see the disempowered point of view or not to acknowledge it. Less powerful actors will use regimes of justification in order to mobilize and persuade other players.

A second and unique group of users of regimes of justification is **women with institutional positions** in the organization. These women are in a different position than men when the point of view of other women in the organization is exposed. On the one hand, they are part of the power structure that maintains the gendered practice, and on the other hand, they are exposed to the exclusionary effect of the practice on other women (and sometimes on themselves as well). The use of regimes of justification by women in such positions might express their wish to identify themselves as part of the power holders in the organization and distance themselves from a disempowered group (other women), because they might pay a heavy price if they are identified with a feminist agenda or an agenda that is not part of the organizational hegemony within their power-driven work environment. For this reason, women in positions of power sometimes have a dual motive for using regimes of justification as silencing practices, and they are often on the hostile side of the divide concerning the points of view of other women and efforts to promote gender equality in the organization.

The third group is **the women themselves**, as part of a process of mobilizing agents of gender equality from the group of women who experience the exclusionary practice. Frequently, in the POV group or the leadership group that discusses gendered practices and shares their POV and experiences of the practices, certain participants use regimes of justification in a way that silences the authentic exposure of the experience of the practice. The exposure of a POV is also an exposure of power relations. Promoting a gender POV in the organization requires coping with powerful actors and opposing regimes of justification. Women who express regimes of justification in the group often do so in order to anticipate the reaction of power holders in the organization to the women's POV and to check how to respond to it. In other instances, they use regimes of justification in order to distance themselves from the necessity to confront powerful actors out of fear of the price they might have to pay.

## Coping with Regimes of Justification

How can gender equality agents cope with regimes of justification? First, the agent must remember the purpose of the organizational change she is trying to promote: a real change in the quality of women's work life, place, status, or dignity in the organization or in the attitude toward them, by turning an exclusionary organizational practice into an inclusive one. Social change agents frequently miss this target under an onslaught of regimes of justification and feel that their primary goal is to refute the justifications, convince the actors presenting them that they are wrong, and get them to recognize the justice of the women's claim or demand. In other words, they expect awareness, persuasion, and understanding. These may be important goals, but they are not the main goal of the organizational change process. The interaction with regimes of justification tempts agents to turn persuading the actors who express them into targets in and of themselves, but this is a distraction that often derails the possibility of change. To a certain extent, it is also a humiliating experience. The need to "persuade" powerful men and make them "understand" women's point of view in every situation recognizes the legitimacy and supremacy of men's power without questioning it.

The change of exclusionary gendered practices is imposed by compelling and coercing forces and by mobilizing allies to undertake a focused action of change at the decision-making site where the practice is designed and decided upon. This process obviates the goal of general "persuasion" and "understanding," and focuses efforts on mobilizing relevant allies and power holders at the decision-making site.

In other words, sometimes there is no need to even address the regimes of justification. They do not need to be answered, and they do not need to be debunked, only identified.

However, sometimes it is necessary to confront regimes of justification such as when hostile actors use them to mobilize and persuade other organizational actors to act at the site of determination against the desired change. In such a situation, efforts should be directed at the organizational actors whose mobilization the regimes of justification serve. Several strategies can be pursued vis-à-vis such an actor.

1. **Debunk.** Directly contending with the regime of justification itself, debunking it, and presenting it as worthless for the decision-makers or mobilized actor. Usually debunking consists of presenting facts, data, or other proof of the fallacy of the regime of justification. For instance, the common regime of justification for excluding women from combat positions in militaries is the physiological argument that women are physically incapable of functioning as combatants. This regime of justification can be debunked by bringing examples of well-functioning combatant women (from various armies and combat arenas), pointing at the fallacy of the physiological data brought as evidence (because they compare the average achievements and abilities between men and women), debunking the tests used to select combatants, and more. Frequently, a good alternative practice is also very valuable to debunk regimes of justification. When we construct an alternative practice and in advance take into account regimes of justification that can be used to prevent its implementation, we strengthen our ability to debunk them. For example, when it is known in advance that the claim of “lack of budget” is going to be a strong regime of justification used by actors in the organization, we will offer an alternative inclusive practice whose cost is low.
2. **Expose.** In many cases actors have a strong interest or stake in maintaining the gendered practice, but they hide that interest under other regimes of justification that serve them to mobilize other powerful actors. In wage struggles, for example, employees’ committees or trade unions do not always support women’s demands out of a desire not to harm men’s work conditions, terms, or wage agreements. However, that will not be the regime of justification they use to reject the demands, but rather they will use administrative regimes of justification (“there is a queue for making demands”) or ideological ones (“all workers’ needs must be addressed, not only women’s”).

In political struggles as well, the particular interests of one identity group are often presented under universal regimes of justification of caring for society as a whole. In such situations the best way to deal with regimes of justification is to expose to the decision-makers the real interests behind them and thereby avoid them.

3. **Present alternative regimes of justification.** In this strategy, gender equality agents use their own regimes of justification as a counterweight to the regimes of justification of hostile actors. There are several types of regimes of justification at the agents' disposal.
  - a. **Women's POV (i.e., the truth) as a regime of justification.** In certain situations, the fact that the exclusionary practice causes a constraint, hardship, fear, discomfort, or humiliation has power that can be used as a regime of justification to mobilize organizational actors and decision-makers – as a counterweight to other regimes of justification, or when other regimes of justification are weak. The best way to use these regimes of justification is to expose in the most authentic way how women experience the exclusionary practice in reality and in the first person. For example, to describe in the first person the experience of a woman who has to park in a dark underground parking lot to get to her workplace, or has to find someone at the last minute to pick up her child from kindergarten in the afternoon because she suddenly had to stay at work late. This way of using regimes of justification is also called mobilization by identification (see chapter 6).
  - b. **Counter regimes of justification.** Since some of the regimes of justification are about different negative consequences the change of the organizational practice will bring about, gender equality agents can counter them with regimes of justification that indicate the positive consequences of the change, beyond the promotion of gender equality. These regimes of justification should be encompassed in the inclusive alternative practice. Already in the planning stage of the alternative practice, the gender equality agent should take into account regimes of justification hostile to the alternative, such as lack of budgetary feasibility, functional problems that might arise, impairment of the organization's effectiveness, harm to other groups, and so on. The alternative practice should be designed in a way that refutes these arguments, while at the same time indicating the advantages its implementation will have for the organization.

For instance, when discussing changing work schedules and arrangements to leave more time for activity in the private sphere (home, family, leisure), usually indicated are those advantages the changes will provide for men, the streamlining of the organization by reducing time devoted to ritual work such as discussions, and even technological solutions that improve the organization's functional problems.

- 4. Suspend regimes of justification.** The best way to deal with regimes of justification is to circumvent them on the way to the decision-making sites and not deal with them at all as a goal in the pursuit of gender equality. If a gender equality agent invests her resources in focused mobilization of relevant and influential allies at the sites of determination, out of an understanding that the realization of an inclusive organizational practice is a product of power and authority of women's POV at these sites, this largely obviates the need to justify, explain, manufacture arguments, or persuade hostile actors that level regimes of justification at the agent. The effective mobilization of allies can include the combination of several methods detailed in chapter 6. One method of mobilization is the use of regimes of justification, but creating institutional interest in implementing the alternative practice or creating identification with the exclusionary experience will also mobilize organizational actors. In the case of women with power in the organization, it is useful to also create identification between them and women employees in the organization based on a shared experience of exclusion.

## Conclusion

Regimes of justification are discursive practices used to make women's point of view marginal and unimportant in an organization and to silence it. They put the truth inherent in the authentic experience of women in the organization to a series of exhausting trials that can lead to demoralization of the gender equality agents. Sometimes, when regimes of justification are internalized by the agents, they create self-exclusion from working toward change: the agents listen to the "allure" of the internalized justifications and rule out any possibility of change even before it is conceptualized or articulated out loud.

In this chapter, we show that the key to confronting regimes of justification is to understand that **they are not the object of change**. The experience of running into regimes of justification tempts us into thinking that change in gendered organizational practices is a change of the regimes of justification of the actors who oppose women's POV, but that is not the case. The purpose of the change is to construct an inclusive organizational practice, and the regimes of justification are a means, not an end, in this context. Out of this understanding, we offered several ways to contend with regimes of justification, not by way of persuading the actors who articulate these justifications, but in the impact of these justifications on other actors at the sites of determination. The ways we proposed are to debunk them, expose them, create alternatives to them, or suspend them, but only to the extent that they play a role at the sites of determination.

## Chapter 8. The Leadership Group: Developing Leadership from a Gender Perspective

The capacity to lead, or “leadership,” has drawn significant attention over the years in the attempt to understand what that capacity is, what it is made of, and how it can be acquired and developed. In the organizational-management literature, leadership is closely associated with management, on the assumption that the leader-manager is a desirable model to lead an organization. Most of the discussion of leadership throughout the years has been on the individual level and has asked questions such as: What are the leadership qualities of an individual? Is an individual born a leader or can leadership skills be developed? What is the most effective leadership style? How can leadership be developed in an individual? The intensive discussion of the subject arises from the assumption that the ability to lead can mobilize and motivate people to act and do things, and therefore create change in reality by way of identification, without forcing others to act or imposing the change on them. Feminist literature in general, and in the areas of gender and organizations in particular, has for years maintained that the concept of leadership is gendered. The arenas where leadership is traditionally tested – the military, politics, business – are absolutely controlled (or, as some would say, led) by men, and the identification between the qualities and abilities of the leader (such as courage, determination, rationalism, assertiveness, strategic thinking, personal example) and dominant male identity is almost absolute. A woman leader is a combination that is often perceived as artificial, and doubting women’s ability to lead in various arenas is a common practice by men and women alike. In this chapter, we wish to take a step further and discuss the gendered concept of leadership, not on the individual level but rather as an organizational practice. In other words, we propose developing a practice of gender leadership in organizations as an intervention whose purpose is to give voice to women’s perspective on organizational practices and promote its integration in organizations’ decision-making processes. This will be based on recruiting and mobilizing women who have status and power in the organization to promote change in gendered organizational practices.



## The Exclusionary Gendered Practice: Splitting and Preventing Solidarity

The exclusionary gendered practices (EGP) at the center of this chapter are practices that disempower and split women into individuals and separate subgroups, to prevent solidarity among them. Derogatory descriptions of relations between women in organizations are commonplace, such as “a vipers’ nest” or the epithet “queen bee” for a woman in a senior position. Such descriptions reflect the way gender power relations are expressed: the power divides, separates, and creates conflicting interests between members of the disempowered group, immobilizing their ability to act and resist. The power works through different practices of co-option,<sup>5</sup> making certain women want to maintain the gendered status quo by integrating those women into the power system that maintains and supports the status quo and turning them into part of that system. There are a number of co-option practices that tie the interests of those with power in the organization to the interests of some of the women themselves. These practices can occur separately or in combination with others through:

- ❖ **Professional responsibility.** When women are part of the existing organizational order and therefore have an interest in its preservation by virtue of their organizational role and professional responsibility. For instance, a woman HR director who opposes raising women’s wages in the organization out of her professional responsibility to maintain the existing salary calculation formulas.
- ❖ **Dependence on a power holder.** Creating a situation where a woman, by virtue of her position, is trusted, valued, and compensated on the basis of her ability to represent and realize the interests of a power holder. The dependence can be formal, such as in the case of a CEO’s office manager, or a woman in a senior confidence position, or informal, when a woman is appointed to a senior position by a power holder who expects her to demonstrate absolute loyalty to his organizational interests.

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5 Co-option is a way to deal with people who disrupt or might disrupt the operation of a particular organization. The organization offers these people the opportunity to join it and accept an official role, in order to harness their skills in favor of the organization as part of its mechanism and prevent them from disrupting the organization’s functioning from the outside (see [co-option](#) in Wikipedia). We use the term to describe the practice used with women who may work for the organization but are usually “external,” which means they are not part of its power system.

- ❖ **Delegation of power.** Appointing a woman to a position that by definition directly represents the power vis-à-vis a group of women by disciplining them, such as a warden in a women's prison, or a Mother Superior in a convent, a rabbi's wife in a religious girls' high school, a platoon commander in women's basic military training, a shift manager in a sewing workshop where most of the employees are women, or a manager of the cashiers in the supermarket.
- ❖ **Internalization of power.** In this case the existing organizational power structure is internalized by certain women as natural, correct, and taken for granted. These women will directly oppose any attempt to expose other women's point of view about the gendered practices in the organization (and even their own point of view). Their resistance will be expressed by various regimes of justification, such as "the same rules apply to men and women," "nobody has ever complained before about this," or "it was your choice so you have to live with it."
- ❖ **Distinction.** The appointment of a sole (token) woman to a senior position in an all-male environment. In many cases, a woman in this situation will distinguish herself from other women who were not promoted by her concept of her own exceptionalism ("pathbreaking," "the first woman"). But this exceptional feeling arises from the prevailing system of power relations, which singles out a few women for token positions rather than integrating many women in varied positions usually held by men. This provides the woman with an interest in preserving the existing power relations in order to preserve her own exceptional position.
- ❖ **Intimidation.** Agents of gender equality often pay a price when they attempt to challenge gendered organizational practices (being labeled as disloyal or as having a hidden agenda, being ignored or excluded are all common examples). This creates a "balance of terror" that deters other women from expressing solidarity and joining an organizational change process in which they are required to confront or resist existing power relations. In other words, some of the women avoid joining an action directed at promoting gender equality or showing solidarity with it because the organization instills in them fear of the price they might pay for doing so.

These practices prevent the development of a joint awareness of women in the organization as a group and the creation of solidarity among them. There, they constitute a barrier to collective action based on mobilizing the power of women in different organizational positions in favor of promoting gender equality.

They prevent many women with power in the organization from mobilizing their organizational power and status to support action toward gender equality. In other words, such practices prevent some women from mobilizing their organizational power for the benefit of other women in the organization. Many gender equality agents are familiar with the phenomenon that on occasions when women's point of view about an organizational practice is brought up and exposed, other women who are present, usually women who have organizational power, quickly silence that point of view in a variety of ways (see chapter 7 about regimes of justification). For agents of gender equality, this experience provokes anger and frustration because if these women, who can influence organizational practices and have access to decision-making processes, would mobilize their power and access in favor of other women's POVs and in support of changing an exclusionary practice to an inclusive one, the chances of advancing gender equality in the organization would be much higher (for more on the reasons for women's resistance, see chapter 6, about recruiting partners and allies).

## **Intervention: The Practice of Gender Leadership**

As we described in the previous chapters, promoting gender equality in organizational practices is based on recruiting and mobilizing enough power to compel and coerce relevant stakeholders in the organization to take women's POV into account at a range of decision and policy-making sites in the organization. When a group of women with status and power, formal and informal, works jointly and systematically in an organization, they have more potential influence than individual agents of social change.

### **1. Goal**

The goal of the leadership group is to empower the ability of agents of change to bring women's POV to bear as a consideration of equal weight and power at the sites of decision-making and reality-shaping in the organization. The group members are gender equality agents who represent the POVs of women from different organizational echelons, positions, and sectors. Through their actions, the gender equality agents promote the assimilation of women's POVs as a routine, ongoing, and lasting organizational practice within the organization's planning and decision-making practices.

The assimilation process is described in chapter 9, which addresses decision-making in the organization. In the present chapter, we will describe the practice of creating a leadership group and making the women who comprise it active agents for gender equality in the organization.

A leadership group is an intra-organizational group with the potential of becoming a lever of overall change in gendered practices in the organization. In order for its members to be able to function as gender equality agents in the organization, the group gives them different kinds of abilities and tools that enable them to act as such:

- ❖ Tools for gender decoding of the organization
- ❖ Familiarity with practices and strategies used to promote gender equality
- ❖ Strategies to set priorities, direction, and purpose for gender equality change processes in different sectors of the organization
- ❖ Language and regimes of justification that can be used in situations of disruption and recruitment of allies
- ❖ An intra-organizational network of agents who support the organizational change processes they initiate
- ❖ Resources such as practical knowledge, ideas, relationships, and emotional and professional support

The leadership group helps make the transition from the first stage of identifying exclusionary gendered practices to the stage of planning actual change. But mainly, it supports promoting and implementing change in gendered practices as a routine and constant act in the organization. In other words, promoting gender equality not necessarily as a focused and specific project but as an ongoing organizational routine. Since the women who are members of the group have relatively high status and power in the organization, they can constitute a permanent organizational-gendered eye in the situations they are in. They are very familiar with the organization, the ways it operates, its power centers and its decision-making practices, while at the same time they are familiar with the organization's gendered practices, whether because they experienced them themselves or as representative of other women's POVs.

The most common gender equality initiatives in organizations are projects that focus on specific organizational practices (for example, lack of women in management or gender gaps in salaries), and are limited in scope and duration. They usually include a committee established to deal with a specific aspect of the status of women in the organization (such as increasing representation at senior levels, incorporating women in “masculine” positions, or improving work-life balance), by collecting relevant data that indicates the extent of the problem, drafting solutions and recommendations, and presenting them to the organization’s management. Management usually adopts the recommendations and establishes a new committee to implement them. These processes usually evaporate and disappear from the organization’s agenda under the daily pressure and the limited organizational attention devoted to the subject, and it is very difficult to persist with them and promote their implementation over time. The leadership group is a practice that facilitates turning the process of promoting gender equality (from the decoding stage through planning the change and recruiting allies to assimilating and implementing an inclusive alternative practice) into a routine and inseparable element of the organizational practices occurring at all levels of the organization. It is not a transformation process in the sense of a specific and focused effort but rather a routine practice in the organization.

A leadership group begins as a POV group but is also distinct in its composition and goals. The main goal of a POV group is to decode the daily experiences of diverse women in the organization and identify exclusionary gendered practices, whereas the purpose of the leadership group is to mobilize the power of women in the organization in favor of change in gendered practices as a routine and ongoing practice. In both types of groups, women decipher women’s POV about gendered practices. In the POV group that is the goal, whereas in the leadership group it will be a stage in the process of establishing the group. In the leadership group, the agents of gender equality will have the power and commitment to use their organizational position to give voice to women’s POV and assimilate it in decision-making processes as part of promoting change in gendered practices in the organization. The basic assumption is that the women who participate in the group have power in the organization, whether formal or informal. In many cases the women who participate do not perceive themselves from the outset as powerful or are not committed from the outset to mobilize their power for the benefit of women in the organization. Contending with these issues is part of the process of forging the group.

## 2. How is a leadership group created?

Establishing a leadership group consists primarily of recruiting women who want to act (or are willing to act) as agents of gender equality in the organization. The unique characteristic of the members of the leadership group is that they are women with power and status in the organization who wish to harness their own power to better the situation of other women and to promote change in organizational gendered practices. It is sometimes surprising to discover these women's willingness to accept the invitation to join an action group of this sort, especially considering the divisive practices described above. The chief practice for recruiting women to the leadership group is their active participation in deciphering gendered practices and women's POV based on their own experiences. Therefore, the leadership group begins as a POV group. It is an ongoing process of jointly articulating the gender POV as the groundwork for solidarity action to promote gender equality.

Recruitment can be done by a formal gender equality agent (for example, the commissioner for the advancement of the status of women) or by other women stakeholders in the organization. It is not a secret group in the organization. Part of the group's power and impact may come from the organizational status of the women who are its members, but no less from the recognition and approval they receive from the organization itself. The recommended size of the group is twelve to eighteen women – a group large enough for the women to feel part of a significant group even if some of them are absent from some of the meetings, but not too large, so that all members have enough time to speak at each meeting.

In a series of face-to-face meetings, the participants will discuss developing an identity of a feminist agent of gender equality and their cohesion as a group. Participants will gain the ability to represent the gender POV about organizational practices at the organizational sites where they are present, and acquire tools to promote and realize changes in gendered organizational practices. Among other things, they will learn how to recruit allies and the necessary resources to introduce the gender POV at the sites of decision-making; identify regimes of justification used to resist the organizational change they are promoting and develop regimes of justification in favor of this change, thereby enabling them to direct the organizational discourse surrounding their initiatives for gender equality; and become familiar with the range of gender intervention practices relevant to them and their organizational position. The participants will update their team members about the processes they are initiating and leading, with ongoing reflection on the directions and modes of action, to guarantee their suitability to the situation.

### 3. How does a leadership group work?

At the stage in which the members of the group act as gender equality agents in the organizations, the group holds ongoing meetings (at a frequency that suits the members of the group and their needs). In these meetings, they continue to receive training according to actual developments in their initiatives and conduct reflexive discourse about dilemmas and issues they encounter. The meetings are important for strengthening their sense of solidarity and capacity for action. At the same time, each one of the participants becomes a gender equality entrepreneur in the organizational sector in which she is active and has power and influence. This enables group members to operate in a decentralized way in different sectors of the organization and to direct their efforts to different issues. But at the same time they can draw support from the group as a whole and rely on its power for the initiatives in which they are involved as independent agents of gender equality. Because the group consists of women who have power in the organization, it is hard for the organization to deny its right to exist. The organizational recognition of the group and approval of its existence enable the group to acquire its own power, beyond the personal power of each of its members. It becomes a center of power in the organization and maintains a balance of power with other elements in the organization. The group is an actor with its own power, which provides validity and legitimacy to the POV that each member of the group brings and sets forth. Therefore, members of the group can use the power of the group in situations in which they operate independently and especially in the recruitment of allies to promote gender equality change. Over time, group members accumulate experience, confidence, and status in the organization as agents of gender equality because of the combination of their personal status, power, and seniority and the status and influence of the group.

The actions of the gender equality agents who are part of a leadership group express the combination between their own organizational power and the power of the group as a whole. The underlying principle is that they do not just identify problems and barriers and signal directions of action to the formal agent on the assumption that she will work to realize the change by virtue of her position. Rather, they themselves act to bring about change in organizational gendered practices and realize it with the help of the group resources. They themselves are agents of gender equality, which is to say, they are leaders. Each one of the gender equality agents in the group operates in her own organizational environment, identifies in it gender barriers and opportunities to create change, and uses the leadership group as a resource as needed.

Thus, for example, women from the group will be “on call” to attend a certain meeting in order to present the gender POV in the most influential manner, use their organizational associations to recruit support for the initiative of another agent, contribute from their practical organizational knowledge to develop an alternative practice, help formulate regimes of justification that will open doors and confront resistance, and more. The agents of gender equality collaborate among themselves, and when necessary mobilize power from the leadership group in favor of recruitment of allies and impacting decision-making situations. In certain cases the agents create additional groups in the sectors of the organization in which they operate. They thereby bolster their ability to give voice to women’s POV, recruit the support and power of additional women, and make the change in gendered practices into an ongoing and constant process in the organization.

Based on the experience of leadership groups in different organizational environments, we identified a number of conditions that promote their success in advancing and realizing change in gendered practices. The first condition is that the members of the group are women with power and status, although not necessarily formal power by virtue of a position in the organizational hierarchy. Power and influence can be the products of seniority, informal status, relevant experience, and so on. The second condition is the women’s willingness and commitment to use their power and influence for the benefit of other women and for the benefit of the “cause” of gender equality in the organization. Another condition is systematic and confident leadership of the group. The leadership can be undertaken by the formal agent of gender equality. The cooperation between her and the group can empower her to lead and realize changes in gendered practices, and group members can use her formal power in the initiatives they are promoting personally. In addition, there are other resources she might make available to them, such as knowledge, guidance, or contacts with various parties in and out of the organization. The group can also be led by an informal gender equality agent who initiates the establishment of the group, recruits participants, and serves as a role model to them by virtue of her initiative.

## Conclusion

The assumption underlying this chapter is that the concept of leadership is gendered, and leadership practices are usually exclusionary gendered practices for women who perceive themselves as falling short of the traditional image of a leader.



As an intervention to contend with the exclusion of women implicit in the concept, we propose the concept of “gender leadership” and the practice of leadership groups as an inclusive alternative practice. The purpose of the group, which is composed of women with power in the organization, is to act in order to bring forth women’s POV and integrate it in decision-making processes in the organization. The principle that “power recruits power,” which is the foundation of the leadership group, helps create a positive experience for the participants, in light of the increasing capacities of each one of them to validate her POV and to impact the organization and its practices from that POV. There are women who have no experience using their power for the benefit of other women or who are afraid to do so given the potential for conflict with an opposing power in the organization. Even senior women who are used to exercising power in their professional capacities are often not interested in identifying themselves with an agenda of gender equality and avoid the label of feminist out of fear of harming their professional standing, their chances for promotion, or their scope of opportunities in the organization. The leadership group helps to deal with this dilemma and bridge the perceived gap between professional standing and being labeled as a feminist.

**SECTION THREE**

**TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY: INTERVENTIONS  
IN GENDERED ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES**

## Chapter 9. Assimilation of Gender POV in Decision-Making Processes

The chief foundational argument of this handbook, and at the basis of the practical approach that we propose to gender equality, is that the promotion of gender equality in an organization is actually a process of representing, recognizing, and imposing women's POV about the organizational practice. According to this approach, what is excluded or disempowered in organizations is not women themselves but their POV: the way they experience organizational practices, participate in them, and give meaning to them. The continuation and reproduction of exclusionary organizational practices in organizations are made possible primarily by excluding women's POV from processes of planning and policy-making and from sites of decision-making that shape, preserve, and change organizational practices and day-to-day realities. In these processes and sites, women's POV is usually not represented, not recognized, is silenced, carries no authority, and has no impact.

In this chapter, we will describe organizational practices that exclude women's POV from the organization's decision-making processes and sites. We will focus primarily on the main practices: using regimes of silencing, exclusion from representation in decision-making processes, and absence of authority and power for women's POV at the sites of determination. We will also describe a series of interventions at different levels of the organization whose common purpose is to make recognizing, representing, and giving power to women's POV a routine organizational practice in decision-making processes. To make the representation of women's POV an integral part of decision-making, with authority and impact in shaping organizational practices, just like the authority and impact reserved for other privileged POVs, such as the economic, legal, or efficiency POVs. We will propose a number of planes of intervention: bureaucratic intervention, which forces the gender POV on decision-making processes through binding rules and procedures that require organizational actors to receive approval and meet gender criteria as part of their decision-making routines; political intervention, which includes recruiting actors with the authority to grant power to a POV in decision-making sites; and practical intervention, assimilating the gender POV in the practical knowledge and daily practice of decision-making by the organization's executives.

## **Gendered Practices that Exclude Women's POV from Sites of Decision-Making**

According to our conceptualization, the process of promoting gender equality in each arena is a process of unraveling an existing practice that is experienced negatively by women and impedes their functioning and contribution to the organization, and reconstructing the practice in such a way that enables women to participate in the organization alongside men in an active, contributing, and rewarding way. In this process, women's POV about a particular organizational practice goes from repression, denial, and marginalization to becoming a weighty factor and an important consideration in the organization's decision-making process, alongside the POVs, interests, and logics of other institutional actors, such as the budgetary, political, efficiency, moral, or public relations POVs, which impose themselves on the decision-making process at the sites of determination on a daily and routine basis.

One of the main experiences of women who actively engage in promoting gender equality in organizations is constant frustration because of the gap between the capacity to identify, understand, and decode exclusionary organizational practices, and even to find simple and effective solutions to them, and the great difficulty in turning these solutions into an organizational reality. The advisors, commissioners, and activists who are agents of gender equality report an experience of clearing a path for their POVs in a dense thicket of resistance, silencing, dismissal, belittling, and disinterest, which block their path to the heart of decision-making sites. Women's POV on an organizational practice that is on the organization's agenda is usually absent from the decision-making site. If it is present, it is hard to acknowledge it as valid. And even if it is acknowledged as valid, it does not have compelling and coercive power over decision-making, and is perceived as a marginal or secondary factor compared to other considerations and interests present at the site. The prevailing assumption that decision-making in an organization is rational, objective, and gender-neutral obfuscates the fact that in most cases women's POV, their experience, interests, and priorities are absent from the decision-making process and have no weight and influence in it – which makes the decision-making processes in the organization loaded with gendered significance and consequences and not gender-neutral.

## How Do Organizations Exclude Women's POV from Decision-Making?

The absence of women's POV at sites of decision-making, the failure to recognize it, and the negligible weight it is given, are not the result of oblivion or lack of attention. Nor can one accept the assumption that women's POVs are merely "not important" to the organization, or that they are simply "forgotten" and therefore not perceived as important in decision-making processes. We argue that women's POV is very important in organizations, otherwise how can we explain the active resistance and great force usually exerted in order to silence it when an attempt is made to put it on the organization's agenda? The force exerted indicates the importance of women's POV: it threatens and undermines routine organizational arrangements, habits, logics, and interests. The questioning or unraveling of the self-evident automaticity of organizational practices makes the actors who are embedded in them lose their strength. Even the smallest change required in an organizational practice has consequences and a price for the actors embedded in it and involves loss of power, in the sense of accepting that particular POV as legitimate and as having compelling and coercive force. Therefore, the absence of women's POV is not a passive process that results from oblivion, lack of attention, or lack of importance, but an active, power-driven process in the organization's daily routine. We identify three sets of organizational practices that exclude women's POV from sites of decision-making, and we will describe them in detail: discursive practices of justification and silencing, bureaucratic practices of exclusion from representation, and political practices of disempowerment.

### 1. Discursive practices of justification and silencing

When a woman decodes her personal POV about an organizational practice and exposes it as an exclusionary gendered practice, varied statements (regimes of justification) are instantly and almost instinctively unleashed. These statements examine, test, and undermine the validity and justice of this POV, thereby doubting it (for details and elaboration, see chapter 7, "Regimes of Justification, Controversies, Resistance, and Support"). The statements are activated by participants in the situation, men or women, and they prevent the POV from turning into an overt and collective demand for gender equality and from becoming a compelling and coercive power that forces a change in organizational practices. As a result, their direct impact on women is to silence them.

Regimes of justification exist well beyond the men and women who express them in response to the exposure of women's POV. Their exercise is a power-driven act because it silences a disempowered POV and excludes it from the sites of decision-making. However, it does not reflect malicious intent or a desire to do harm. The active silencing is not a vindictive act on the part of chauvinistic men who want to hurt women or a conscious effort on the part of women to purposely ignore their sisters. The silencing is much more banal: it is based on actors in organizational positions for whom exposure of the POV is perceived as having negative and unsettling consequences. They enlist such regimes of justification simply to keep things as they are, not necessarily out of a desire to minimize women or hurt them. Active silencing is based on practices, barriers, and mechanisms that not only silence women's POV but also prevent men and women in the organization from recognizing that POV and validating it. The people who exercise the silencing practices are, to a large extent, victims of that very process, so their reaction cannot be explained by disregard or malicious intent. The ability to recognize women's POV is blocked both by those who are harmed by the practice and by those who gain from it. Therefore, the intervention practices we propose focus on the ways in which it is possible to expose women's POV to women and men in the organization in order to make that POV a compelling and coercive force in shaping organizational practices, no less than the economic, legal, bureaucratic, moral, or efficiency perspectives.

## **2. Bureaucratic practices of exclusion from representation**

One of the main mechanisms to silence women's experience and POV on organizational practices is to exclude them from being represented in the organization's planning and decision-making processes. Organizations' bureaucratic structure – the written and unwritten rules and procedures that organize and regulate organizational activity – determines the POV that is represented and the weight it carries in the organization's systemic and structured decision-making processes. The bureaucratic order determines who needs to be present, who has the power to decide, who has to approve, and what needs to be taken into account in every decision-making situation. Decision-making can concern the promotion of people in the organization, acquisition processes, tenders, planning processes, resource allocation, disciplinary actions and dismissals, change of organizational structure, and so on.

The same system of rules that determines the representation and weight of actors and different POVs in decision-making processes excludes women's POV by not giving it structured space and weight in the structured series of events that culminates in decision-making and in changing organizational practices. Many other POVs are given a structured space – legal, political, expedient, accounting, and even medical, environmental, and safety POVs – but women's POV is usually not given space or weight as an inherent and structured part of the decision-making process.

The representation of a POV in the bureaucratic process of decision-making is not based only on women's participation and presence in senior positions, forums, or boards. There is no guarantee that women in particular professional or managerial positions in the organization, who by virtue of their job are in charge of representing a particular organizational POV, will necessarily also represent women's POV about the practice under discussion just because they are women. Experience teaches us that oftentimes the opposite is the case. Therefore, the bureaucratic representation of women's POV cannot be based only on the presence of women in decision-making forums or situations, but it must also lean on organizational rules and procedures that coerce the POV into the process. For instance, an organizational acquisition procedure may require checking and confirming that suppliers are of both genders, or procedures of building and physical infrastructure planning may require obtaining a gender review about the suitability of the planned buildings for women as a condition for approving the plans. Thus, the POV is compelled and coerced into the bureaucratic practice of decision-making and approval, which gives it power and significance in designing the practice.

### **3. Political practices of disempowerment**

In order to impact the design of the practice, the POV must not only be exposed and represented in the decision-making processes but also be given weight – which is to say, be considered important and as having significant consequences so that it needs to be taken into account and cannot be ignored. The more actors with organizational power and status represent women's POV at determination sites, the greater the importance and weight of that POV. Sites of determination are power-driven situations and decisions are made in them by a process of gaining power. The more a particular actor's POV, his or her logic, interests, and experience of the practice enlist additional actors as allies – actors who recognize and understand the POV and give it importance – the more the decision-makers find themselves coerced and compelled to take the POV into account in their decision.

It is a complex silencing process: the various actors around the discussion table, who represent diverse organizational POVs and interests, acknowledge the existence of a problematic gendered situation in the organization, but do not support taking action to change the situation for various reasons that are important to them. The power of the gendered POV is as the power of the actors around the table, and when they do not understand it, do not support it, and are not willing to represent it – it remains without importance, without weight, and without impact on the practice. The decision-makers do not feel the need to take it into consideration. Therefore, the political silencing of a POV is an active process where powerful organizational actors fail to step up and actively represent women's POV at the site of determination and do not support such representation and acknowledgement.

## **Intervention: Practices for the Assimilation of Gender POV in Decision-Making Processes**

One of the most significant interventions that can be realized in organizations is to implement women's POV within decision-making processes and practices out of the understanding that organizations are saturated with gendered organizational practices that exclude, disempower, and silence women's POV and prevent it from impacting decision-making processes. It is clear that organizational actions that only depict and articulate women's POV are insufficient to create real change in organizational practices. Therefore, meaningful organizational change to reduce gender inequality can only be realized through the assimilation of the gendered POV as an inherent, routine, ongoing, compelling, and coercive force in the decision-making practices of the organization. Corresponding with the three categories of silencing and excluding practices of women's POV outlined above, there are also three paths to promote the assimilation of the gendered POV into the decision-making processes: political, bureaucratic, and practical.

### **1. The political path: Recruiting allies**

The political path means increasing the ability of a gender equality agent (or group of agents) to recruit allies to promote change in a given practice toward gender equality. The recruitment of allies is a complex process, and chapter 6 presents various recruitment practices that are suitable for different actors and situations in the organization, in order to mobilize actors to use their power in favor of realizing change in gendered organizational practices.



Gender equality agents are sometimes averse to engaging in these recruitment efforts: some think such an effort is illegitimate in terms of the organization, others think it is impractical because they perceive their own organizational power and status as inferior and themselves as unable to recruit powerful actors. But experience shows that without recruiting powerful actors as allies for organizational change in gendered practices, such change is doomed to end with a brief exposure of women's POV and to die out in the face of a solid wall of silencing.

That is why organizational interventions are needed to give the gender equality agent a feeling of efficacy, experience, and practical skills to identify and understand actors who can be allies and to activate suitable recruitment efforts at critical points in the process of bringing about change in gendered practices. Such mobilization interventions are an inseparable part of the role of gender equality agents and part of their repertoire of practical know-how. The best approach is to practice them in workshops and simulations as part of the development and training of POV groups or leadership groups (see chapters 3 and 8).

## **2. The bureaucratic path**

The second path to assimilating women's POV into organizations' decision-making processes is the bureaucratic imposition of the POV. This means establishing a series of organizational rules and procedures in which the women's POV has a structured place as an integral part of the decision-making process, and instructing the different functionaries in the organization to implement them. Examples of rules that require a gender POV in the decision-making process include mandating the presence of a gender equality advisor at promotion discussions in the organization; a requirement to meet gendered standards in tenders (for instance, a demand from suppliers that 50% of their personnel be women, or that they uphold regulations to prevent sexual harassment), or requiring a gendered review in planning and resource allocation processes (such as an evaluation of equipment acquisition and the extent it meets the needs of the women who use it); requiring approval of building and development plans from a gender perspective (for example, a gender analysis of plans to build a new campus that takes into account women's needs and experience); a gender analysis of formal organizational rules and regulations (such as identifying laws and rules that separate men and women or exclude women); a gender analysis of the organization's budget before its publication, and so on.

These processes compel and coerce the women's POV as a routine practice in all organizational processes, such as acquisition, policy design, planning, construction, budgeting, recruitment, promotion, and the rest of the fundamental organizational processes.

### **3. The practical path**

The biggest challenge in assimilating women's POV in decision-making is making the gender consideration a natural, routine, normal, inherent consideration and especially giving it weight in decision-making practices of individual executives and managers. The day gender considerations are integrated into the practical knowledge of executives in problem solving, decision-making, and daily planning, along with other weighty considerations (economic, budgetary, practical, moral, and so on) is the day organizations will be fair, equitable, and maybe even gender-neutral.

Assimilating gender consideration in decision-making practices on the individual level means a carefully defined decision-making process. It begins with the personal ability to examine the practice or look at it from the POV of women who are routinely immersed in it. It continues with the ability to give weight and importance to the experiences the practice creates for women versus other considerations and constraints in decision-making. It ends with the creative process of making the practice inclusive to women, which means the ability to imagine, plan, or change the practice in such a way that will make it convenient and enabling for both men and women. When this process on the individual level becomes an inseparable part of the series of events that constitutes planning or decision-making, most gender inequality problems will be resolved before they even appear.

How is this process assimilated into the common practical knowledge of the executive echelons of the organization? This is achieved through several parallel practices. First, men and women executives must undergo systematic and methodical training to develop their ability for inclusive decision-making. The practical training will include conceptualization and understanding of inclusive decision-making processes, as well as repeated exercises in case studies where they will practice decoding women's POV on an organizational practice or situation, understand the exclusionary and gendering aspects of the practice, and construct creative alternatives in the form of inclusive practices.

These inclusive practices must reflect women's POV and provide a solution to the existing exclusion. Second, since most decision-making processes are not individual and autonomic but rather group processes that include different speech acts, such as discussions, meetings, reviewing and expressing opinions, the inclusive decision-making process needs to become a "shared mental model": a scheme deeply assimilated in the practical knowledge of executives, both women and men, that provides a language and vocabulary to manage the decision-making process. The successful assimilation of the shared mental model largely depends on the power holders, those actors who lead and direct organizational discussions and meetings, being vigilant in using the concepts and vocabulary of the inclusive decision-making practice. For example, the director of a discussion asks participants to voice their opinions regarding a gender POV on the subject being discussed, or a department head insists on receiving a review from a gender perspective before continuing discussion of future plans, or an executive requires that a gendered consideration be included in the discussion, or defends whoever represents women's POV in the discussion against the avalanche of regimes of justification and silencing unleashed on her.

## Conclusion

Assimilating a gendered POV into various organizational practices has been the main strategy for promoting gender equality in organizations since the 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing. This approach emphasizes the importance of POV assimilation, but does not usually position that process in the arena of organizational power relations. This chapter proposed ways to assimilate women's POV in organizations' decision-making processes and give it value, weight, and impact in these processes, out of decoding and understanding power relations in the organization and contending with them. It is important to note that the assimilation of women's POV in decision-making processes does not mean turning decision-makers in the organization into feminists or raising executives' feminist awareness. The exclusion of women's POV from sites of determination in the organization is a power-driven process and therefore power is needed to confront it. The interventions described seek to give women's POV power in decision-making situations in the organization, whether in bureaucratic processes, in political relations, or in the day-to-day routines and practical knowledge of the organization's executives.

## Chapter 10. Gender Analysis of Occupations

One of the chief sources of the gaps between women and men in their status, wages, promotion, and position in organizations is gendered internal labor markets: tracking processes and practices in the organization that direct women and men to different sectors or positions, which have starkly different compensation prospects, promotion opportunities, and employment conditions. When an intra-organizational labor market is gendered, we will often find many women concentrated in occupations or organizational sectors where compensation is relatively low, employment conditions are less secure, promotion opportunities are fewer, and the work itself might be more routine or considered less important by the organization. In contrast, we will find few women, or the absolute absence of women, in positions or sectors considered to be the core of the organization, which give those who fill them high status and prestige, higher compensation, and an abundance of promotion channels, and which are considered the most important, contributing, and central in the organization. Such jobs might be, for example, software engineers in high-tech companies, combatants in militaries, construction engineers in the construction industry, surgeons in hospitals, field engineers or network technicians in the electric company, or sanitation workers in municipal services. Sometimes there are no women at all in these positions, and if there are any, they are usually a minority and will experience difficulties fitting in and functioning because of the gendered nature of the positions. Women are entitled to an equal opportunity to work and succeed, and to expand the range of employment opportunities available to them. Many organizations are also interested in integrating women in various core positions. However, successful integration often requires substantial organizational changes and not only an effort by the women to accommodate themselves to the positions in their present configuration.

### **The Exclusionary Gendered Practice: The Gendered Nature of Jobs and Positions**

Core positions in various organizations are often considered “masculine positions” – not only because they are usually filled by men but also because they are designed for men’s bodies, identities, and social relations. In other words, work practices through which these jobs are performed are not only functional actions designed to optimally realize the goals of the job, but practices that also express the masculine identity of the position holders: the way men speak, the way men perform actions, the way men address and communicate with each other, the way men think about women and femininity, the way men achieve, the way men’s bodies need to look and act, the way men need to function in the public sphere.

Therefore, “masculine positions” are not only performance positions but also identity positions: they express the male ideal, and their performance practices are also practices of identity demonstration. In many cases these positions are identified with masculinity and even define masculinity. For instance, research studies show that children (and not only children) will almost always presume people in occupations such as police officer, fighter pilot, firefighter, or carpenter are men, and those in occupations such as teacher, nurse, or secretary are women.

It is easy to demonstrate this point when it comes to combat positions in armies. The way the combat job is performed, namely the array of practices through which it is performed – the training, maneuvers, equipment, forms of address, relations with other soldiers and commanders, the way your body is expected to be built – all express an ideal of masculine identity. These include how a male body is supposed to look (durable, sturdy, impervious to harm, overcomes obstacles), how a man is supposed to behave in the face of difficulty (with dominance, persistence, restraint, self-discipline, determination), and how social relations between men are constructed (brotherhood, camaraderie, mutual sacrifice, self-effacement in favor of the group goals). Furthermore, sometimes the masculine identity of the occupation is defined by the negation of female identity. Combatants are raised and bred on the idea that the identity of a combatant is the opposite of the identity of a woman through statements that mark female identity as the “defining other” of masculine identity: “Don’t be pussies,” “You walk like a girl,” and even referring in a derogatory way to the enemy as female. Likewise, a large part of the motivation to be a combatant resides in the promise by armies of a masculine identity in exchange for service as a combatant, and thus men are motivated to take upon themselves the difficulties, the violence and the risk of life involved in that occupation. In fact, armies construct basic combat training as a rite of passage into manhood, just like rites of passage into manhood that exist in different cultures and societies.

The position of “boss” is also gendered because it contains expectations for patterns and styles of behavior considered masculine, such as aggressiveness, dominance, centralization, authoritativeness, individuality, ambition, and competitiveness. Organizational practices design the position according to these outlines. For instance, long work hours that indicate sacrifice and commitment, evaluation and selection practices that distinguish between candidates on the basis of those traits, speech manifestations and practices that express authoritativeness and are manifested in seating patterns in the room, the ability of subordinates to voice criticism or exception, and even with their body gestures that express obedience and respect.

It should be noted that the masculine ideal on which the performance practices of the “masculine positions” are based is not necessarily uniform, but reflects different versions of masculinity that exist in different social groups. For instance, the design of the occupation of “Software developer” reflects a different male ideal than the design of the occupation of “firefighter.”

The deep association between performance practices of “masculine” occupations and the masculine identity demonstrated by them is also the main source of difficulty in integrating women into such positions. The overlap between performance and identity practices makes the male positions a focus of strong resistance to the integration of women into them for several reasons. First, the integration of women threatens the masculine identity of the position and makes it less desirable and prestigious to other identity-seeking men. Second, it is assumed in the performance practices themselves that the performer is a man in a masculine situation, which means he has a certain body structure, a certain behavior style, and a certain lifestyle that allows him to devote himself to the job. Since a large part of these practices are constructed in the image of the (ideal) man and based on negating the image and identity of women, they are by definition exclusionary for women. It is much harder for women, from the situation they are in, to function in them properly. For instance, the job’s equipment may be accommodated to men’s carrying capacity; the work hours or shift hours are based on the assumption that a man is available to devote or sacrifice all of his time to performing the job; and the patterns of relationships with clients (for instance, going from door to door, house calls, one-on-one conversations) are based on situations in which men feel safe, but women often do not.

Beyond the lack of accommodation of the position’s performance practices, another obstacle that faces women’s integration into masculine positions is resistance to their inclusion in these positions – both by the men who fill the positions and by organizational parties who are not interested in including women in these positions. The former resist because of the threat to the masculine identity of the position. The resistance of other organizational actors might arise from a variety of reasons related to the way they are connected to those positions or jobs and immersed in them. For instance, actors might object to including women because it will require installing additional bathrooms, and that would require a budget; because it will be necessary to provide a room for nursing and milk-pumping at the expense of a room that has a different use; because the work hours will need to be changed; because job requirements will have to be redefined, and so on.

The resistance will come with regimes of justification, which are explanations of why women cannot fill the job or why a specific woman is unsuitable for a specific job. Regimes of justification accompany the efforts to open these positions and jobs to women and the actual integration process of women into the positions.

Another obstacle and perhaps the most significant one to integrating women in “masculine positions” is an integration process in which women are thrown into the positions without a preparatory process of gender analysis of the gendered aspects of the occupation and gender accommodation of it. Merely opening up these positions without such preparation processes almost guarantees the vicious cycle of failure: women enter the position, some or most of them have many difficulties performing the job, and they increasingly quit due to the non-accommodation of the performance practices to the gendered situation (see above). For those who oppose integrating women in these positions, the failure is solid proof that women are incapable, unqualified, not suited, or unworthy of serving in them. Sometimes the integration process is called a “pilot” – a term that indicates the inherent skepticism in the organization regarding the process and puts women in a state of test, while completely ignoring the need to evaluate the existing organizational practices and accommodate them to the new reality.

In these situations, failure is indeed almost certain and expected. Since the job performers need not only to perform the job but also to demonstrate identity practices that express their situation, style, and socialization as men, women are precluded from performing those identity demonstrations from the outset. Colleagues examine their performance with gendered eyes: Do they manage to resemble men in performing the practices of the position? Do they succeed like men? The answers to these questions are predetermined. For instance, in some places women have been perceived as failing at a job because they cried when they faced difficulty. Crying is perceived as defective performance and personal decomposition, and not as part of the process of coping. In other places, women have been perceived as failing because their voices were not deep and resonant enough to do the job successfully (an argument voiced about Hillary Clinton when she was running for president of the United States). The difficulty of coping with physical demands (such as carrying a heavy weight) is also perceived as a failure, and women have been perceived as failing also because they did not demonstrate “sacrifice and commitment” in the form of working long hours into the night.

Therefore, the inseparable combination between performance practices and identity practices is the main obstacle to integrating women in masculine positions and jobs.

When it is impossible to separate performance from identity, the existing performance practices are perceived as correct, irreplaceable, and sometimes even sacred – even if it is impossible to point to a necessary connection between them and optimal functioning in the job. The combination of performance practices and identity practices also makes it difficult to imagine and accept alternatives to these practices, and when alternative performance practices are indeed implemented, it draws resentment and is often called an “accommodation” or “decline in quality.”

## **Inclusive Practices: Integrating Women in “Masculine” Positions**

Integrating women in positions which are perceived as masculine is a process that demands planning, effort, resources, and open-mindedness by the organization. As part of the process, it is necessary to treat both the professional aspect of the integration – the performance practices, and its social aspect – the resistance, the hostility, and efforts to torpedo it that emerge in the organization. There are several parallel measures that help the success of the integration process as we shall present below.

### **1. Gender analysis of occupations**

Gender analysis of an occupation is a specialized examination of existing performance practices in the job – the extent to which they enable women to perform the job properly on the one hand, and the extent to which they are truly relevant and necessary to performing the job on the other hand.

Gender analysis of a job or an occupation must be performed by experts in the field along with people with organizational knowledge who are familiar with the jobs and their demands. The main source of information for analyzing the job is the experience of women who perform or have performed it in the specific organizational context. These women are familiar with the performance practices and have actually experienced the difficulties they pose because of their lack of accommodation to women’s situations. Women’s POV and experiences in certain jobs or positions can be obtained through POV groups (see chapter 3) or through detailed personal interviews. If there are no women who have actually experienced the job or position in the organization, the experiences of women in parallel or similar positions in other organizations can be a useful source of information. An analysis of a job or an occupation from a gender perspective enables the mapping of the range of practices in the following areas:



- ❖ **Selection and recruitment to the job or position.** What are the criteria used to determine the suitability of an individual to the position? What are the sources of recruitment? How and where is the job publicized?
- ❖ **Training.** What are the physical and academic demands of the training and qualification process for the position? What learning and training are needed to perform it? Where and how do the learning and training take place? To what extent does the training prepare for the required performance practices?
- ❖ **Performance.** How is the job itself performed? What actions are the employees required to perform? With what equipment and instruments? In what places? What are the physical attributes of the place where the job is performed?
- ❖ **Work schedule.** At what hours is the job performed? How is the time organized – in shifts? Is transportation provided? What are the beginning and ending hours? Are they rigid or flexible? How are employees compensated for their hours?
- ❖ **Social relations and communication in the position.** What patterns of interaction are there in the position? Who answers to whom? How does communication take place among the employees and between them and the managerial echelon? How does communication take place between employees and clients?

**For each practice the following questions should be asked:**

- a. **To what extent is the practice inclusive or exclusionary?** In other words, does the practice allow or block the integration of women into the position when it is performed in the situation of a woman (motherhood, physical ability, gender socialization).
  1. When the performer is a mother of children, she is usually subject to duties and expectations by the institution of motherhood that might conflict with the demands of the practice and thereby make it exclusionary.
  2. When the woman performer is physiologically different from the male performer on accepted indexes (maximum oxygen utilization, muscle mass in upper body and legs, bone density, height, etc.), the practice can become exclusionary if the requirements do not suit the physical capacities of women.
  3. Practices can become exclusionary also when they do not suit the gendered socialization that women usually undergo. For instance, women are usually less exposed to physical effort, are socialized to different uses of language (it is less legitimate for them to curse or shout), they are directed differently than men toward ways of spending leisure time and hobbies, they are not socialized to use work tools, and raised with different habits concerning dirt and cleanliness, appearance and presentation, forms of address and behavior.

**b. To what extent is the practice actually a necessary and irreplaceable requirement to performing the position?**

1. What is the source of this performance practice? What is the rationale for its inclusion as a requirement?
2. Is the practice performed in different, non-exclusionary ways in other places?
3. Is it possible to perform it in a different, non-exclusionary way and still function effectively?

**c. Is there an inclusive performance alternative that meets the following criteria?**

1. Excludes neither men nor women.
2. Does not mark women as separate and different (lesser) than men.
3. Maintains the effectiveness of the job performance or maybe even increases it.

## **2. Gender accommodation of occupations**

The gender analysis of an occupation gives rise to a list of recruiting, training, and performance practices that demand organizational change in order for women to be able to function fully and contribute in the position. The analysis also gives rise to a series of possible solutions. For instance, in a large security organization it was difficult for women to be integrated into field positions that constituted the organizational core. These were the positions from which workers got selected and promoted to the organization's executive positions. Most of the women left their field positions after a short while, especially after they became mothers. The managers complained it was difficult for them to provide the women with solutions suited to their needs, and that the organization itself failed to provide the managers with appropriate solutions for situations in which women were absent from work, were limited in performing the job, or were entitled to mothers' working conditions such as a shortened work day and work hours. A detailed gender analysis of the occupation was performed through two POV groups. Members of the groups described the organizational practices that made the work experience distressful for mothers of children. A more detailed analysis found that the main problem was the shift practice: shift hours did not accommodate the drop-off and pickup times of children in kindergartens and primary schools, tasks that were in most cases the women's responsibility. The shift structure was rigid in the sense that it had a permanent and binding order that had been in place in the organization from time immemorial.

The POV groups not only pointed to the problem inherent in the shifts practice but proposed several possible solutions that would accommodate the situation of women in the specific organization. These were strong solutions in the sense that they allowed work to proceed properly and for the tasks of the job to be performed and completed successfully, through the practice of a different shift arrangement. The new shifts practice gave women and men more flexibility: accommodation of the shift hours to the normal drop-off and pickup times of children, transition between shifts according to special needs, and planning the staffing schedule two weeks in advance to allow personal and managerial preparation.

### **3. Assimilation of inclusive performance practices**

The process of accommodating and adapting an occupation or a specific job for women is not only a rational process of occupation analysis and presenting recommendations and solutions. It is also a process of overcoming different kinds of resistance of different magnitudes. As mentioned above, “masculine positions” are focuses of identity, power, and prestige, and it is very difficult not only to admit women into these jobs but mainly to change the organization’s practices of selection, training, and performance that have been pursued in these jobs from time immemorial. Changes are usually met by an array of resisting regimes of justification – from lowering standards and a drop in performance, through to various costs and up to the danger of harm to women. For example, the change in the shift practice described above met fierce resistance with the argument that the change harmed the cohesiveness of the teams, because in the new shift practice a permanent team would not necessarily be able to do all of its shifts together – which was considered a value by the organization and was considered important and necessary for effective functioning. Even though the occupation analysis and proposed solutions indicated that functioning and the ability to fulfill tasks actually grew when flexible shift staffing was implemented, it was difficult to persuade decision-makers in the organization to adopt the inclusive practice. Managers felt they had more control of their personnel in a fixed structure, and the men claimed it would be difficult for them to function in irregular teams. Therefore, the accommodation process is also a political process of accumulating enough power to make the decision-makers in the organization implement the gender accommodation plan, rather than silencing and shelving it under a slew of regimes of justification (chapter 6 is devoted entirely to managing the political process of recruiting partners and allies to processes of changing organizational practices to promote gender equality).

Besides overcoming resistance in the organization to implementing inclusive performance practices, integrating the changes requires a preparation and training process among the managers and peer workers. When no such preparation is undertaken, resistance is expressed through hostile and belittling interactions directed at the women. In addition, there is a lack of understanding about the move and even a lack of cooperation by the managerial echelons – reactions that usually undermine and torpedo the integration processes. The preparation process should include several layers:

- a. Reflecting women's POV on the existing performance practices to all managers and workers and presenting the logic of the inclusive practices.
- b. Recruiting managers to understand the organizational changes and to solidly support the practices and the women.
- c. Defining the changes as a binding organizational reality, which is not open to philosophical opinions, negotiation, or discretion at the managerial or peer level.
- d. Defining clear rules for gender-fair decision-making and interactions, leaving no room for personal interpretation by managers.
- e. Creating channels of feedback and dialogue between managers and the integrated women, to enable the managers to find out and understand the women's POV about different practices, and to solve problems by inclusion rather than exclusion.

## Conclusion

Full integration of women in the organization's male-heavy positions and sectors is an important and central target for gender organizational intervention. Increasing the participation of women in these sectors expands their range of employment opportunities, increases their earning capacity, offers women challenging and contributing occupation options, and breaks the stereotypical gendered division of labor. Equal participation of women in masculine positions is achieved through the understanding that every practice has a substitute, and that the selection, recruitment, training, and performance practices are only ways to achieve the goals of the occupation or position, and are not goals in and of themselves. This insight is the basis for the process of integrating women and increasing their participation in masculine positions. This process includes a gender analysis of the occupation or job, gender accommodation of it, and assimilating inclusive performance practices in daily organizational life.

The absence of such a process, we argue, can be understood as a deliberate effort to torpedo the integration of women, who in the vast majority of cases experience difficulty and distress, and drop out of these positions due to lack of gender accommodation.

The process will usually meet fierce resistance from organizational actors, managers and peers alike. For various reasons, it is difficult for all of them to give up the practices that have existed in the organization from time immemorial and define the masculine identity of the position and of the men who fill it. This resistance needs to be overcome judiciously, through a process of recruiting partners and allies and through a process of preparation and training of both managers and peers.

## Chapter 11. Preventing Sexual Harassment

One of the main challenges of institutional activity to promote gender equality in organizations is dealing with the phenomenon of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is not only an injustice and a power-driven and cruel behavior on the individual level, it is also one of the chief practices of oppression and exclusion of women in organizations. It is an extreme practice of negating women's POV in the organization.

When a man sexually harasses a woman (and, of course, when men are sexually harassed), he is performing a power-driven act against her that does not recognize her thoughts or feelings, treating her like a sexual object, and thereby denying the woman her subjectivity. The repeated exposure of women in an organization to sexual harassment, of all kinds, violates not only their human dignity and status in the organization, but also their identity, self-confidence, and self-worth. The repeated sexual harassment of women in organizations positions them as a group of lesser worth, which is humiliated and abused by power holders in the organization. For these reasons, the main process to prevent sexual harassment in organizations involves its recognition as an organizational phenomenon occurring by virtue and under the auspices of the organization, and requires imposing on the organization, its executives, and employees the responsibility to intervene actively to prevent sexual harassment. In organizations whose executives and employees know how to identify harassment, understand their responsibility to prevent it, and know how to intervene to stop its occurrence, sexual harassment goes from being an organizational culture to a digression by individuals. In this chapter, we will propose an intervention model to prevent harassment in organizations.

### **Exclusionary Gendered Practice: Sexual Harassment as an Organizational Practice**

Our argument is that sexual harassment is an organizational practice. More accurately, organizations usually have a range of organizational practices that can be defined as a whole as "sexual harassment." The practice of sexual harassment is a series of actions performed on a regular, repeated basis, by different people in different situations. As part of this series of actions, one party (usually a man) uses the power that the organizational situation provides them with in order to force upon the other party (usually a woman) a comment, proposition, or action that has a sexual connotation, and that makes the other party feel distress, humiliation, fear, threat, discomfort, and violation of their self-identity and dignity.

Sexual harassment is an organizational practice when the act of harassment is a regular behavior pattern performed at different times by different actors in the organization, and it relies on an organizational situation and draws its power from it.

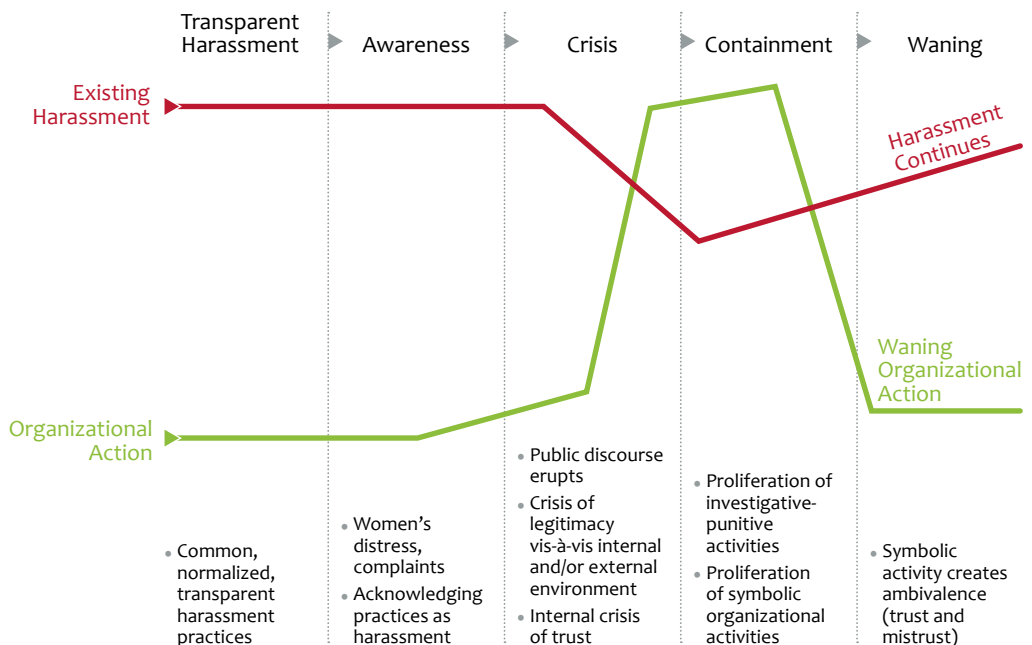
In other words, the individual's act of harassment cannot be disconnected from the organization and the organizational situation in which it takes place: the action is undertaken in the framework of existing power relations in the organization and as part of them. The power can arise from formal authority that the organization imparts to certain people by virtue of their organizational position (such as managers, teachers, supervisors, commanders), or by virtue of the informal authority certain people have by virtue of their organizational status (tenure, seniority, expertise, professionalism), or by virtue of the rules of interaction in the organization (decorum, discipline, camaraderie, fellowship), which diminish the ability of women subjected to harassment to resist it. All of these are types of power that the perpetrating party exercises and enables the harassment by obstructing any resistance to it.

Since sexual harassment is an organizational practice, the organization and its functionaries are responsible for preventing it. The model for the prevention program we propose here is based on realizing the organizational responsibility to disrupt, thwart, and prevent the occurrence of harassment practices that exist in the organization.

## How Organizations Cope with Sexual Harassment: The Existing Model

Experience gained from numerous organizations indicates that organizations usually go through several stages in coping with the phenomenon of sexual harassment, as presented in Figure 3.

**Figure 3. Stages in organizations' coping with sexual harassment**



## 1. The transparent harassment stage

At this stage, sexual harassment practices that prevail in the organization are so institutionalized that they are normalized and transparent. These institutionalized harassment practices are endemic to the organization. In other words, they have specific characteristics and expressions depending on the unique character of each organization, because in each organization unique interactions occur between women and men and the power relations between them have different manifestations. For example, sexual harassment practices in organizations where interactions occur mainly between men in senior positions and younger women who answer to them (such as in airlines – pilots and flight attendants; at restaurants – shift managers and waitresses; in security organizations – senior commanders and young women soldiers) will be different from those in organizations where the main encounter situations are therapeutic (such as men physicians, psychologists, or physiotherapists with women patients). Organizations that have numerous education and training situations will also have their own unique manifestations of sexual harassment practices because of the specific combination of encounter situations and gender power relations.

We distinguish between two kinds of institutionalized sexual harassment practices: harassment situations and harassing types. **Harassment situations** are situations and conditions typical of the organization (for example, frequent assignments that require long travel, dropping off women workers at home at the end of their shift, social gatherings of the organization's men and women employees outside work hours and the workplace, staff meetings where women are in the minority), in which a certain kind of harassing behavior is typically exercised, based on the nature of the situation. For instance, a harassment practice common in many organizations is the "discussion group" – management or staff discussions where men communicate with each other through comical-sexual statements about the body or sexuality of one of the women present. This is a violent harassment practice: the person making the sexual statement is using the force of the social rules of the situation of the meeting, discussion, or gathering, in order to label one of the women present in the situation sexually, to exclude her from the camaraderie, to make her feel shame, embarrassment, and helplessness in light of the uproarious laughter at her expense, and to silence her ability to resist. They do this with a regime of justification that defines the situation as one of recreation and entertainment, camaraderie, or joking.



A **harassing type** is a person employed by the organization, who repeatedly and over time performs harassing behaviors (statements, addresses, or actions) toward women in the organization. For instance, the #MeToo campaign that appeared in the fall of 2017 exposed harassing types in the US media and entertainment industry. These types cannot be defined as “perverts.” Rather, they are themselves an organizational practice: these people repeatedly exploit the power imparted to them by the organization and the organizational situations over which they have control (for instance, the ability to invite an actress to an audition, the ability to schedule work meetings as dinner at a restaurant or as a drink at a bar, the ability to travel together to conferences and events) in order to perform the harassment acts. In other words, these people are typical and endemic to the organizational environment and act within those power relations. Furthermore, the fact that the organization’s executives, functionaries, and peers have ignored the serial and ongoing harassment by these people for years is also an organizational phenomenon that enables and reproduces the existence of the harassing types.

Organizations usually have a range of harassing types. Those who repeatedly touch intimate body parts of women, under the guise of social touching; those who use blatant and controlling sexual language toward women, under the guise of friendship and intimacy or humor; those who ask intrusive and intimate questions under the guise of intimate conversation and interest; and those who direct sexual propositions to women who work with them or answer to them, or even toward women who are clients of the organization, exploiting encounter situations between them and the women – situations created and enabled by the organization that place the harassers in positions of power.

The harassing types and situations vary from one organization to another, depending on the typical organizational situations and unique manifestations of power relations in each organization. For example, sexual harassment practices (situations and types) at a large bank operating in an office building are very different from those in a rescue organization operating 24/7 in small and mobile teams, or from the practices in an organization that creates systematic encounters between a layer of senior officials and young women (airlines, militaries, hospitals, film industry, parliaments), or an organization that is homogenous in terms of personnel composition. Different organizational conditions create different and unique practices of typical types and situations of harassment.

In this stage of transparency, both kinds of harassment practices occur routinely, institutionally, and tacitly. Usually, because of the power relations and regimes of justification that envelop the situations and types, they are not identified as sexual harassment by either the perpetrators or by involved third parties (bosses, colleagues, subordinates, clients). The women subjected to harassment will feel the distress, the pressure, the discomfort, and the humiliation in their encounters with the situations and types, but will not necessarily identify them as sexual harassment. Moreover, sometimes the organization will encourage them to accept these situations and types as an inevitable part of working in the organization. For instance, a group of women soldiers who serve as trainers for reservists in the army encountered systematic patterns of sexual harassment during training sessions, and the organization encouraged them to conceive of coping with these situations as part of their professional capacity and identity. In other words, a trainer who was unable to cope with the harassment was considered a lesser soldier or not a good trainer but not a sexually harassed woman. Another case in point is a group of women in another security organization who encountered blatant and regular sexual harassment by clients of the organization, and the organization encouraged them not to “make a big deal” out of it and to view it as part of performing the less comfortable and more difficult aspects of the job. Waitresses and baristas are also usually encouraged to interpret sexual harassment by customers as “flirting” that is inherent to their work and their jobs.

One might dare say that in almost every organization there is a range of practices of harassment by types and in situations, but it is precisely the unique organizational form in which they manifest that helps to obfuscate and obscure them as part of normal organizational relations rather than as sexual harassment. The practices are well-known in the organization, but are not recognized as sexual harassment. Rather, they are normalized and silenced as a natural and inseparable part of working in the organization and performing well within it.

Part of the normalizing and silencing of harassment practices is achieved by the routine fulfillment of sexual harassment prevention actions required by law: the appointment of a commissioner for the prevention of sexual harassment, posting the code forbidding harassment on bulletin boards, performing training activities required to learn and know the law for the prevention of sexual harassment, and so on. When these activities are performed as an organizational duty meant to meet the formal requirements of the law, their effect in preventing harassment in the organization is minimal.

The activities usually refer to an “abstract” practice of sexual harassment as described by the law, the codes hanging on bulletin boards, or in various performances and plays, but do not refer to the concrete and specific harassment occurring within the walls of the organization. The activities do not actually identify the sexual harassment practices endemic to the organization, because sexual harassment as it occurs in the organization is not identified as harassment in the first place. For instance, people in the organization find it difficult to make a connection between the letter of the law, which defines sexual harassment among other things as “an insulting or debasing reference to a person in connection with their gender or sexuality,”<sup>6</sup> and concrete situations in the organization, such as, for example, a joke told at the board meeting. Another example is the difficulty to make a connection between a play in which two participants present a case of sexual harassment at an abstract workplace and the unique harassment practices that exist in their immediate environment.

## 2. The awareness stage

With time, women in the organization begin to identify harassment practices – types and situations – not as organizational routines or job descriptions, but as sexual harassment. They begin to understand that their repeated experiences – the joke at the board meeting, the inappropriate touching, the demand to submissively accept sexual comments by managers and bosses – are not merely an unpleasant but necessary aspect of work, but an experience of exploitative and humiliating organizational power relations. This awareness often emerges as part of a more general process of raising the public’s awareness of sexual harassment. However, it might also emerge in a specific organizational context because a group of women were offended by the poor way a harassment case was handled in the organization, or because women were inspired to come forward and share their personal experiences following the publication of a specific harassment case in their workplace, or because of the activity of gender equality agents who raise women’s awareness and enlist them to protest and act against sexual harassment at their workplace.

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6 The example is a quotation from Israel’s Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law, section 3(a)(5). See: [https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/State/Law/Pages/Prevention\\_of\\_Sexual\\_Harassment\\_Law\\_5758-1998.aspx](https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/State/Law/Pages/Prevention_of_Sexual_Harassment_Law_5758-1998.aspx)

### 3. The crisis stage

A sexual harassment crisis in an organization occurs sometimes when more and more women start to identify organizational situations as sexual harassment; when complaints are submitted to the commissioner for the prevention of sexual harassment and their treatment is deficient; when harassment cases become public because they are exposed and disseminated through traditional media or social networks, usually by journalists who believe exposure of sexual harassment in a particular organization has value, or by the harassed women themselves. In some cases, the organization is engulfed by a media uproar that involves external social institutions such as the courts, Knesset discussions, court petitions, demonstrations by feminist organizations, or investigations by the police or various regulators.

At this stage, the organization pays a very high price in its most important capital: its social legitimacy. Organizations whose main product is some social value (security, health, education, environment) are particularly vulnerable to this because without social legitimacy they lose their resources and sustainability. But even business organizations from the private sector rely to a large degree on legitimacy, and pay a heavy price when they are exposed as organizations that maintain sexual harassment practices or that silence or cover them up. Part of the price they pay is a crisis of trust between the organization's women employees and management; the women realize they have been abandoned and do not believe the organization's efforts to confront the harassment are genuine.

### 4. The containment stage

The immediate reaction at the crisis stage is an increase in the organization's symbolic activity to prevent sexual harassment: complaints will be treated severely, penalization will increase, and harassers will be punished publicly. At the same time, activities of high visibility will be performed: signs and behavioral codes will be posted, instruction films produced, lecturers brought in for training sessions, unequivocal statements will be made by senior management about "zero-tolerance for sexual harassment," and new regulations will be issued and disseminated to the field echelons, very often regulations that enforce separation between men and women or require encounters between them to be conducted in public. For instance, regulations forbidding traveling together in the drop-off at the end of the workday, or regulations about separating men and women's areas of residence and activity, or regulations about leaving doors open or requiring the presence of another woman in situations of individual meetings (like a man manager's interview with a woman employee).

## 5. The waning stage

At the peak of the organization's symbolic activity in the containment stage, controversies arise and mixed feelings are expressed about the activities undertaken to prevent sexual harassment. On the one hand, the large number of activities and their high visibility increase women's feelings of trust and sense of security in the organization, which appears to be genuinely addressing the problem of harassment. At this point, trust in the earnestness and fairness of the intra-organizational handling process increases. On the other hand, a wave of counter-reactions by men and women in the organization emerges (backlash), which pushes aside the issue of harassment or leads to re-silencing it.

Many men feel that the prevention activities are directed against them as a group. The nature of the activities – the use of laws and regulations, the denouncement of the harassers, and the disciplinary and criminal actions brought against them – makes them feel accused themselves. This feeling increases the more men understand that routine behaviors and actions toward women that were taken for granted in the past (and even in the present as well), and as part of demonstrating their male identity in the organization, are considered sexual harassment. These are insights that are hard to accept. The dissonance between the behavior they perceived as normative, its new labeling as sexual harassment, and their feeling of being accused manifest in a range of backlash activities, from claims and complaints against the strict and unfair organizational policies, which make men victims in their own eyes (“You women complain about every little thing,” “What’s wrong with a little hug?” “I always leave my door open,” “I don’t hire women because I’m afraid they’ll file complaints against me”), to blaming the harassed women based on common stereotypes and images of women and femininity, the stereotype of women as seductive (“Women here wear revealing clothes and that’s why there’s harassment”), women making false charges (“Most cases of harassment are false complaints filed by women against men. Actually it’s women who harass men”), women as exploiters (“She used him to get promoted”), women as gullible (“Why did she agree to go up to his room?”), women as weak and passive (“She should have slapped him and kicked him in the balls”), and more.

The anger and resistance may also be expressed by women in the organization because exposing women's POV about organizational practices of sexual harassment causes many women discomfort and anxiety.

The realization that behaviors to which they were exposed by their colleagues or managers and took for granted, or day-to-day behaviors that were aimed at them and perceived as inevitable but were actually incessant sexual harassment, is also a realization that is difficult to accept, as is the idea that exposure to sexual harassment in the organization is almost inevitable. The reaction to these disturbing insights is often an attempt to distance the experience from themselves by denial or by blaming the harassed women, while using the same discourse practices men use to clear themselves of guilt (“slanderous,” “exploiters,” “gullible,” “weak”).

The wave of silencing voices is added to the organizational processing, inquiry and punitive procedures that are usually biased in favor of men. The organizational procedures for handling sexual harassment complaints force the complainant to undergo a series of often violent tests and judgments, designed to ascertain and clarify the actual facts of the harassment by proving that the complainant is telling the truth. Accusation of the perpetrator involves proving the victim’s innocence of lying and libeling. In case of sexual abuse, the tests designed to provide these proofs are intolerable and put the complainant through what is known as a “second rape” in the investigation and inquiry processes, and a “third rape” in the criminal or disciplinary judicial processes. The hostility of the inquiry and judicial procedures significantly reduces women’s trust of these procedures and therefore their willingness to come forward and file complaints.

Women’s trust of the disciplinary measures is even further reduced because in many cases the perpetrator is judged by his peers in the organization – people who in many cases share his point of view about the act of sexual harassment, and understand him rather than the harassed woman and her point of view. The official processes of inquiry and handling make it very difficult for managers and colleagues of harassers to intervene and prevent harassment through social action such as warning, notice, or removal of the harassing man. In numerous organizations any intervention indicates knowledge of the harassment, which is subject to compulsory reporting to the authorities (either intra-organization or extra-organization). The obligation to report puts the intervener in an uncomfortable or even impossible situation, so that the only possible response to harassment becomes ignoring it.

The wave of silencing and the hostile treatment processes in many cases lead to the waning of organizational energy and attention devoted to preventing harassment.

Within a climate of mistrust, blaming the victim, and minimizing the seriousness of the phenomenon, organizational activity to prevent harassment becomes formalistic and devoid of meaning: the codes are posted, the training is given, and employees sign declarations, but none of that prevents the phenomenon from occurring, and it becomes reinstated. This waning is often manifested by a drop in the rate of complaints filed by women, which the organization will tend to attribute to a drop in the extent of the phenomenon itself. But it could just as easily be attributed to women's mistrust of the organization's prevention and treatment mechanisms and/or to a drop in the organizational attention and resources devoted to the prevention and treatment of the problem. Thus for example, after the inspector general of the Israel Police declared that he would not accept anonymous reports about sexual harassers or harassment incidents, the rate of complaints about sexual harassment in the police dropped by 67% in a single year (Kobovitz 2017).

## **Intervention: Preventing Sexual Harassment in Organizations from the POV of the Harassed**

The program to prevent organizational practices of sexual harassment is substantially different from the disciplinary treatment of harassment that occurs in most organizations: complaint, ascertainment of guilt, accompaniment of the complainant, and punishment of the harasser. The program to prevent organizational practices of sexual harassment is designed to prevent the occurrence of harassment incidents through a systematic series of measures employed by the organization. All of these measures originate from understanding the point of view of women (and men) who experienced sexual harassment practices during their work in the organization, and their purpose is to disrupt these practices. A systematic prevention program turns sexual harassment from a routine and taken-for-granted organizational practice to an aberrant and unusual behavior by individuals who are quickly identified and called out.

The series of organizational measures is designed to bring the organization to the following situation:

- ❖ All members of the organization know how to identify any sexual harassment practices that are common in the organization, and to understand them as sexual harassment from the point of view of those harassed.
- ❖ Actual or potential harassers know how to identify harassment situations through filters of justification regimes that they feel allow them to perform the harassing behavior. They know how to avoid harassing and how to replace the harassment with respectful behavior.

- ❖ Men and women in the organization know how to identify and understand situations in which they are sexually harassed and know where and to whom to go in order to stop the behavior or to punish the harasser.
- ❖ Women and men in the organization who are present in a sexual harassment situation or hear about it know how to identify the situation and understand it as harassment, and internalize their duty and responsibility to intervene in the situation as part of their organizational identity – including how to act to prevent and stop the behavior and how to treat the harasser.
- ❖ Men and women managers (and other authority figures) in the organization internalize their personal responsibility to prevent sexual harassment, know how to identify situations of harassment occurring in their area of responsibility, and are familiar with means and tools of preventive intervention in sexual harassment situations under their jurisdiction.

## Developing the Prevention Program

How can organizational foundations be established that will bring the organization to the situation described in the aforementioned five points? How do you develop the ability of women and men in the organization to identify, understand, avoid, intervene, and take responsibility in situations of sexual harassment? Establishing these foundations involves a series of organizational measures: designing an effective training program, building a network of field intervention agents, building an effective exposure system, developing a flowchart for treating cases of harassment, accommodating organizational procedures and standards, and intra-organizational communication. These are all behavior control mechanisms available to organizations, and in the same way organizations use them to increase productivity, loyalty, and discipline among their employees, so they must also use them to prevent and eradicate practices of sexual harassment.

### 1. Compiling a catalog of type-situation harassment practices

The cornerstone of every sexual harassment prevention program in an organization is compiling an accurate catalog of harassment practices as they occur in the organization. The catalog should be compiled by professionals with knowledge, expertise, and skill in analyzing harassment practices. The catalog will include an exact description of all harassment situations and every harassing type, as they actually appear and recur in the organization.



For each practice, it should describe the typical concrete situation in which it occurs (discussion, travel, doctor's office, dressing room, office, WhatsApp group, etc.), the typical harassment activity (the statement, address, or touch), the regime of justification that accompanies the harassment act ("I was just kidding," "I was being friendly," "I'm like her father," "She initiated it," "She wanted it"), the power structure in the situation (relationship of subordination or authority, social codes, and rules), the specific experience and feelings of the harassed (discomfort, confusion, anxiety, helplessness, distress, humiliation, fear, etc.), and the typical reaction of "third party" spectators or witnesses (laughter, active joining, ignoring, etc.). The catalog should be compiled from the point of view of women and men who were harassed and should verbalize how they experienced the situation. It should not be compiled from either the point of view of the perpetrators and their regimes of justification or the legal point of view.

Again, the catalog should be compiled by expert women along with the parties in the organization in charge of preventing harassment, because it requires understanding the gender aspects of the harassment situation: gender power relations, the act of sexual control expressed by the practice, and the point of view of the women who were harassed, on the one hand, and a deep familiarity with the organization's structure, culture, and practices, on the other hand. The database for compiling the catalog should be diverse, according to the organization's circumstances and at the discretion of the experts. A good starting place could be the database of complaints that have reached any degree of treatment in the organization. The complaints can be understood as harassment scenarios from which the aforementioned characteristics can be extracted. Another source for building a database of sexual harassment practices can be focus groups of women from different sectors in the organization. These focus groups should follow a special methodology that facilitates eliciting personal harassment experiences as organizational scenarios. A third possible source is website and Facebook pages describing harassment cases taken from the organization or from the organizational field. Thus, for example, in characterizing sexual harassment practices of a large public organization, the Facebook page "[One Out of One](#)" was used, which describes sexual harassment incidents experienced by women and men in Israel. Some of the harassment incidents occurred in the organization in question and the Facebook page was an important source for the characterization of the harassment practices. Another source is women who resigned from the organization, who have an external perspective that facilitates re-understanding their own personal experiences as experiences of sexual harassment.

A quantitative survey is not recommended at this stage, not until the exact harassment practices in the organization are thoroughly identified. What can be used are existing answers to open questions in organizational surveys and feedback forms describing concrete cases and experiences of sexual harassment.

After the materials are collected, the expert women and people in charge of preventing sexual harassment in the organization together compile a catalog of harassing types and situations. The catalog will include a list of “harascenarios” – harassment scenarios. Each one of the harascenarios will be given a name that characterizes it and helps women and men in the organization identify it (for example, “the toucher,” “dirty mouth,” “the joke”), an exact definition of the harassment act in the situation, and a visual representation of the situation and the harassing act, as is illustrated in Figure 4.

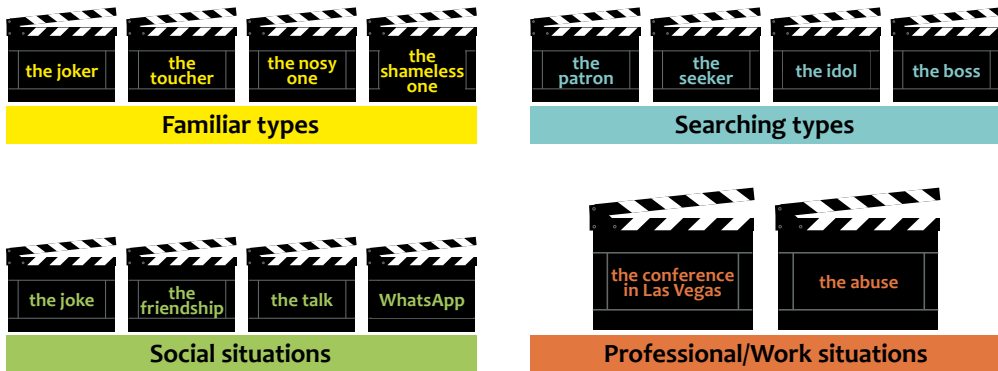
**Figure 4. “The joke” harascenario**



A group of men communicate with each other by making a woman or man who is present with them in the situation the butt of sexual humor. The butt of the joke feels embarrassment, shame, and humiliation. She is constrained by the rules of the situation: discomfort, shared laughter. The regime of justification: "All the friends are laughing."

The total recurring types and situations in the organization constitute the catalog of sexual harassment practices in the organization; see, for example, Figure 5.

Figure 5. Example of a catalog of sexual harassment practices in the organization



## 2. Organizational measures

On the basis of the catalog of identified sexual harassment practices, the organization implements a set of measures that disrupts the practices and thereby prevents them.

### a. Practice-based training

Training is a primary measure to disrupt and prevent sexual harassment practices, and it ought to be based on the catalog of harassment practices. The benefit of the current prevention training that usually includes a presentation of the law and an explanation of what is allowed and forbidden, group discussions in which participants express their opinions about harassment, plays with actors who illustrate general harassment situations, or even confessions of harassers and victims – is questionable. These measures do not directly and fully expose women and men of the organization to the endemic harassment practices that exist in their own organization, and therefore the prevention training does not develop or provide an ability to identify common organizational situations as harassment situations, an ability that is necessary for any preventative action.

For each organizational harassment scenario, and from the point of view of the harassed women, the training should teach men and women to:

- ❖ identify and understand the harassing activity as an act with a sexual connotation;
- ❖ identify and understand the power relations in the situation;
- ❖ identify the experience of harassment and powerlessness, in light of the power relations, as the harassed woman experienced it and to identify with that experience;

- ❖ identify the regimes of justification that enable the harassing act;
- ❖ identify effective and organizationally accepted ways of intervening in the situation;
- ❖ familiarize themselves with the organizational channels of address and treatment in such a case.

The training is meant for all people with organizational relevance to the harassment situation and not only for the harassers themselves. Men who sexually harass learn how to unequivocally identify their actions as harassment through the regimes of justification that enable them, and understand that their behavior is publicly identified as harassment – by the harassed women, by those involved as third parties, and by the organization itself. These understandings disrupt the harassment practice. The potential harasser is cautious and even avoids harassment, because of the disruption of the smooth and automatic flow of the harassment act and of the regimes of justification that maintain it. The harassment is also disrupted by creating awareness of the publicity of the act and by the fear of being exposed as a sexual harasser.

Women who have been hurt or could be hurt by sexual harassment learn how to identify the harassing act, which in many cases is vague, ambiguous, and protected by regimes of justification. For instance, women who train groups of older men in providing medical care were routinely exposed in the course of the training to offensive and insulting comments of a sexual nature by the men they were training: when the instructors illustrated mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on a doll, they were told by the men “I want some too.” Despite feeling discomfort and humiliation, the instructors did not label these behaviors as sexual harassment. In their training courses they were told in advance that they would encounter such behaviors, and that coping with them was part of being good and professional instructors and demonstrating their control of the class. Furthermore, the training courses even held simulations for coping with such situations, so that the sexual harassment practices were completely institutionalized in the organization. Therefore, the ability to identify and label is critical for disruption and prevention. Often the ability to resist the harassment, whether while it is happening or by immediate reporting of the harassment and the harasser, is reduced because of the obfuscation and ambiguity of the action. The sexual harassment training we are proposing here teaches women to identify the actions as harassment, recognizes their point of view and experiences in light of these harassment actions, and empowers them to resist directly or by enlisting the organization to handle the harasser.

Managers and other stakeholders in the organization learn to identify harassment actions that occur under their authority and to understand them as sexual harassment from the point of view of the women who experience them.

Therefore, practice-based training seeks to create a common language and understanding as to the nature and character of sexual harassment in an organization, the duties of those involved in harassment incidents, and the ways to respond to them. All of the men and women in the organization must participate in the training and it should be accommodated to different audiences. The training should end with a proficiency test that examines the competence of the participants to identify harassment situations, intervene in them, and prevent them. It is recommended for every man and women in the organization to undergo training once and then to undergo periodic competency tests. If members of the organization fail the competency test, they should participate in additional training.

**b. A network of functionaries**

One of the important measures in harassment prevention is to build a network of field intervention agents. These functionaries are men and women who are well-versed and skilled in identifying harassment practices and ways of intervention, prevention, and treatment of harassment. Presently the law requires the appointment of a commissioner for the prevention of sexual harassment for organizations above a certain size, but this functionary cannot act alone to prevent harassment and must be part of a network of functionaries. Beyond appointing additional supervisors to perform the functions of inquiry and accompaniment of harassment incidents, the network must also include functionaries who engage in preventing harassment:

- 1. Safe space trustees.** Field intervention agents at the division or department level or any other primary subunits (units where the work is performed by a stable group of workers such as a police station, factory, chain department store, supermarket branch, academic university department). The job of the trustees is to identify and expose harassment practices that take place in their unit (by encouraging sharing, participatory observation, and complaints by harassed employees), to provide and coordinate harassment prevention measures that the organization provides (training, written materials, posters, regulations), to make sure that the procedures and policies aimed at preventing harassment situations are in place in the unit (for example, separate sleeping and living quarters for women and men), and to be an address and provide an initial safe space for women who have experienced sexual harassment in case of need.

A safe space means that they are the first address for firsthand information or hearsay of harassment incidents or harassment practices (permanent types or situations) by virtue of their proximity to the organizational unit. Usually, a significant obstacle to preventing harassment is the fear of witnesses and those harassed that involving another person will compel them to report to various organizational parties outside the subunit. Therefore the duty to report, as important as it may be, in many cases actually prevents the exposure and treatment of harassment practices in the organization: the witnesses and women who have been harassed prefer to keep the information and experience to themselves out of fear that the reporting will expose them, hurt them, or even hurt the perpetrator, whom they do not want to hurt. Safe space trustees can receive the information and give the witnesses or women who have been harassed and who have come forward informed and judicious advice on possible ways to handle the situation, the consequences, and the degree of safety those ways will afford them. Appointing safe space trustees will encourage safe reporting and is the organization's way to ensure that complaints will be handled in an appropriate way that respects the rights of the witnesses, women who have been harassed, and defendants. If, after approaching the trustee and receiving information about available options and their implications, the witness or complainant is not interested in further treatment, their wishes should be respected and the information should be used for indirect prevention measures in a way that does not expose them (for instance, a general instruction session in the presence of the harasser, an inquiry to expose additional information about the harasser, measures to prevent repeated situations such as distancing the woman who was sexually harassed from the harasser, and more).

- 2. Interveners.** Sexual harassment practices persist in organizations mainly because they are institutionalized, normalized, and taken for granted. As a result, those subjected to them are silenced and unable to object or respond in any way. Moreover, others who are aware of harassment situations – whether because they were present or heard about them – are also prevented from doing anything to stop or prevent them from occurring in the first place. There are many stories that emerge over time about serial harassers whose actions were well known to their friends, colleagues, and even supervisors, but none of them felt it was their job or duty to take preventive action. They preferred to turn a blind eye or even deny to themselves that what they were witnessing was sexual harassment.

Therefore, it is very important to enlist a large group of experienced and high-status functionaries from different levels, sectors, and units of the organization, who undergo suitable training, know how to identify sexual harassment practices, situations, and types, and acquire tools to warn, intervene, and call out people involved in such situations. The status, authority, and very presence of these functionaries is a very important compelling and coercive force for the prevention of harassment. The interveners have a very important role in preventing sexual harassment and creating a respectful work climate for both men and women.

### c. **Exposure system**

Another critical component of the prevention program is constructing an effective system to expose harassers and harassment in the organization. An effective exposure system enables the commissioner for the prevention of sexual harassment to understand the organizational situation concerning harassment – what practices exist, to what extent, and in what parts of the organization – and to intervene preventively. An effective exposure system also creates deterrence for potential harassers. When a person who is in the habit of performing harassing actions or intends to perform a harassing action knows that the chances are good that his behavior will be exposed, reported, and passed on, the chances of him performing the action are smaller.

An exposure system might include a combination of several elements:

- ❖ **An organizational survey.** A periodic survey in which women and men are asked about the existence of sexual harassment practices in the organization, including types and situations, and the extent to which they have encountered them. Such a survey can be performed through telephone or internet questionnaires, and it is important because it ensures employees that the organization is serious about confronting sexual harassment. It also increases trust in the organization's ability to deal with incidents of sexual harassment, and it raises awareness of harassing actions and the ability to identify them.
- ❖ **Proactive sharing sessions.** Another important way to identify sexual harassment practices in organizations is to maintain an ongoing dialogue with women and men to expose the practices and their prevalence in the organization. Proactive sharing sessions can be periodic focus groups with women and men held by the commissioner for the prevention of sexual harassment throughout the organization; discussion groups held by trustees in different organizational subunits; or inquiries about sexual harassment practices as part of prevention training events.

- ❖ **Corpus of complaints and inquiries.** Another way to identify and characterize the organization's harassment practices is a periodic check of the complaints and inquiries received, to check whether there are certain patterns in the incidents that are the subject of the inquiries and if there has been a change in these patterns.

**d. Transparent and effective order of actions for inquiry and treatment**

The law demands that every organization maintain an inquiry procedure into any complaint or information on sexual harassment. In accordance with the results of the inquiry, the organization must determine how to treat the case – from disciplinary treatment to a warning and notice to the defendant. In many organizations the inquiry is not systematic or is not anchored in clear guidelines and procedures. In some organizations the process of inquiry is not known at all or not transparent: employees do not know what the results of the process were or what the reasons for them were. For instance, in many cases it is decided at the end of a disciplinary procedure to remove the employee from their job, but other involved employees feel as if it is a breach of trust or a cover-up by the organization, and that removing the employee from their job indicates that the complaint was not handled at all.

Therefore, the inquiry process must be anchored in clear procedures and guidelines; it must be published, known, and understood in the organization; it must be transparent with results publicized at least among the specific people involved in the complaint. This will increase the trust of witnesses and women who were sexually harassed in the treatment process, and they will have more confidence in the system since it acknowledged their point of view. In addition, they will not be afraid of being mistreated or disregarded. Ultimately, the increased trust will raise the rate of reports, complaints, and exposure.

The inquiry process must be effective so that it encourages reporting and treatment of harassment incidents. It must be designed to constantly take into account the point of view of women who were harassed or witnesses, and ensure their anonymity and control of the process. Women who have been harassed and witnesses to the harassment must be protected from being exposed to violent and hostile events as part of the inquiry and investigation. The inquiry process must include only functionaries (trustees, supervisors, managers, members of the disciplinary committee, legal advisors) who have undergone sexual harassment training.



The process must carefully balance between the duty to report sexual harassment and the interests of preventing it, because in many cases compulsory reporting leads to harassment incidents not being treated or prevented in the first place. This happens when there are close relations between a functionary who is informed about an incident and complainants or witnesses, who for various reasons are not interested in exposing it and themselves. This puts the functionary bound by the reporting duty in a serious conflict. Furthermore, when witnesses and those harassed know that informing the functionary involves the duty to report, they will not inform them at all. In other cases, functionaries will prefer to ignore incidents of harassment that they do not perceive as serious, because if they do recognize them as such they will be bound by the duty to report, which does not make sense to them. For these reasons, it should be weighed carefully who is subject to the duty to report and in what situations, based on the specific organizational circumstances. A sweeping and global reporting duty is not helpful.

**e. Regulations and procedures to disrupt habitual harassment situations**

The analysis of organizational practices indicates habitual harassment situations. These situations are encounter situations between men who enjoy power by virtue of the situation, and women or other men whose power to resist the harassing behavior is diminished by the encounter situation. The power in such situations can result from subordination (a functionary to whom the women or men report, which means they are dependent on him and his whims), authority (when the person has superior status in the situation due to seniority, respect, or expertise), or social rules (rules of fraternity, rules of mutuality, rules of conversation, rules of manners, and more). In some harassment practices, the occurrence of the ordered actions of harassment can be disrupted by dissolution or change of the encounter situation itself. For example, in an organization where it was discovered that harassment incidents occurred when women employees were driven home at the end of their shift by the shift manager, shift managers were forbidden from personally driving employees home and a transportation company was hired to do it instead. In another organization, cameras were installed in spaces where functionaries performed their routine activities, including in cars used for joint travel and in waiting areas – all of the spaces where sexual harassment practices occurred routinely. The cameras turned harassing behavior, which was previously hidden and interpersonal, into something visible and public. This disrupted the ability to perform the harassment based on the understanding that the action was being watched and recorded.

In other organizations, for instance medical ones, when it emerged that some of the harassment incidents occurred in professional encounters in which physical contact was part of the treatment (for instance, between doctors and patients or between physical therapists and their clients), instructions were added to provide verbal explanation of the therapeutic touch, which means a clear professional explanation to the patient as to the purpose of the touch. In some cases it was decided that such encounters would occur only in the presence of another woman.

It should be noted that some organizations implement solutions of separating men and women in activities, or worse yet, excluding women from professional and work-related activities or encounters with men. These forms of prevention are illegitimate, immoral, and, in fact, illegal. Such solutions reek of blaming the victim and are based on the concept that the very presence of women, or of women and men together, inevitably leads to harassment, and that it is in the nature of men to sexually harass and in the nature of women to be harassed. Furthermore, the solution of separation undermines women's rights to equal opportunity, because in most cases of separation, they are excluded from the organization's important and rewarding sites and activities.

## Conclusion

The repeated experience of harassment and its being taken for granted as something that is "in the nature of the job" is one of the major barriers to women's equal participation in organizations, and can be viewed as a systematic oppression mechanism of women. A sexual harassment prevention program is meant to mobilize members of the organization to recognize the experience of women employees who encounter repeated practices of sexual harassment, and to take responsibility for such practices of address, speech, and interpersonal behavior between men and women employees. The prevention program not only cleans the organization of sexual harassment but also makes interpersonal organizational behavior appropriate and respectful. Many organizations are afraid to intervene on the level of interpersonal behaviors and do not see them as part of their jurisdiction or responsibility. But this organizational fear leaves employees exposed to inappropriate, disrespectful, offensive and sexually harassing behavior. Just as organizations, by their nature, implement powerful and even forceful mechanisms to control other behaviors (discipline, getting the job done, productivity, organizational loyalty), so must they exercise control practices that are part of the organization's prevention program in order to promote a respectful, appropriate, and collegial atmosphere between men and women employees.

## Chapter 12. Silencing Voices in Speech Acts

Speech acts are organizational situations in which participants express their professional authority, expertise, ability, and knowledge through speech. At board meetings, customer presentations, staff discussions, lectures before audiences and more, participants demonstrate their authority, impact, and expertise through things they say and the ways they say them, and especially by the way their words are received by other participants in the situation. Therefore speech acts are key opportunities to earn “organizational capital” – reputation, prestige, status, influence, and power – which can also be translated into promotion to key positions, authority, autonomy, and other material and symbolic compensation.

Speech acts are organizational practices: who speaks and when, who interrupts, when and how, the manner of speaking, the manner of addressing participants, and even the seating arrangement and occupation of the space, the use of props, the hidden common rules to evaluate a participant’s words. These are routine, repeated patterns, a system of rules that govern speech acts, by which the participants are also evaluated and judged, and by which they accrue organizational capital.

The gender discourse on representation of women in organizations has devoted extensive attention to the “glass ceiling” phenomenon and women’s barriers to the organization’s senior executive positions. Much attention has been devoted to various barriers, such as hidden evaluation biases, use of social networks, and gender-biased promotion mechanisms. We propose viewing speech acts as key barriers that influence women’s promotion in organizations. Speech acts, or the collection of organizational practices that occur in the settings where speech occurs, are another instance of exclusionary gendered practices. Many studies, as well as reports of women from different organizations about their personal experiences, indicate that settings of speech acts are gendered sites: they are sites of organizational practices that are directed at men and women in different ways and impact them in different ways. Many women report negative experiences of belittling and exclusion at sites and situations of speech acts, undermining their confidence, and limiting their ability to speak in an authoritative and weighty voice. In research literature, especially research concerning classrooms in schools and academic institutions, the phenomenon is called “chilly climate.”

We claim that the experiences of women in speech acts cannot be reduced and defined as a matter of “organizational climate” or even as “hidden biases” that exist on the participants’ psychological level. Nor can these practices be brushed off as general examples of aggression in speech situations that affect both men and women alike. Speech acts may be sites or situations that are steeped in power relations, which impact the participants, both men and women, but the fact that women’s experiences are the result of repeated situations in which patterns of address, reference, and gestures are systematically exercised by men toward them and have exclusionary implications, indicates that these are gendered practices.

Women report a vast range of exclusionary practices in speech acts (see detailed list below). These practices are important and central in understanding women’s experiences and the barriers they face in their work environments. What these practices have in common is that they block or reduce women’s ability to participate, speak up, and accumulate organizational capital through speech acts. Moreover, the overall impact and repeated experience of being exposed to exclusionary gendered practices in speech acts lead women to self-exclude themselves from participating in them. Their confidence in their own voices drops, and they prefer to listen or participate passively rather than be exposed to the practices that block their voices and minimize their significance. Many women report that this lack of confidence is internalized and turned into lack of faith in themselves and a feeling of low efficacy, which negatively impacts their sense of entitlement to meaningful participation and contribution to the organization, and their promotion on the organization’s central track.

## Exclusionary Gendered Practices in Speech Acts

There are several categories of exclusionary practices in speech acts. The following list was composed from the experiences and reports of numerous women in diverse organizational situations.

1. **The setting.** Patterns related to determining the circumstances, location, and time of the speech acts:
  - a. **Non-inclusion.** Organizing the speech act so that no women are present or only very few women are present. This refers to practices of selection and filtering of participants so that women are prevented from participating in the speech act or that no woman meets the participation criteria in the first place. This phenomenon is especially notable in speech acts such as management forums and board meetings, ad hoc teams and committees, professional panels or conferences to which experts are invited to speak.

The exclusion is carried out through formal or informal criteria of selection (position, rank, status, authority, expertise, personal acquaintance, range of influence). One example is a management forum that has no women because the organization has no women in senior enough positions to participate in the forum (for example, the council of a local municipality that has no women, Israeli military general staff forum), or promotion committees that have no women members because of the scarcity of women in high enough positions or ranks to sit on the committee.

- b. Exclusion.** Deciding on the physical location of the speech act in a way that limits or blocks the participation of women. One of the known practices is scheduling management meetings or other important meetings early in the morning or late at night, making it difficult for employees who are mothers to be present. Another practice is scheduling informal meetings, where fraternizing is very important for organizational networking, at bars, or even strip clubs, making it difficult for (some of) the women in the company to be comfortable participating in the event. Another practice is scheduling discussions at sites far from the workplace so that participation in them requires special logistics (transportation, a solution for dropping or picking up children from school, and so on).
- c. Organizing the setting.** Arrangement of the physical aspects of the speech act in a way that makes women uncomfortable and makes it difficult for them to participate. One common example is the air-conditioning practice – the air conditioners are usually set to a very low temperature, which is very uncomfortable for women because of average differences in thermal comfort between women and men. As a result, they are busy dealing with feeling “frozen” and the need to wear seasonally inappropriate clothes, and find themselves negotiating with others about room temperature. Another physical practice is sitting in a circle, so that women wearing dresses or skirts are constantly worrying about their sitting position and whether it is too revealing. Additional practices of setting have to do with the props that are used. For example, the typical podium is accommodated to the average height of men, so that average height or short women are blocked by it and their appearance is ridiculed rather than being empowered by it.
- d. Task delegation.** When it is necessary to delegate tasks and responsibilities in the process of preparing for a speech act or during it, the delegation is often gendered. For example, tasks usually delegated to women include organizing the refreshments, inviting and introducing the speakers, facilitating, taking minutes, preparing background materials and sending them to the participants in advance, or bringing water to a speaker in the middle of the speech act.

- e. **The token woman.** In speech acts in which few women or only a single woman participates, many women report that practices are used on them that make them feel as if they are not considered to be legitimate and full-fledged participants in the event, but as if they are there as token representatives. Frequently, participants use practices of labeling and differentiation by addressing statements directly to women or to each other, such as “Alice is here and as a woman she will agree with me that ...” or “I would tell a joke but Nancy is sitting here and I don’t want to offend her.”
2. **Speech actions.** Speech actions that reduce and limit women’s speaking time and opportunities at an event. These include:
- a. **Interruption.** Interrupting a participant before she finishes an argument, an idea, or a sentence.
  - b. **Parallel speaking.** Talking simultaneously, joining in with a “second voice,” supposedly in order to reinforce or expand her words but actually impairing or disrupting her ability to speak.
  - c. **Speaking at length.** Taking over most or all of the speaking time, usually in the comments or questions part of an event, in a way that prevents or leaves no room for participating women to speak and express themselves. Various participants tend to speak at length, but speaking at length becomes a gendered practice when it is regularly exercised by men in a way that leaves no speaking room for women. The extreme instance of this practice is when a lone man is present at a speech act composed largely of women (for example, certain university classes or a discussion at a women’s forum to which he is invited) and still takes up most of the speaking time.
  - d. **Mansplaining.** When a man authoritatively explains to a woman something she already knows or is even an expert at, in a way that is experienced by the woman as arrogance and minimizes her knowledge or understanding of the subject.
  - e. **Authority.** The tendency of speakers with formal authority to use their authority to negate, minimize, or silence the opinions or comments made by women at speech acts. For instance, “I’ve been a doctor for twenty years and you might as well let those who understand decide.” The classic example is the statement by Israeli President Ezer Weizman to the cadet Alice Miller who asked him, as a former Air Force commander, to support her petition to participate in a pilot’s course. Instead of providing professional arguments to justify his position, he said, “Honey, women will be pilots when men darn socks.”

- f. Decisiveness.** Talking to women or about things women say with the intonation or syntax of resolute certainty, in a way that dismisses, minimizes, or negates them or their statements. One of the obvious consequences of this practice is reducing women's confidence in expressing themselves at public events.
- g. Overprotection.** Expropriating women's authority or professional standing in a speech act supposedly out of the desire to protect the speaker from attacks, save her from the need to cope with resistance, or rescue her from falling into professional "pits." The result is undermining her professional standing and authority. For example, when the discussion leader rushes to the rescue of a women speaker and says, "What Elizabeth meant to say is ..." or "Let me interrupt you for one minute to explain it instead of you," or "Let me explain and I'll save you the argument."
- 3. Marginalization.** Repeated gestures, facial expressions, and body movements directed toward women or in response to what they are saying during speech acts that convey derision, mistrust, or even dismissal of what is being said and the speaker herself. These gestures turn the speaker and her words, in full public view, into something marginal, pointless, wrong, and irrelevant. These practices include:
- a. The gaze.** The way people gaze at a certain individual in a situation has the potential to empower and elevate, or conversely to belittle, cheapen, and undermine their confidence and sense of entitlement to be part of the situation. In the context of speech acts we focus on gaze practices that convey derision, impatience, or arrogance toward the speaker and can be manifested by eye rolling, a glassy look, lack of interest, avoiding looking at the speaker, and more.
- b. Gestures.** Like the gaze, these are practices of body movements that convey derision, disinterest, or dismissal. For example, a dismissive hand gesture, playing with a cell phone while the speaker is speaking, turning one's body in the other direction, or shaking one's head in the negative while she is speaking.
- c. Belittling.** The verbal use of belittling descriptions and adjectives toward women who participate in the speech act or toward a particular speaker. This includes ignoring her academic degree, addressing by first name when it is the norm to address by full name and title, and phrases such as "the girls here in the room," "sweetheart," "honey," or "dear."

- d. **Ignoring.** Lack of follow-up comments or lack of reaction to what a woman speaker has said. For example, a speaker ignores what the woman who spoke before him said and shifts the discussion elsewhere, a thundering silence after a woman finishes speaking, refraining from addressing questions to the woman on the panel or pointedly addressing them only to the men.
  - e. **Selective address.** The managers of the speech act direct their gaze or speak to one man or a particular group of men participants whose approval and reaction they seek, while ignoring the women participants and failing to address them with their gaze or speech.
  - f. **Failing to give credit.** When work products are presented at speech acts, colleagues or authority figures tend to appropriate for themselves the credit for the product while minimizing the contribution and role of the woman who was partner to the work. Another example is when a man co-opts an idea a woman raised and presents it as his own original idea.
4. **Harassment.** Practices including statements, propositions, or actions that refer to the bodies, sexuality, or feminine identity of women in a minimizing, deriding, and objectifying way during the speech act and as part of it (see also chapter 11 about sexual harassment practices):
- a. **Fraternity.** Men talk to each other and communicate through statements (which they perceive as comical or insignificant) and pictures focusing on the bodies and sexuality of women who may or may not be present at the speech act. This discourse objectifies the women, embarrasses, humiliates, and silences them, excludes them from the situation and at the same time limits their ability to respond (see elaboration in chapter 11 describing practices of sexual harassment). Such statements are, for example: “I wouldn’t mind nailing her,” “Did you see those airbags?” “Is she wearing a thong now?” “Get a load of that rack,” “She’s edgy because she hasn’t gotten any for a while,” “Are you nervous because you got your period?” All of these statements and many others are forms of address between men who communicate with each other at the expense of a woman who is present. A subcategory of examples in this category is men sharing, in the middle of the speech act, pornographic or sexual pictures on their cell phones or laptops.



- b. The stain of femininity.** Dismissive and humiliating statements and forms of discourse concerning women, femininity, and feminine identity, which range from sexist “jokes” (“all blondes are ...”) to supposedly philosophical discussions about the qualities and abilities of women as a category, such as, “they drop their pens at four,” “vipers’ pit,” “women undermine team cohesion,” “women only like to shop.” This category of practices also includes the discourse of men among themselves about their wives or partners – “jokes” and stories that start with “my wife is ....” In contrast to the psychological discourse that views these statements as a manifestation of internalized stereotypes or subconscious biases, when they are used in the course of a speech act, they are, at best, practices of exercising power, exclusion, and turning those present from professional and expert women to “merely” women. At worst, they are a ruinous and destructive force.
- c. Sexual harassment.** Sexual statements, actions, or propositions addressed to women present at the speech act. This is a practice of public exercise of power and violence toward women. In a speech act, the negative implications of sexual harassment are multiplied because women pay a higher price due to the public humiliation involved.

## Intervention

The purpose of gender interventions in speech acts is to create a respectful and facilitating speaking event, where women and men from all levels of the organization feel safe to express themselves freely. Moreover, the speaking event should enable both men and women to accrue organizational capital based on their participation in it.

Any intervention in speech acts must start by analyzing and identifying the specific exclusionary gendered practices typical of the specific context of the speech acts. The analysis can be based on personal experience, a POV group, or observation. A list should be compiled of key sites of speech acts: the typical situations in the organization, the situations most risky genderwise, and the most important situations or sites – the ones where most organizational capital is at stake. Every organization has its own key settings, which are the highly valued situations and sites where the speech act involves a lot of organizational capital. For each such setting, a specific catalog of speech exclusion practices should be compiled, detailing how the practices are actually performed in the specific circumstances and setting. Based on an accurate catalog of endemic practices, two main types of interventions can be developed: local disruption by agents and/or third parties, and situational prevention by implementing a code for managing speech acts.

## 1. Disruption by agents and third parties

The first type of intervention is a workshop directed at identifying and disrupting exclusionary practices in speech acts (we also call it a “voice amplification” workshop). It is based on the idea that the key to the disruption of a gendered practice during the speech act itself is to provide women and other participants in speech acts with the ability to identify in real time that an exclusionary practice is being used on them and how it operates. The “voice amplification” workshop is usually comprised of a group of women who participate in one or more speech acts, and may also include men colleagues who regularly participate in them too. The workshop has several goals:

- a. To develop the ability to identify overt and covert exclusionary gendered practices in speech acts;
- b. To identify power-driven practices when they are used on the participants and not to see them as a personal problem of a particular participant;
- c. To provide a collection of successful alternative practices, based on the experience of the participants in the workshop, for the use of the agents or their colleagues (women and men) in the speech act;
- d. To create and advance in the organization recognition and understanding of the importance of setting and conducting respectful and empowering speech acts for both women and men.

The “voice amplification” workshop usually starts with an introduction to the idea of exclusionary gendered practices and the concept of “speech act” and its importance, followed by a basic analysis of the typical speech act practices based on the personal experience of the workshop participants and the catalog presented above. In the second part of the workshop, the participants are invited to share examples of successful (or unsuccessful) disruptions of gendered practices in speech acts from their personal experience. Women’s shared experiences in speech acts produce many examples and ideas for dealing with exclusionary speech practices creatively and successfully, enabling them to speak up and feel empowered in the situation.<sup>7</sup>

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7 A creative and successful example of disruption and creating an alternative inclusive practice was published in the *Washington Post* and other media outlets: women who were part of US President Barack Obama’s senior staff found themselves silenced at staff meetings. They developed a practice of echoing each other’s words so that their voice would be heard consistently. They were successful in changing the speech act setting of the staff meetings. For details, see Eilperin 2016; Hatch 2016.

The use of shared experiences is extremely effective in creating a range of response options (inclusive practices or disruptions) and making them available to additional women, thereby reducing the sense of helplessness in the face of exclusionary practices in real time. It should be clarified and emphasized during the workshop that even though alternative practices are available to them, it does not mean that the agents themselves are responsible for dealing with the exclusionary practices during the speech act. The workshop only provides them with options. The responsibility for dealing with gendered speech-act practices lies with the power holders in the organization and the organizers of the speech act.

In addition, the workshop facilitator encourages all participants to give examples of successful interventions by third parties, or in other words, situations when another man or woman who was present at the speech act managed to disrupt the exclusionary practice. For instance, ensuring a woman can speak during her turn, safeguarding a woman's place at the discussion table, coordinating coping strategies in advance, and more.

The product of the workshop is a catalog of exclusionary practices and a list of suggestions and ideas for interventions and disruption practices to be used by agents (women participants in the speech act) and/or third parties. Intervention ideas can be proposed and developed in several ways:

- ❖ Participants are asked to illustrate situations in which exclusionary practices were used on them and that they feel they dealt with successfully, so they were able to speak authoritatively and confidently.
- ❖ The facilitator presents familiar exclusionary practices, using a movie or other visual illustration, and asks the participants to post on the screen (through applications such as Poll Everywhere) successful responses they used or heard of that disrupted the exclusionary practice (or spontaneous ideas for comebacks or responses).

## **2. Situational prevention on the organizational level**

Disruption workshops may provide women and men who participate in speech acts with tools and options for action. However, we still put the responsibility for enabling women and men to speak up comfortably and safely at speech acts on the organization. The organization, therefore, must systematically and routinely implement inclusive conduct practices at speech acts that allow equitable, respectful, and safe participation of all participants. Most organizations are not aware of the need or the possibility of managing speech acts in such a way.

There may already exist strict rules of conduct in speech acts that are part of the organizational culture, such as who speaks and when in certain situations. But the need to deal with exclusionary practices in speech acts and prevent them is usually perceived as outside the organization's jurisdiction and influence, under a range of regimes of justification such as "the panel is a free contest and the inability to compete in it indicates the weakness of the participant"; "an organization cannot intervene in a speech act and does not have the tools to do so"; "men too suffer from aggressive practices in speech acts"; "changing the rules of conduct in team and management meetings requires too much organizational effort and investment. It is not important enough."

But a review of the literature and of successful experiences finds that there is a range of measures organizations can easily implement in order to promote gender (and other) equity in speech acts, including, for example:

- a. Defining a clear and inclusive participation code for specific speech acts. The code can be written by a POV group, and must reflect the participants' experience in speech acts. The code includes rules for participation: who speaks, when, how you get the floor, whether it is or is not permitted to interrupt a speaker, and if so, how and when. The code will also include clear expectations from the manager of the speech act: finding speakers, defending speakers, limiting length of address, and so on.
- b. Distributing the code as an organizational demand and standard through a range of dissemination channels: films, flyers, posters, a slide with guidelines for rules of discourse projected before the speech act begins, compulsory or elective workshops for organizational staff. The dissemination means should enable people to become acquainted with and identify both the exclusionary and the inclusive practices in speech acts, and develop an understanding of the points of view of men and women participants in the acts and internalize the importance and necessity of the code.
- c. Adding feedback channels as to the gender equality of speech acts such as a question in an evaluation tool, organizational surveys, and POV groups. In addition, providing an avenue through which attention can be directed at offensive practices in speech acts or at participants who exercised offensive and violent practices on such occasions.

## Conclusion

Speech acts are a central setting for accruing organizational capital. The practices of silencing, belittling, and denying authority in speech acts are a central barrier to women's advancement in organizations, and make their experience of work itself distressful. Regulating gender equity in speech acts is one of the intervention focuses of agents, advisors, and commissioners of gender equality. Safe and fair participation in speech acts is a central tool for women to demonstrate their expertise, capabilities, and authority in a way that promotes the assimilation of their point of view in organizational practices. Gender awareness in speech acts is an organizational responsibility and must not be left to the goodwill of individual participants. This chapter offered a series of structured interventions that reflect and enhance organizational responsibility for the conduct of speech acts in a gender-equitable manner.

## Chapter 13. Work-Life Balance: The Arrangement and Schedule of Work

What time does the (paid) workday begin and what time does it end? Where is the workplace located and where is the work done? Does the work involve much travel abroad? Does it include shifts, and how? Is it easy to park near the workplace? Are there accessible bathrooms? Does the workplace provide a private area for nursing women who wish to express milk? These and many other questions articulate the minute and countless details, the organizational practices that determine not only how and where the workday occurs, but also the impact of paid work on conduct in the private sphere – home, family, and leisure.

The point of departure in this chapter is that the point of view, which historically shaped and continues to shape the organizational practices of management and control of workers' time and space, is men's POV. This point of view established the logic of the modern organization, which is based on the distinction between the private and public spheres. This logic identifies employees' high commitment to the public sphere, even at the expense of the private sphere, as an indication of the employee's quality. It follows that prolonged physical presence at the workplace is an indication of the quality of the worker and their work, and therefore most organizations are interested in employees' maximum presence at the workplace. Thus, for instance, many organizations present an informal demand for long working hours and continuous presence at the office from morning to late at night. Many studies over the years have found that organizational control of time and space is gendered and manufactures gendered practices that impede women's integration and equal participation in workplaces, because of the duty to fully meet presence requirements even when they have family obligations, and in light of an organizational expectation to be committed to the public sphere and to prefer presence therein over commitment to the private sphere.

Therefore, the arrangement of work is saturated with practices that assume maximum availability of the worker to the demands of their workplace. This assumption is gendered, because it fails to take into account the traditional gendered division of labor in the private sphere, in which house and family work is still mostly the responsibility of women and they dedicate many more hours to it than men.

In the present day, most households cannot survive economically on a single income, and women are significantly less able than men to live up to work organizations' gendered assumptions as to availability and commitment primarily to the public sphere. Therefore, organizational practices that dictate the scope and nature of presence have more negative consequences for women than for men, and more for mothers than for fathers. These consequences are manifested by the daily distressful work experience reported by women, and mothers in particular, involving tremendous pressure because of the need to endlessly maneuver between the two spheres, as well as burnout and exhaustion, being labeled as second-rate personnel, and so on.

The discussion taking place in recent years about work-family balance often places responsibility for finding solutions or striking a "balance" on the women and mothers themselves, and most of the solutions involve streamlining the private sphere: whether by outsourcing various services (a housecleaner, a cook to prepare meals for the children, a nanny to take care of the children during the day or night, a grandmother or grandfather to respond to emergencies), or by friendly "recommendations" by people in the organization to better divide responsibility with their partners and better manage the negotiations over "who does what." Even when the work organization is "mobilized" for improving work-family balance, this is usually limited to a recognition of the need to drop off and pick up children from kindergarten or school in the morning and afternoon, and allowing some of the work to be done from home on certain days or times to facilitate the need to maneuver between the two spheres (for example, when a child is sick).

These and other solutions can somewhat mitigate combining parenting and paid labor, but leave most of the burden of the organizational practices of time and space management unchanged, as well as the organization's gendered assumptions about who is the good and committed worker who deserves compensation and promotion. Another limitation of these solutions is that they recognize the legitimacy of missing work primarily for child care, especially for getting children out of the house and bringing them back, whereas the range of tasks and responsibilities of house and family work is much wider. The sight of fathers bringing their children to school in the morning (or sometimes even picking them up in the afternoon) obfuscates the fact that the gendered division of labor in household and family work is still in full force. Therefore, organizational solutions such as a shortened workday for mothers or fathers for one year after a child's birth, as provided in Israel, do not offer a fundamental solution to women's difficulty to pursue a professional career parallel to family life.

Furthermore, a critical analysis might interpret organizational permission given to parents to be absent from the workplace for dropping off and picking up children from school, and even for the purpose of childcare, as also expressing the contemporary POV of fathers, who are interested and sometimes required by their partners to divide the responsibility for childcare tasks more equitably. This up-to-date POV of men causes work organizations to somewhat relax their organizational practices of physical presence and long work hours. Women who are mothers may also enjoy this easing, but it does not necessarily express their experience as mothers at the workplace and their POV on the organizational practices that dictate prolonged physical presence at the workplace, given their overall responsibility for the housework and care work in the private sphere.

The public discourse on work-family balance and the solutions described above, which are common in various organizations, occur within the existing social-economic-political order, and do not try to challenge it. In other words, it accepts as a given the traditional gendered division of labor in the domestic sphere and the preference of the public sphere over the private sphere. Confronting gender inequality in its numerous manifestations necessitates fundamentally challenging these social constructs. In contrast, in this chapter we wish to place the discussion of work-family balance in the framework of the organization of labor, out of the understanding that as long as the world continues to follow the same gendered order, the key to change in this area is found in the development and implementation of inclusive organizational practices from the point of view of the women who work in the organization.

## Intervention

Interventions in the context of combining work and family life seek to address the negative consequences of the tremendous tension between the time and presence practices of work organizations and these practices and the responsibilities they entail in the domestic-family sphere. These consequences are relevant both to women and mothers and to men and fathers, but the incongruence between the two spheres affects women in particular. Beyond the exclusionary consequences for chances of promotion, professional standing and earning capacity, the main consequence is the creation of a stressful work experience. Therefore, the purpose of the interventions is to improve women's experience in the world of employment (and "while we're at it" – men's experience too), so that they can experience work as positive, dignified, and rewarding, and be able to equally contribute to it and be compensated for it.



Since time and space management practices are organizational practices, every work organization must deal with this issue and offer and implement solutions that constitute gender-inclusive organizational practices.

## **1. Identifying exclusionary organizational practices**

The starting point of interventions related to work-family balance, as in other issues, is a rich and detailed analysis of women's POV in order to identify and expose organizational practices and patterns that impede and block their ability to simultaneously maintain work and family life, and to have a work experience that is not distressful and exclusionary. Even though the situation is supposedly familiar to everyone, and even discussed and addressed by many organizations, it is still necessary to pursue a process of identification of the specific exclusionary organizational practices endemic to the organization where the process is taking place. This is because the practices take a unique form in organizations with different characteristics, and moreover, the solutions, the inclusive practices, need to be adapted to the unique characteristics of the organization. For instance, the inclusive practices will be different in an organization in which work is based on shifts compared to a factory in which production lines operate from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., or compared to a high-tech company where formal work hours are in actuality the minimum number of hours expected from the employees. Also, identifying the practices will expose us to the diversity within women in the organization and the different difficulties and barriers they face in this context considering their life stages, and personal and family situations. For example, women who are mothers of young children experience the exclusionary practices and barriers differently than women who have no children, or women who are mothers of teenagers, women who care for elderly parents, or women undergoing fertility treatments. A basic mapping of exclusionary practices from women's POV in the different situations and life stages is a critical step toward identifying coping strategies and solutions.

We will hereby detail the main categories of organizational practices of time and space control that constitute the basis for how paid labor is organized and that must be discussed in order to offer inclusive alternatives and make the place of work parent-friendly. For every gendered practice that a POV group identifies, they should detail how it operates and what its negative consequences are for the parenting situation.

### a. Time control practices

1. **Work hours.** Formal and informal demands. How is the number of work hours per week or per month defined? What are the beginning and ending times? Is there a custom or requirement to stay beyond official hours? Is there a custom or requirement to work uncompensated hours? Is there a requirement to punch a clock or attendance card? Are the work schedule and hours known in advance, or are there unexpected events during the workday that require a change of schedule? Is it necessary to continue working at home after leaving the workplace?
2. **Ritualistic organizational work.** Are there practices of “ritualistic work,” such as participating in meetings for long hours, a demand to attend meetings or committees that are not directly related to the job or position, and compulsory attendance of various extracurricular activities such as employee outings, teambuilding activities, and so on?
3. **“Personal time” versus “work time.”** Is there an accepted distinction between work time and personal time? For instance, are workers expected to answer emails or text messages after their formal work hours?
4. **Worker evaluations.** Are workers measured and assessed based on inputs (such as the number of their work hours) or outputs (fulfilling tasks, meeting deadlines)?
5. **The hours when meetings or various organizational activities are held.** Are meetings and activities held early in the morning? Is sleeping away from home required in order to participate in certain activities?
6. **Shift work.** How are the shifts organized? How frequently are workers scheduled on shifts? How long does a shift last?
7. **Sick leave.** How many days are given as sick leave? Can sick leave be taken when children or elderly parents are sick?

### b. Space control practices

1. **Physical presence.** Is presence at the workplace required or is it possible to work from home? How frequently is working from home permitted and does it come at the expense of working in the office? Is it technically possible to attend staff meetings virtually?

2. **Reaching the workplace.** How long is the commute to and from work? Is there convenient public transportation between home and work? Is parking for private cars available? Does the employee need to reach different places during the workday or is the work accomplished in a single main place?
3. **Privacy.** Does the organization provide nursing mothers with a place and means to express milk?

A women's POV group will examine the questions and practices outlined above and offer additional practices consistent with their specific organizational context and their personal life situations. It is important to specify for each of the identified practices how it affects women's work and parenting experiences. All of the gendered practices that are exposed must be documented in detail so that inclusive alternatives can be proposed, as described in the following step.

## 2. Developing inclusive alternatives

The second step is developing a repertoire of solutions – namely, inclusive practices that can replace the existing exclusionary gendered practices. The goal is to provide executives and decision-makers in the organization with a range of alternative practices, to enable them to be flexible and customize the optimal solutions for different women according to each woman's specific organizational and personal context. As we noted above, in the area of family care tasks, there is a significant difference between women (and men) in different life stages, the number and age of their children, presence of elderly parents, travel time between their homes and the workplace, and so on. Therefore, the proliferation and variety of proposed solutions are critical to resolving the relevant gendered organizational practices.

In many organizations and industries, the underlying logic of managing and controlling employees' time and physical presence is still quite conservative and rigid, and based on capitalist principles of efficiency, maximum utilization, cost containment, and so on. The time and space control practices that arise from this thinking are a very powerful gendering force in the work lives of women and men, and come with powerful regimes of justification that are very hard to resist on a personal level: "Our workday is nine hours long for everyone," "The training course is an overnight retreat because teambuilding is just as important as learning the professional contents," "The client is in the US so our conference calls take place at night here during work hours there," "This job needs to be finished today. You decide for yourself how to manage your time," and so on.

Women's point of view is the first step in opening up these thought patterns and deconstructing the organizational practices. This process benefits both women and men because both women and men want to enjoy a better balance between family and work and between leisure and work, particularly if they are parents of children. This step requires all stakeholders involved, women and men, to let go of deep cultural assumptions about women, men, femininity, masculinity, motherhood, and fatherhood.

The methodology of developing alternative inclusive practices was described in detail in chapter 3. This methodology can be used to develop inclusive alternatives that are suitable to the specific context of the women and the organization. We will now offer some organizing principles for different types of solutions, based on actual alternative practices implemented by different organizations as solutions for improving work-family balance for their employees. The common denominator of the proposed principles is a different way of organizing work so that it suits both women and men. These principles are intervention models and can help to develop concrete alternative practices relevant to any specific organizational context.

- a. The organization as a dynamic realm of time and work arrangements.** Different sectors in the organization have different time and work arrangements, and employees are offered the option of working in different sectors to maximize the compatibility between work demands and their family constraints. For instance, in a certain sector work is in shifts, another sector offers parent positions, in another sector work is from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and another sector has on-call duty. In a large hospital, the HR department used this principle and offered nurses assignments in different sectors according to their constraints and preferences, after they surveyed the nurses individually.
- b. Decentralization and flexibility of tools.** Developing an array of flexible solutions and options that managers in different subunits are authorized to offer to employees. Moreover, customizing solutions taking into consideration not only the organization's needs and constraints but those of women employees as well. The practice of customization indicates that the organization approves of even low-level managers recognizing women employees' POV and responding to it, and liberates both the manager and the employee from the need to constantly negotiate over terms – a deterring practice for many women because it is personal and local and does not indicate organizational legitimacy.

Thus, instead of offering a specific alternative practice (such as a “parent position”<sup>8</sup> or “mother position”) as a single solution for everyone, concrete needs and constraints are considered and an effort is made to customize the solutions to them, including flexible starting and ending times and the possibility of working from home. A concrete example is a military officer, mother of three children, who was required to serve in a field position away from home as a prerequisite for promotion. Her direct commander consulted with her how to structure the job so that it would enable her to do it. He designed an arrangement that suited the circumstances and needs of both parties – the unit and the woman officer. They agreed she would get off work early twice a week and on those days her deputy would replace her, whereas on Sunday she would report to the unit at noon instead of in the morning.

- c. Telecommuting.** As early as the 1970s many researchers forecast that technology would solve the fundamental problem of separation of time and space between the private and public spheres. As we noted, that separation underlies much of women’s difficulty and stress at work. Today’s means of communication make it possible to bridge time and place gaps and are being used in many organizations, including multi-participant conference calls and video meetings (through different software apps such as Hangouts, Skype, or appear.in). The technology often facilitates performing the work without physical presence at a particular workplace or outside formal working hours. However, research on gender in organizations also indicates possible prices of this alternative practice, because it does not always function as an inclusive alternative. Lack of physical presence at the workplace is sometimes labeled as lack of investment and commitment to work, and compensation and promotion are impaired accordingly. Likewise, this practice may require employees to be available to work 24/7. This alternative becomes non-inclusive when it applies only to women or parents, and it becomes more inclusive the more common it becomes in diverse sectors of the organization and the greater the number of jobs it is applied to.
- d. Reserve surplus to fill gaps.** In many organizations personnel is chronically stretched, and a woman’s absence for maternity leave<sup>9</sup> is seen as a “punishment” for the organization, the executives, and even her colleagues, who are required to take on her responsibilities and assignments so that the subunit can meet its goals.

8 For more information: [mother and parent position](#).

9 In July 2016, Amendment No. 55 of the Women’s Work Law was published, which changed the term “maternity leave” to the term “period of childbirth and parenthood.”

For example, doctors in a clinic must treat the patients of a colleague who is on maternity leave. A surplus reserve of resources – personnel, part-time positions, person-months, person-hours, and so on – provides the organization with managerial flexibility and the ability to fill gaps when women (or men) are absent due to pregnancy and maternity leave (childbirth, high-risk pregnancy, a preemie staying in an incubator, and so on) or because of a prolonged illness of an employee's child. The chronic personnel shortage creates a structural conflict between executives and women (and men) employees over parenthood. It often leads mothers and fathers to be labeled as second-rate workers, whose commitment and contribution are relatively lower than that of other workers, and who cannot be relied on as much, and are therefore less desirable. Creating a reserve of resources can deconstruct this conflict and lead organizations to recognize the responsibility and duties of parents toward the domestic-family sphere. Increasing the array of staffing solutions allows subunits to accomplish their assignments and meet their goals, neutralizes the prospect of absence surrounding pregnancy and childbirth serving as a barrier to hiring women, and dissipates the interpersonal antagonism such absences raise – especially between managers and employees.

- e. **Streamlining time use.** Employees often spend numerous hours in long and multiparticipant meetings that have a significant ritualistic dimension and are not necessarily held for an essential purposeful need. Identifying and carefully tracking work hours that are in effect ritualistic is a critical basis for creating change based on an alternative organizing principle of making organizational time more expensive and effective. One way to do this is by (symbolically) pricing work hours so that workers' time will have a clear and overt value. Another solution is limiting the length of meetings and discussions or setting a starting and ending time for discussions, and even limiting the number of participants in a meeting. Another way is to limit the number of weekly hours in which meetings can be held (for example, not before 9:00 a.m., not after 3:00 p.m.), or, as was done for some time in Japan, holding meetings standing up.
- f. **Amendments of the motherhood penalty.** In many organizations mothers pay a "penalty" for their motherhood<sup>10</sup> by virtue of the fact that the organization's core positions or positions that serve as springboards to promotion in the organizational hierarchy are less accessible to them, or they receive lower employee evaluations because they spend less time at work ("I can't give you

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10 See, for example, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/upshot/a-child-helps-your-career-if-youre-a-man.html>.

the highest evaluation grade because you weren't here as much as the others"). The principle of amending or canceling the motherhood penalty includes solutions such as defining additional positions as core positions or equal to core positions if mothers fill them, or canceling the evaluation by a direct superior when an employee's children are still young.

Any resistance, embarrassment or cringing you, the reader, feel while reading the principles for inclusive practices and solutions proposed above, primarily indicate the power of the existing organizational practices, to the point of blocking your ability to imagine alternatives to the existing gendered situation and way of life. In our terms, the objections ("it's too expensive," "it won't pass in our organization," "we don't have the necessary resources," "it will never work," and more) are regimes of justification intended to push aside women's point of view as expressed by the demand to make organizational practices more equitable. As we mentioned above, in many organizations, the underlying logic of managing and controlling employees' time and physical presence is conservative and inflexible, and the resulting day-to-day practices have been constructed and evolved out of men's point of view. The above list of principles serves as a basis for developing solutions adapted to a specific organizational context. It is meant to inspire and strengthen the ability to imagine alternatives to existing gendered practices, out of awareness of the fact that this is one of the areas where it is the most difficult to let go of existing dictates of reality and offer different possibilities of conduct. Therefore, we wish to emphasize again that both the principles and the actual solutions derived from them that were described above were all collected and developed out of existing inclusive organizational practices in actual organizations.

Every alternative practice proposed on the basis of women's point of view in the organization must be examined in light of its future implications in order to try to anticipate its unintended consequences. For instance, we know today that working from home helps mothers combine work and family life, but might impair their status at work if lack of presence is identified with reduced commitment to the organization and is translated into exclusion from central and prestigious projects or from core positions. Therefore, it is important to examine over time, from the point of view of women, the implications of alternative practices, to identify whether negative consequences are emerging, and to tackle them by corrections and adjustments of the inclusive practices.

## Conclusion

The organization of work life and the time constraints it poses for women have been the subject of public and organizational discourse for a long time. In recent years there has been an attempt to promote different solutions for parents, both men and women and not necessarily mothers, in the hope that more flexibility in working hours would promote a more equal participation of men who are fathers in household and family work, which in turn would lead to a more equal division of responsibility for the domestic-family sphere and facilitate a more equitable participation and integration of women in the workplace. So should we talk about mothers or parents? On the one hand, “parents” is a stronger actor than “mothers” because it emphasizes a broad common denominator between women and men, and men usually have greater bargaining power in organizations than women. Likewise, extending the inclusive practices to men helps men free themselves from organizational constraints that apply to them as well, especially concerning prolonged physical presence in the organization. Such a change also enables women to demand that their partners take advantage of the inclusive practices and thereby promote a change in the division of responsibilities and chores in the domestic-family sphere and strengthen their position in their workplaces. On the other hand, there are still significant differences in the situations and constraints of mothers and fathers, both in the family and at work, so that the inclusive practices must be developed from the point of view of women-mothers, or else they will not address the unique constraints they experience.

The world of work has been undergoing dramatic changes in recent years due to various technological changes, the fading out and emergence of professions, impacts of globalization and more. However, many institutions and work organizations are still entrenched in a bureaucratic-gendered work structure whose roots go back to the industrial revolution and the beginning of the twentieth century. New arrangements and forms of organizing work in terms of time and place and should be developed out of a gender perspective and the distinct needs of both women and men, in order to provide a comprehensive solution for the whole population and not just half of it.



## Chapter 14. Remuneration Regimes: Narrowing the Gender Pay Gap

(This chapter was co-authored by Yael Wolfenson<sup>11</sup>)

One of the most consistent if elusive organizational phenomena is the gender gap in pay: women's average pay is lower than men's. Pay gaps between women and men in Israel have been quite consistent and are common at all levels of education and in diverse occupations. The gap between the average monthly salary of men and women in Israel is 34% (Tzameret-Kretcher et al. 2018). When comparing wages per work hour, the gap is narrower, 16%. In terms of median hourly wage, the gender gap is 28%, a figure that indicates relatively wide pay gaps at high wage levels.

Pay gaps are not limited to the private sector and are also common in the public sector, the biggest employer of women in Israel. Of the workers in the public sector, 65% are women, but their average wages are considerably lower than men's: the average pensionable salary of women in the public sector is 19% lower than men's pensionable salary, whereas when computing gross salary, the gender pay gap ranges from 23% to 31%.

The gender pay gap phenomenon is not unique to Israel. It exists all over the world and is a fundamental issue of gender equality. Pay gaps also impact gaps in power and prestige in everyday life, degree of autonomy and freedom, and the ability to support and take care of personal and family needs. Pay gaps also contribute to status differences in the family and lead to the man being the main breadwinner in many families, which makes the woman dependent on him, thereby undermining her negotiating power in the division of domestic labor.

At the organizational level, pay gaps are a summary and reflection of the organizational status of women. They reflect an organizational status of women being disempowered: they are employed in less rewarding sectors, have a lower status in the organizational hierarchy, are in a more marginalized position because they often work part-time, and have weak negotiating power that blocks their access to raises, compensation, bonuses, and lucrative personal contracts. Reducing the gender pay gaps in an organization is one of the most difficult and complicated tasks facing gender equality agents. The purpose of the present chapter is to offer interventions to identify and reduce pay gaps between women and men in organizations.

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11 Yael Wolfenson is one of the founders of the Feminist Forum in [Koah LaOvdim](#) and an expert analyst of gender pay gaps in organizations.

## Practices of Exclusion from Compensation and Pay

What is the source of gender pay gaps? How are they created? Different explanations have been offered for this persistent phenomenon over the years. Traditional approaches tended to view pay gaps between men and women (and between different social groups) as the unfortunate outcome of differences in so-called human capital. According to this theory, there is fair competition in the labor market, and organizations select and promote people solely based on objective criteria of human capital (education, experience, skills) and its suitability to their occupation. Stratification between different groups in organizations – men and women, whites and blacks, majority and minority groups – is the result of each one of these groups coming into the organization with lower human capital in the first place. In a broader sense, this approach reflects a meritocratic ideology, which argues that a person's achievements in an organization are affected by their skills, choices, efforts, and personal characteristics. One of the main criticisms of this approach relevant to the issue of wage gaps is that it removes responsibility from the organization because it assumes that organizations are objective and gender-neutral.

This approach has almost passed into oblivion since the 1980s. Current approaches to stratification in the labor market look at the organization as the source of stratification, pay gaps, and status gaps between social groups of workers. Today we see how organizations, by way of their human resource practices, actively limit women's access to the different compensations offered by the organization to its employees. There are several typical families of gendered organizational practices that create the average pay gaps between men and women in organizations: practices of occupational tracking and segregation, promotion, full- and part-time positions, access to pay supplements, cultural images and symbols, and practices of exclusion from information about wage rights and legislation.

### 1. Practices of occupational tracking and segregation

Every statistical analysis that deconstructs the sources of pay gaps finds that the occupational sector or the definition of the worker's job is a central source of the gender pay gap. In simple terms, in an organization there are more and less rewarding jobs and occupations, and we will usually find women in the less rewarding ones. For example, in a municipality, we will find women concentrated in jobs with low hourly pay, such as teachers or teachers' aides. On the other hand, we will find large concentrations of men in more financially rewarding jobs such as garbage collection.

In the professional literature these practices are called “horizontal segregation,” and they are divided into two types:

- a. **Barriers to women’s entry into men’s positions.** Defining the entry conditions to an occupation or defining the nature of work in an occupation in a way that is incompatible with women’s situation. For instance, selection for jobs by physiological criteria or physical performance where men, on average, have an advantage; or defining hours and shift requirements for performing the job in a way that mothers cannot meet (on such practices, see chapter 10 on gender tracking and chapter 13 on work arrangements).
- b. **Low prestige and compensation for “women’s occupations.”** Occupations where women are the majority (also known as “women’s occupations”) are sometimes evaluated as requiring less training and skill, if any, and therefore as less important. That is why wages for those employed in them are relatively low, even though the amount of investment and skill level required may be identical to those required for “men’s occupations,” or even higher. In the past, there was a formal pay category called “women’s pay” that allowed paying a lower wage to women based on the regime of justification that women are only secondary breadwinners. However, this practice is no longer legal. In fact, the law in Israel and in most developed countries requires that women in a similar occupation to men earn a similar wage, as well as women and men actually doing the same work. But in many cases, “women’s work” sectors and occupations still receive lower wages.

## 2. Promotion practices (vertical segregation)

In most organizations women are underrepresented in senior executive positions where wages are higher. This phenomenon is known as the “glass ceiling,” and in research literature, it is called “vertical segregation.” In Israel, for instance, one of the main factors that influences wage levels in the civil service is the employee’s pay grade. Civil Service Commission data indicates that the higher the grade, the lower the rate of women: in the senior grade of civil service, the rate of women employees is 47%, at the medium level their rate is 62%, and at the low levels it is 71%. Several factors contribute to differences in the hierarchical stature of men and women in the organization. For example, there may be gendered entrance patterns into the organization, with men being hired into higher positions in the first place. There may also be barriers in promotion for women, such as the ways internal mobility tracks are defined in the organization, or blocking promotion from sectors dominated by women.

### 3. Full- or part-time employment practices

On the average, women's hours of paid work are less than men's, and more women than men are employed in part-time jobs. The reason is, to a large degree, the gendered division of labor in the domestic-familial sphere, and women's greater responsibilities for housework and care work. Women's paid labor is also characterized by longer intervals than men's work (despite men's military reserve service) because of maternity leave, children's sicknesses, taking care of elderly parents, and so on.

The Western labor market is based on a model of the "ideal" worker who can work long hours and be available at all times to his or her employer. In Israel in particular, there is a norm of long work hours, even beyond full-time as defined by the law. This gives a structural advantage to men, because despite the need to compensate them for overtime, they are perceived (whether consciously or not) as more productive and committed to work, and this image also affects their promotion in terms of salary and status in organizational hierarchy.

It is well known that many women complete some of their paid work tasks from home. The Israeli public sector, although a relatively friendly place for working mothers, does not usually allow flexible work hours and compensation for work done from home.<sup>12</sup> Under these circumstances, a lot of the work women perform remains transparent and uncompensated.

### 4. Access to pay supplements and fringe benefits

Organizations give different kinds of benefits beyond base wages. The benefits are numerous and might include covering job expenses (clothing, car, per diem expenses), aspects of performing the work (hours on call, training hours on the job), the training and education required to perform the work (education and advanced study compensation), or the quality of performance of the job itself, in the form of bonuses and excellence grants.

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12 In recent years the Civil Service in Israel conducted a pilot of compensation for work done from home by employees in parent positions. Preliminary reports indicate gendered aspects of the pilot. For example, it provided that work from home was compensated only if it was overtime. Women who are mothers reported that they were unable to take advantage of overtime because of their responsibility for housework and family care. Therefore, compensation for work from home only when the work is performed overtime is not an inclusive alternative practice for some women. For details, see ["Implementation of overtime from home pilot"](#) (in Hebrew), Civil Service Commissioner, 26 January 2016. Miki Peled, ["The State Will Allow Parents to Work Overtime from Home – With the Purpose of Narrowing Gender Disparities,"](#) *Calcalist*, 20 March 2016 (in Hebrew).

Entitlement and access to benefits are determined by different criteria defined by the organization. Even if the criteria are considered by functionaries to be gender-neutral, they are often gendered, which is to say determined from the point of view of men without taking into account women's different life situations. Thus, for example, an organization may provide a pay benefit for maintaining a car, but many women do not even own a car. Or organizations that pay for on-call hours when women who are mothers usually cannot be on call during all the hours needed. On the other hand, organizations usually do not provide benefits accommodated to women's life situations – such as a benefit for completing assignments and tasks from home, a benefit for hygiene products for menstruation, and more.

## **5. Practices of cultural images and symbols**

Gender discrimination often arises from regimes of justification that use social stereotypes and cultural perceptions, usually unintended and even unconscious, as to women's role at home and at work. For example, there is a perception of women as “second breadwinners” or as workers who are incapable of performing physical work. These biases may be reflected by organizational practices of job interviews as well as promotion practices (criteria for tenders, questions asked in promotion interviews, evaluation tools, and so on).

Likewise, many studies have shown that compared to men, women tend to ask for lower pay, to demand raises at a lower frequency, and to negotiate less over salary and promotion in personal negotiation situations, because they adopt gender-dependent expectations and social values (such as “women shouldn't talk about money,” or “tough negotiators are masculine”). Therefore, in an organization where the salary structure (hiring, promotion, and compensation systems) is less based on clear, transparent, and gender-neutral criteria, and more subject to the personal biases or discretion of employers and employees, there is a higher chance of gender pay gaps emerging.

## **6. Exclusion from information about wage rights and legislation**

In many cases women and men cannot understand their pay slips and their many components, and moreover do not know their colleagues' salary terms, ever since personal contracts and nondisclosure agreements about salary and employment terms came into use. Nor do they usually know the existing legal basis for remuneration, their rights in this area, and the relevant gender emphases.

Under the cloak of vagueness of information, lack of information and cover of secrecy, organizations pursue gender-discriminatory remuneration practices without the awareness and knowledge of the discriminated employees, even though in most Western countries there is progressive legislation that forbids pay discrimination on the basis of gender.

In Israel, the Man and Women Workers Equal Pay Law was passed in 1964, requiring employers to offer equal compensation for equal work, essentially equal work, or comparable work. The National Labor Court even expanded the language of the law in a number of decisions, ruling that employers are obligated to give equal treatment to women and men when deciding on pay and promotion, regardless of their pay history or their preliminary pay demands.

It is difficult to evaluate the efficiency of antidiscrimination laws because they are very hard to enforce. Israeli legislation is based on the individual suit model, placing the responsibility for finding evidence and filing a complaint about pay discrimination on the employee who suspects she was discriminated against. This process involves numerous barriers and few women have pursued the legal channel to enforce their right to equal pay. It is noteworthy that the tendency in the world today is to adopt an “active-preventive” model to treat pay discrimination, in which the state requires employers to take active measures to identify, reduce, and prevent pay gaps, while providing suitable tools and incentives. In a growing number of developed countries, such as Australia, Austria, and Canada, the reporting and transparency requirements for employers concerning gender pay gaps have been expanded, and they are required to submit audit reports to the regulator on pay gaps in their organizations, which include submitting action plans to reduce any gaps found.

## **Intervention: Reducing Gender Pay Gaps**

Reducing gender pay gaps in organizations – identifying them, ascertaining their sources, and taking action to narrow them – is one of the most sensitive, demanding, and complicated tasks facing gender equality agents. It involves not only changing practices related to work arrangements, equipment, social relations, and recruitment procedures, but directly addressing the very thing that constitutes the reason for work and its meaning: livelihood and the ability to make a dignified living. In others words, pay and compensation conventions are practices in which numerous actors and stakeholders are embedded inside and outside the organization, and control over them entails a large degree of power.

Usually, existing pay practices are not only the result of an employer's decision, but reflect coercive and compelling forces that exist outside the organization, such as collective agreements inside or outside the organization, laws about wages and how they are paid, institutional coercion of the employer by external organizations (such as agreements with the finance ministry), global policy, and more.

Moreover, it is hard to enlist support for measures to narrow pay gaps between women and men, especially because today it is difficult to find “smoking-gun discrimination” in organizations concerning pay. To most people, pay discrimination exists only when different pay and compensation practices are used for women and men – e.g., when women are officially and publicly paid less than men employed in the same job or occupation. The main sources for gender pay gaps today – intra-organizational tracking to less rewarding sectors or jobs, part-time work, lack of access to pay increments and fringe benefits – are perceived by most people as legitimate and fair sources and even as gender-neutral, because they reflect a person's efforts, investment, and skill at work. Therefore, it is difficult to convince people that working part-time or payment of car expenses are actually a secondary source of gender pay discrimination.

An organization's entry into a process of detecting and narrowing pay gaps has to be motivated by a strong force. Forces such as a labor dispute, court claims or regulation can help initiate and advance such processes (see in detail below). When an organization is willing to examine and change its pay and compensation practices, the following steps are recommended in order to make a wage comparison.

## **1. A statistical study of pay gaps**

The first step of the intervention is to construct a quantitative-statistical picture of pay gaps. This is empirical research that requires consultation with experts (salary accountants, statisticians, data analysts, and so on). The database for the study is the organization's human resource and pay database, and preparation is required in order to translate the pay data into parameters suitable for statistical analysis. For instance, it is wrong to base the analysis on pay data for a single month. Rather, it should be based on average and weighted data for a full-time position over a time period of even a year, to strengthen the validity of the findings (the analysis of pay gaps on the basis of a single month might be less representative because certain wage benefits are not distributed evenly over the year but given only in certain months).

The statistical analysis deconstructs the overall picture of average pay differences between men and women and evaluates the relative weight of each factor. The following factors are usually examined:

- a. **Sector of the organization.** To which organizational sector does the employee belong? Finance, administration, education, sanitation, planning, and so on.
- b. **Occupational sector.** Classification of the worker's occupation or profession, such as teaching, secretarial, cleaning, engineering, medicine, or law. The analysis can utilize accepted statistical categories, job categories used by the organization itself, or other categories depending on the research needs.
- c. **Organizational rank.** The employee's status in the organizational hierarchy. For classification, ranks accepted in the organization or in the civil service can be used, or another kind of relevant classification of the hierarchy of jobs (department head, section head, etc.).
- d. **Whether the employee works full- or part-time.**
- e. **Terms of employment.** What are the terms of employment in the organization: employed by a contractor, temporary worker, permanent worker, freelancer, personal contract, and so on.
- f. **Pay supplements and benefits.** Which benefits is the employee entitled to out of a list of existing benefits in the organization (car maintenance, on-call hours, phone expenses, clothing expenses, risk premium, per diem, advanced training funding, etc.).
- g. **"Human capital."** Variables that are known in the organization as entitling to pay supplements and special compensation, especially seniority and level of education.

We recommend that the data analysis be done by experts on statistics and pay gaps rather than by the organization's data system professionals, because these experts must be conversant with, and follow, a specific methodology for identifying and testing sources of pay gaps. The most common method is the Oaxaca<sup>13</sup> method, where different sources are put into a regression equation in steps, indicating the added contribution of each factor to the pay gap beyond all other factors. This method enables identifying the relative weight of different factors in the average gender pay gap. Pay gaps not explained by the pre-identified factors are sometimes called "smoking-gun discrimination," on the assumption that they reflect direct wage discrimination. However, it is important to emphasize that there might be additional structural wage practices that have not yet been identified and may cause the gender gap in wages, so that the interpretation of direct discrimination could be controversial.

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13 For an explanation of the method, see, for instance, Wikipedia entry [Blinder-Oaxaca Decomposition](#).



## 2. Qualitative analysis of pay practices

The statistical analysis creates a snapshot of the weight of the various factors in explaining the pay gaps between women and men. The next stage is to decipher the wage and payment practices behind the different factors – namely, to inquire how the processes that produce the relative weight of the different factors in the pay gaps actually occur. For instance, if we discover that tracking variables (sector, occupation) make a significant contribution to the pay gap, we will seek to inquire what organizational mechanisms track men and women into different jobs and sectors. If we find that pay supplements explain a significant part of the gender pay gap, we will seek to find out why men and women have different access to those supplements. For example, if entitlement to a supplement for on-call hours is a weighty explanatory factor, we would like to know how the definition of entitlement to that supplement makes it inaccessible to women. This inquiry should produce a catalog of exclusionary pay practices for each one of the factors that we find to have impact in creating the gender pay gaps (for explanation on creating a catalog of exclusionary practices, see chapter 4).

The best way to conduct this inquiry is in workshops with groups of women from the organization's HR department and intra-organizational experts, who know and understand the organization's bureaucratic wage rules. Such a workshop will usually include a conceptual explanation of pay practices and gender pay gaps, and a presentation of the methodology to detect and expose exclusionary pay practices in organizations. In order to facilitate an open discussion about exclusionary pay practices and gender pay gaps, it is necessary to suspend regimes of justification that serve women and men in the organization to "explain" and justify the existing practices and gender gaps despite their exclusionary implications for women ("She chose to work part-time in order to be with her children," "Of course someone who doesn't have a driver's license doesn't get car maintenance," "In Human Resources you can't get on-call hours. You're only entitled to them in Logistics," and so on). Suspending regimes of justification during such a workshop is critical because the participants are usually the ones in charge of maintaining and enforcing organizational rules and norms in general and remuneration rules and regimes in particular. Therefore it is often difficult for them to separate between the rules' exclusionary effects and their justification. The facilitators of the workshop should consider this point and ensure a discussion free of regimes of justification.

### 3. Building a repository of inclusive pay practices

The third stage of the intervention to bridge gender pay gaps is to create a comprehensive and rich repository of inclusive pay practices. This stage relies on the identification and analysis of exclusionary practices conducted in the previous stage. Inclusive pay practices can be created in a follow-up workshop with the same participants. The process of imagining alternatives to the pay practices is difficult and complicated and might be facilitated by **the orange tree model**. This model conceptualizes current pay practices as a problem of access to oranges in an orchard with only one orange tree. A specific group cannot even enter the orchard, or cannot reach the tree within the orchard because of various obstacles, or does not have the means to climb the tree to pick the oranges, or the oranges are not to its members' taste. There are five conceivable solutions to the problem of lack of access to the oranges:

- a. **Allow the group into the orchard.** Open rewarding jobs and sectors to women by removing entrance barriers.
- b. **Remove the obstacles in the orchard on the way to the tree.** For instance, remove promotion barriers such as the demand to perform the job full-time or serve some time "in the field" as a precondition for promotion; or change working arrangements such as a shift structure that prevents women from working and parenting at the same time.
- c. **Provide the group with the means to pick the oranges.** For instance, perform a gender review of the criteria for entitlement to certain pay supplements, and add to them alternative criteria that are consistent with women's situation. Thus, if the review finds that most of the employees entitled to the benefit of car maintenance are men, the entitlement criteria for car benefits can be expanded (as was actually done in several organizations) so that the benefit be given even without a valid driver's license, or against proof of using public transportation (usually car benefits are much higher than refunds for using public transportation).
- d. **Give the group alternative oranges from the same crate.** For instance, level women's pay with men's pay when they perform the same job but men still earn more because of pay increments they accrued in previous positions.
- e. **Give the group tomatoes as compensation for oranges.** Recognize women's different situations as entitling them to wages or pay supplements.

For instance, women can be compensated for work hours from home or travel time to work and back, women can be compensated for their unique needs or transparent tasks they do on the job even though it is not part of their job (organizing social activities at the workplace, coordinating meetings, making sure there are refreshments for meetings and more), and absence because of children's vacations can be counted as work days or as non-absence.

In this workshop, the rules of discussion should be strict to allow freedom of thought and ideas (for details of the methodology for developing alternative practices, see chapter 3). Participants should be especially encouraged not to be silenced by regimes of feasibility. Good ideas are often nipped in the bud because participants think that the current practice cannot be changed for various reasons including financial cost, objection by men, certain rules that exist in the organization, dependence on outside parties and more. At this stage of the workshop, the discussion should proceed on the assumption that all of the options are open and that the resources are not limited.

#### **4. Building a program of equality levers**

In the fourth stage, all of the ideas brought up in the experts' workshop are processed into new and inclusive pay practices whose implementation will reduce the average pay gap between women and men in the organization. Selection criteria include:

- ❖ Their implementation will improve the wages of large groups of women.
- ❖ They are fair toward both women and men.
- ❖ Their implementation in the organization is not completely dependent on external resources.
- ❖ They do not harm men's current wages.

#### **5. Recruiting allies for implementation**

The wage equalizing program is completely theoretical, and its implementation requires a political process of mobilizing power, allies, and influence at the relevant sites of determination (see also chapter 6). The accumulated experience in this area shows there are several powerful forces that can be mobilized to support the process of eliminating gender pay gaps: the collective action of women, information about wages and relevant rights and laws among women, turning to the courts, and competition in the labor market.

**a. Collective action.** Collective action is a demand by women employees to improve their pay and benefits. Such an initiative is usually undertaken by trade unions, but can also be a spontaneous initiative. The famous strike by sewing machinists at the Ford factory in the UK city of Dagenham in 1968 is an example of a collective action. A women workers' strike erupted when they discovered a wage review committee determined that their work was rated as "unskilled labor" and priced accordingly. The strike and other actions eventually led to the legislation of the Equal Pay Act. Current research finds a direct correlation between gender equality and the rate of organized labor in the country. For instance, a study by Tali Kristal and Yinon Cohen (2007) analyzed the Israeli case and found that processes of liberalization and weakening of organized labor in Israel increased employment polarization and led to the expansion of low-paying jobs performed by women.

Therefore, collective action has the potential of improving women's situation in a number of ways:

1. Raising the wages of employees at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy.
2. Establishing enforcement and control mechanisms that involve women workers' committees in preventing gender discrimination in pay. Thus, for instance, by virtue of the Equal Pay Act, the women workers' committee can represent an employee who was discriminated against in her pay – both in demanding information from the employer to establish her position and in creating a coercing force to accept the worker's demand for compensation, without being dragged to the labor court.
3. Reducing pay gaps throughout the labor market by a collective and public demand to increase compensation for performing "women's jobs" whose social and economic contribution is priceless, such as the struggles carried out in the last decade by the social workers' union, kindergarten teachers, and school teachers.
4. Creating transparent and clear pay grades for compensation and promotion based on fair and accepted parameters such as the nature of the work, required skills, seniority, education, and so on. The existence of a wage scale reduces randomness in determining workers' pay, as accepted in the more organized public sector.

Workers who organize to demand a gender-equal pay policy must avoid maintaining a discriminatory situation and anchoring it in supposedly objective structured categories. We must remember that labor unions are also gendered. As history proves, they too have often emerged and acted from the point of view of working men and fought for their working conditions and rights.

Therefore, it must not be assumed that a workers' committee will be above perpetuating the status quo and anchoring it in collective agreements that are supposedly gender-neutral and benefit everyone. Furthermore, creating transparent pay grades is only one action out of many that workers' committees can take when seeking to narrow pay gaps in an organization, because, as described above, even in workplaces that have pay grades, such as the public sector, gender pay gaps abide. Therefore, the workers' committee must aim to remove all barriers to women seeking equal pay, such as making the promotion tracks in the organizational hierarchy accessible and guaranteeing the right to receive benefits that acknowledge women's unique life situations and needs when determining pay policies. This requires the involvement of aware and active women inside and outside the committee, to consistently represent women's perspective in the collective bargaining process. The forms of collective action may be diverse and do not necessarily require action through a representative committee. Another way to act is on the basis of the intra-organizational group of women experts who were recruited for analyzing exclusionary pay practices and designing inclusive ones. This group can become a focus of power to promote inclusive pay practices and implement them in the organization.

- b. Information about pay rights.** In addition to initiating collective action, it is advisable to raise awareness among women and employers concerning legislation and rights of women in terms of remuneration. Most women employees take for granted the remuneration regimes in their organizations – namely, the various benefits and supplements, their pay grades, and so on - even if according to the law they are discriminated against. Many workers, men and women, see pay slips and pay rules as a tangled and incomprehensible collection of undecipherable codes and mysterious initials. Workshops or training activities can be held for women to learn more about the structure of their salaries, their pay rights, their status in relation to existing legislation, and the parties that can be addressed for help in cases of pay discrimination (or suspected discrimination). The workshops can be given by intra-organizational parties or external organizations that specialize in these subjects. These training sessions enable women to make demands of their employers in cases of wage discrimination, of which, in some cases, the employers are not even aware. On another level, it is known that in cases of personal contracts and personal agreement on terms, women are often averse to making aggressive pay demands, whether out of humility or lack of feeling of entitlement to high wages, exceptional benefits and terms.

One way to overcome this barrier is to disseminate information about pay norms in the occupational field in general and in the market of personal contracts in particular. When the accepted norms and standards are known, it is easier to negotiate or to make demands for higher pay that are perceived as normative.

- c. **The courts and law.** Recourse to the court, or raising the possibility of going to court, can also force employers to correct pay practices. For instance, in a suit against the Jerusalem Municipality, the Labor Court decided in a precedent-setting ruling that when a man and a woman perform a similar job, the employer is required to equalize the woman's pay terms to the man's. This, ruled the court, applies even when his job title is different from hers or if his wages encompass raises and ranks given to him exceptionally in the past by virtue of his sectorial affiliation with a group with stronger bargaining power than the woman's.<sup>14</sup> In other words, the Employment (Equal Opportunities) Law and the Man and Woman Workers (Equal Pay) Law are powerful nonhuman actors that can be enlisted to initiate a process of instituting equal pay practices.
- d. **Competition in the labor market.** In certain cases, even competition over quality workers in the labor market can be a force enlisted for implementing change. Organizations competing over a shortage of quality labor (or dealing with criticism over a lack of women in various positions in the organization) can find out that the way to attract quality women to the organization involves creating conditions in the organization that allow them to make a dignified living and providing a non-distressing work experience. In some situations, making the organization and working in it attractive for women can be a lever to initiate a process of equalizing pay practices and working conditions.

## Conclusion

Pay and compensation are among the most difficult organizational areas to change. On the one hand, pay and compensation practices are usually perceived as neutral and universal practices that reflect the human capital of men and women employees and apply to them equally and fairly. The practices themselves are maintained by powerful regimes of justification and numerous institutional actors, who are embedded in the pay practices and could stand to lose in different ways from any change in them.

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14 LD 22000-08-10 (Jerusalem District), *Galit Kedar v the Jerusalem Municipality* (Published in *Nevo*, 12 March 2014). [The ruling is available on the workers' rights website.](#)

At the same time there are forces that can compel and coerce organizations to change exclusionary pay practices so that women can earn a living and be compensated more fairly. Effective organizational intervention, which accurately maps the sources of gender pay gaps and at the same time offers a practical plan to correct the disparities on the basis of the knowledge and experience of expert women from within the organization, can set off a process of change as long as it is supported by compelling and coercive forces: women's vast information of pay legislation and rights, collective action by them, crises of legitimacy by turning to the courts and filing lawsuits, or competition over quality personnel.

Despite the difficulties, this is an extremely important site of change. Pay and compensation for work also reflect economic mechanisms of oppression of women at home and in the family, their consequent dependence on men, and their difficulty to make changes in their personal lives at times of need. Low and unfair pay limits women's freedom of action and choice. Making pay and compensation fair increases women's ability to make a living; moreover, it increases their autonomy and freedom of action in life in general.

# Chapter 15. Gender Budgeting: Promoting Gender Equality through Organizational Budgeting Processes

Dr. Yael Hasson<sup>15</sup>

An organization's budget is one of the main elements that shape its reality and day-to-day life. The organization's budget impacts all of its employees and the communities it affects. In contrast to the rational-bureaucratic image of budgets as reflecting rational priorities and objective needs, budgets can also be seen as political elements, as a product that reflects and expresses struggles and power relations between different organizational actors. In other words, the budget, the organization's most detailed working plan, is a practice that reflects the power relations in the organization. An organization's budget is usually perceived as objective and gender-neutral: it is made out of monetary sums that denote income and expenditures and does not specifically refer to women or men. We propose understanding budget planning and approval processes in general, whether an organization's budget, a state budget or a local municipality budget, as organizational practices. Furthermore, these processes become exclusionary gendered practices when they do not represent the point of view (POV) of women who are affected by the budget, whether they work in the organization or consume its services.

The process of planning and approving the budget, its ongoing management, and the approval of changes and exceptions in it, are central organizational processes that express different logics and POVs in the organization and the power relations between them. The absence of women's point of view from these practices makes it impossible to identify the different meanings and consequences the organizational budget has for different groups of women and men. Moreover, it prevents women from acting to allocate resources in the organization to promote gender equality. Everyone takes it for granted that the POV of the finance people, their formulas, and the concepts they present – economy, deficit, surplus, prioritization, meeting goals, resources, and so on – are dominant in the budget planning and approval processes.

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15 Dr. Yael Hasson, a sociologist, is a researcher at the Adva Center – a policy analysis institute whose mandate is to examine Israeli society from the perspective of equality and social justice. Her work focuses on researching economic policy from a gender perspective and developing approaches and tools for the gender analysis of budgets. She also teaches courses on social and economic policy, inequality, and gender mainstreaming at various academic institutions.



It is less obvious, and sometimes draws resistance, to argue that the gender POV – that is, women’s needs and priorities, and the logic of gender equality – must also receive weight and presence in the organizational practices of planning and deciding on the budget.

In this chapter the focus is on budgeting processes as a gendered practice: we propose the concept of gender budgeting as a gender-inclusive practice, which seeks to present the gender perspective as bearing weight and impact in the processes of planning and approving the organizational budget. This practice means including the gender POV at all levels of financial decision-making in the organization. The practice of gender budgeting is an implementation of a gender mainstreaming strategy in the budgeting processes. Gender mainstreaming means bringing the issue of gender equality into the mainstream of organizational processes, as well as legislation and budgeting in all areas of the economy and society. It is a strategy of achieving gender equality aiming for systemic change and shattering gender barriers, whether formal or informal. This approach seeks to generate a conceptual change by advancing gender sensitivity when shaping policy, planning, and distributing resources and budgets (Hasson and Seigelshifer 2017).

Gender budgeting is a powerful tool to promote gender equality in organizations because it focuses on the ways resources are distributed in the organization and enables us to identify who gains more and who gains less from that distribution. The gender budgeting process not only reflects the impact of resource distribution on women and men, it also encourages a gender equality perspective in decision-making and reorganization of resources. In other words, this process forces women’s point of view into the organization’s main decision-making sites where resource distribution is decided. Bringing women’s POV into budget analysis and preparation processes provides an opportunity to perform a gender analysis of the budget: how resources are distributed between different groups of women and men in the organization and to what extent the resource distribution is consistent with their needs and priorities. The main purpose is to reorganize income and expenditures so that they promote gender equality.

To clarify the nature of the gender budgeting practice, several points must be emphasized. First, gender budgeting is not about an equal distribution of resources between women and men but rather an overview of the budget from a gender perspective to evaluate how it addresses the different needs and priorities of women and men, and how it promotes equality.

Second, gender budgeting is not a separate or special budget for women, such as a budget for a “women’s day” or budgets for sexual harassment prevention workshops. These budgets usually help to address specific issues, but they are limited and constitute a very small part of the total budget, whereas most of the budget is seen as neutral, but continues to serve certain groups rather than others. Therefore, when we analyze the budget we must analyze, if possible, all of the income and expense items. Third, gender budgeting does not assume that women and men are homogenous categories but rather acknowledges intersectionality. It seeks to create a resource distribution that is consistent with a deep understanding of the needs of different groups of women and men, that are distinct from each other in their economic status, age, ethnicity, nationality, and so on. Therefore, gender budgeting places people, both women and men, at the center of the budgeting process, facilitates a more effective allocation of resources, and increases transparency of budgeting processes.

## Intervention: Gender Analysis of the Budget

How do you bring a gender POV as a compelling and coercive force into budget decision-making sites in the organization? It is a complex process because these sites are the focus of power relations between various organizational actors. Furthermore, some of those power relations are reflected in the ability of some of the actors not to reveal information they have about various elements of the budget. Therefore, gender budgeting is an intervention that includes two challenges: the first is decoding women’s point of view in relation to the budget, and the second is representation of that POV as a compelling and coercive force at relevant sites of determination.

The **decoding challenge** requires gender analysis of the budget - e.g., analysis of the impact of different budgetary items on different groups of women and men in the organization and on others who are affected by it. A common obstacle to such gender analysis is lack of access to data and information (and in some cases complete absence of data and information) that would allow a comparative analysis of those consequences. The lack of access to information limits the ability to identify exclusionary aspects of the budget and to offer appropriate responses to them in the form of inclusive gender practices. However, access to data is not enough because the process of gender decoding of the budget requires participation of professional women conversant with reading and analyzing budgets who also offer a gender POV. It is advisable for the gender equality agent to convene or appoint a team that includes finance and HR professionals, to actually analyze the budget data and identify its exclusionary gender consequences.

The **challenge of representation**: on the basis of accumulated experience we can offer several ways to present women's point of view and promote gender budgeting processes. The first is to mobilize the commitment of senior echelons in the organization (see chapter 6). Mobilization of actors in positions of authority and power improves access to the necessary databases as well as the actual decision-making sites. Another measure is to conduct training programs for executives about the connection between gender and resource allocation - e.g., to assimilate the gender POV within the executive identity. Such programs promote the understanding that good management takes into account women's point of view in the decision-making processes (see chapter 9) in order to achieve cooperation at different levels and in different sectors of the organization. It is advisable to hold training for men and woman executives from different ranks and different professional fields in the organization. Another approach is to appoint a professional team whose job is to decode and present women's point of view in relation to the budget. The team should be comprised of women and men from the organization who are conversant with its budget planning and allocation processes, as well as external expert women who specialize in gender budgeting analysis.

In the following two sections we will describe a gender analysis of a budget and demonstrate the analysis in relation to two different areas of action of organizations. The first area is programs, services, and projects that the organization runs and provides, both to its men and women employees (such as training programs, leisure activities, infrastructure for performing the job, funding education) and for external audiences and customers (such as building facilities, planning new products or providing services).<sup>16</sup> The second area is the organization's procurement processes.<sup>17</sup>

## 1. Stages in the gender analysis of budgets for programs, services and projects

- a. **Selecting the program.** The gender analysis should start with programs that the gender equality agent or POV group identified as having a direct impact on employees, and where it is relatively easy to "count" who benefits from them. Likewise, in order to achieve the goal of gender equality, it is advisable to select programs or services that could narrow the inequality.

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<sup>16</sup> This analysis is based on Hasson 2013.

<sup>17</sup> This analysis is based on Dagan-Buzaglo 2017.

**b. Evaluating the extent of the program's impact on women and men.** After selecting a program we will answer two main questions.

1. **Extent of impact.** How many people participate in or benefit from the program we selected?
2. **Gender.** How many of the participants or beneficiaries we counted are women and how many are men?

For example:

- ❖ **Intra-organizational professional training programs.** How many men and how many women participated in them in the last year?
- ❖ **Subsidizing academic degree or diploma studies.** How many women and how many men benefited from it?
- ❖ **Leisure activities.** How many men and how many women participated in them?
- ❖ **Organizational programs for work-family balance.** Maternity leave, shortened workdays – who is entitled to them? Who actually takes advantage of them?
- ❖ **Facilities (for instance, sports facilities).** How many men and how many women use them?
- ❖ **Funding participation in professional conferences.** How many women and how many men have enjoyed such funding in the past year?

**c. Analyzing the budget.** How much money is invested in women compared to men in the same program? The actual budget distribution should be checked since it is not always consistent with the rates of women and men participants. For instance, the analysis of a municipal budget for funding sports activities for the city's residents found that women were 37% of the athletes in the city and men were 63%. However, only 25% of the budgets for sport associations were allocated to women's sports, compared to 75% of the budgets allocated to men's sport associations. The level of funding for training, participation in conferences, academic studies, and so on for women and men should be checked in the same way.

**d. Analyzing needs.** This stage will focus on a deep understanding of the gender gap as reflected by the budget analysis (if such a gap is indeed found), in order to examine the meaning of the gaps that were found from the point of view of women (and men) and in relation to their needs. We emphasize that since the aim of gender budgeting is to include the beneficiaries of the budgeted programs in the process, it is essential to learn from the women (and men) themselves, out of their experiences and needs. It is recommended to collect this information through POV groups, focus groups, surveys, and interviews.

Fine-tuning the gender analysis will allow us to:

1. Evaluate the degree to which the budget addresses the needs of all service recipients;
2. Understand the challenges and barriers faced by those to whom the services are not accessible;
3. Understand whether the declared policy, particularly with regard to promoting gender equality (if there is such a policy), is consistent with the actual allocation of resources for programs;
4. Understand whether the budget takes into account the gendered division of labor in the domestic sphere - that is, in taking care of family members and housework.

**e. Promoting change through corrective actions (alternative practices).**

Identifying gender gaps and understanding them from the point of view of women and men is an important step in promoting gender equality. At this stage, the goal is to propose a change in the examined program or service and to budget them differently so that they better address the needs of the women and men who use them. New objectives will be determined based on the findings. For example:

1. Raising the number of women who enjoy training programs.
2. Raising the number of women who receive funding for travel to professional conferences.
3. Raising the number of men who enjoy shortened workdays to take care of children.

It is recommended to formulate the desired objective in percentages. In order to achieve it, corrective action on one of two levels should be decided upon.

❖ **On the professional level.** If the gender analysis found that the program does not optimally address the different needs of men and women employees, it should be improved.

❖ **On the budgetary level.** If the gender analysis found a gender gap in budget distribution, the budget should be changed. It should be reconstructed from a gender equality point of view so that it takes into account and corrects the gaps that were identified. It does not necessarily mean supplementing the budget but changing the way it is distributed.

**f. Mobilizing to implement alternative practices.** As noted at the beginning of the chapter, the process of planning the budget and making decisions about it is a political process in an organization that includes numerous actors. The gender budgeting process is an alternative practice to the routine budgeting process. In it, the gender equality agent decodes and represents women's point of view in relation to the organization's budget, in order to create a budget that better addresses women's needs and to make the budget fairer in terms of gender. The ability of the gender equality agent to represent this point of view and turn it into a compelling and coercive force in the process is affected by the political process of mobilizing powerful actors to the women's point of view. Each stage in the gender budgeting process requires the mobilization of allies to carry it out, but each stage also produces new allies as well as compelling and coercive forces that help the gender equality agents to advance the next stages of the process. For instance, the actors who were recruited to the professional team that manages and guides the process can become allies who act to obtain gender-segmented information and data, to clarify needs, and even to implement the proposed alternative practice on the basis of a gender analysis of the budget. The findings of the gender analysis can also become a compelling and coercive force for decision-makers at the decision-making sites in the organization. Thus, for instance, if the analysis finds that the main beneficiaries of the organization's training budgets are men, the finding can mobilize the HR vice president to act to correct the situation by virtue of her professional logic as the person responsible for the training of all employees, men and women alike. The gender equality agent must therefore be concerned with the mobilization issue throughout the process – decoding the POV and action potential of all of relevant actors and identifying non-human actors (data, procedures, models from other organizations, and so on), which can be compelling and coercive forces for other actors at different stages of the process. At the stage when the gender equality agent is interested in implementing and realizing alternative practices (namely, actions to narrow gender gaps in various usages of the organization's budget), mobilization becomes critical. In previous chapters we detailed possible modes of mobilization (chapter 6) and described ways to cope with regimes of justification that serve the opponents of adopting inclusive alternatives (chapter 7). The practices proposed in those chapters are particularly relevant to the process of gender budgeting since it is, as previously noted, one of the most political processes in the organization.

**g. Monitoring and follow-up.** Gender budgeting is an ongoing process of systematic implementation of gender awareness at all stages of budgeting and at all levels of decision-making about organizational resource allocation. It is not a one-off process. It is recommended to conduct a gender analysis of the budget data on an ongoing basis, and in order to examine the extent the organization has achieved its objectives it is recommended to hold an annual discussion with representatives of senior management, HR, finance, and other relevant departments. The products of the gender analysis of the selected programs and projects should be presented at the discussions, as well as new objectives and proposals of corrective actions to achieve them. The discussion should allow for reactions, comments, and proposals for improvement and change by all participants.

## **2. Analysis of procurement budgets**

Some of the organization's budget is allocated for the procurement of services and products, such as organizational and managerial consulting, legal and accounting services, event production, architectural services, advertising and marketing services, photography services, cleaning services, printing, catering, design services, construction and maintenance of the organization's website, and more. Accumulated experience from different countries shows that women owners of small and medium businesses are less likely to apply for procurement tenders and less likely to win them. It was also found that most businesses owned by women are small and tiny businesses (a tiny business is a business that employs up to five employees and whose annual turnover does not exceed NIS 200,000).

Small businesses play an important role in economic growth, and furthermore they are often the solution to difficulties in finding employment, especially for women. Moreover, including small businesses in local procurements strengthens the concept of sustainability: economic development based on local and regional resources and working in favor of local residents. Studies show that along with the advantages of participation in procurements for the small businesses themselves, their inclusion also contributes to creating local supply chains, increasing local employment opportunities, and strengthening the community.

An example of incorporating women-owned businesses as regular suppliers for an organization can be found in the [Strauss Group](#)'s policy in recent years.<sup>18</sup> In 2012, Strauss began to pursue a policy of integrating women-owned businesses<sup>19</sup> as regular suppliers in the company's supply chain as part of the company's diversity policy. In order to pursue the diversity policy, Strauss decided to focus on diversifying the company's indirect procurements, which are procurements that are not part of the manufacturing process and the materials used for the manufacture of the food and beverage products, because the area of procurements that directly serve to manufacture the products is very precise and less adaptable to change. Indirect procurements include a range of products and services as well as contracts with consultants. In 2015, 10% of the suppliers of indirect procurements for the company were women-owned businesses, and the spending on procurements from these suppliers totaled NIS 93 million, 5% of the total indirect procurements that year. Strauss's initiative included several steps.

- a. Studying the international field of supplier diversification and contacting WEConnect, an organization set up by international corporations in order to promote the incorporation of women's businesses in supply chains and that maintains a global database of licensed suppliers. The organization also introduced itself to key corporations in the Israeli economy.
- b. Mapping Strauss's suppliers through questionnaires and adding a question about the ownership and management structure of each supplier on Strauss's contracting form. Adding the question for new suppliers enabled the company to create a database of women-owned suppliers and provide it to the company's procurement division and departments. Women-owned medium and large companies were also approached to explore the possibility of including them in the company's procurement array.
- c. Setting an objective of procurement from women-owned businesses for the entire corporation and not for each division separately to allow flexibility based on the nature of the procurement and the availability of women suppliers in each area.

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18 The information about the Strauss Group is based on the company's sustainability report for 2015 and an interview from 1 October 2017 with Daniella Perosky-Sion, the director of corporate responsibility, and Olivia Malka, the director of indirect procurements.

19 The definition of a woman-owned business is the accepted definition in diversity indexes in the world: a business at least 51% of which is owned, managed, and controlled by a woman.



- d. Training Strauss's procurement teams and mobilizing the different divisions to the concept of diversifying the supply chain by raising awareness of the importance of the subject, distributing information about existing suppliers that are women-owned businesses, and encouraging contracting new suppliers that are women-owned businesses.
- e. Training for women business owners, in cooperation with the Yasmin organization and Zionism 2000. The training focused on the Strauss Group's procurements, and procurements by major corporations in general, and guidelines were provided on how to participate in them.
- f. Implementing an organizational culture of encouraging procurements from women, including employees from the procurements area volunteering to support women-owned businesses in contracting processes with the company.

The effort to include women's businesses in procurements was directed primarily at large businesses. In the last year, Strauss began to take measures to encourage the integration of small and medium businesses using similar measures.

The example above illustrates the real results of implementing an alternative practice from a gender point of view in the area of organizational procurement. An analysis of the measures taken by the company finds the steps described above: acquiring knowledge, training, mobilization, and concrete objectives as an inclusive alternative practice.

## Conclusion

An organization's budgeting practices are at the core of its activities and therefore one of the main targets of professional gender equality intervention. Budgeting processes have far-reaching consequences for women's lives and opportunities – both for women employed by the organization and for women who are affected by the organization's activity. The process of implementing gender budgeting in an organization is challenging for gender equality agents because it requires using a range of gender consulting capacities: the ability to represent and give voice to women's point of view in the organization; the ability to gain access to gender-sensitive budgetary information and data; the ability to decode the gender meanings of various budget items, because the budget is usually written in code that is not clear to external readers; the ability to mobilize allies in circumstances of an interest-driven, competitive political process; the ability to cope with strong regimes of justification based on economic and accounting logics that serve to maintain existing budgeting practices; and the ability to persist in the process over time even though it is Sisyphean.

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*The Handbook of Organizational Gender Consultation and Intervention* is based on the understanding that promoting gender equality is a process of representing, recognizing, and granting weight and power to women's point of view on organizational practices. Organizational practices that have exclusionary ramifications for women are made possible by the exclusion of women's point of view from the planning and decision-making processes that shape organizational practices and day-to-day realities. Hence, the long journey toward gender equality in organizations is also the journey of the perspectives of women working in the organization—from the margins of the organization's "attention" to the organization's power centers where decisions are made. Agents of gender equality, both women and men, are the "travel agents" of this perspective in the organization, and their actions are intended to accrue validity and power for it, recruiting allies in support and recognition of it, and making it a weighty consideration where and when decisions are made.

How can this journey be successfully managed? This handbook aims to answer this question on the basis of many years of research and practical experience. The authors offer a rich toolbox that includes knowledge, know-how, strategies, and organizational interventions to promote gender equality and social justice in organizations: from the process of hiring to work arrangements, from the processes of tracking to the prevention of sexual harassment, from remuneration to leadership in the organization. The handbook examines various aspects of organizational life in order to identify exclusionary gendered implications of organizational practices in each aspect, understand their ramifications for women, and to propose solutions in the form of inclusionary organizational practices that can be implemented and realized in the organization.

The interventions presented in the handbook are divided into three sections: representation of women's perspective, mobilizing action from this perspective, and proactive steps to change gendered organizational practices.