



Men, management and multiple masculinities in organisations

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Abstract

One of the most important shifts in the theorisation of the social construction of gender identities has been the recognition of their relational and multiple nature. In my work, on merchant banking in the city of London, I suggested that two dominant rhetorics of masculinity and gendered performances, adopted by men working in particular spaces in banks, were distinguishable. In this paper, I return to the interviews that I undertook with these men, re-reading the transcripts in order to try to demonstrate that a more nuanced understanding of the complex and contradictory ways that men interact with other men in the workplace – peers, subordinates and superiors – is possible. The focus of this paper is on the ways in which men manage other men, unpicking the dominant or hegemonic view of male managers as rational. Men, as well as women, engage in emotional labour in organisations. In my earlier work, I drew only on the interviews that I had carried out with men in professional positions, contrasting corporate financiers with dealers and traders. Here I also draw on interviews with men in back office employment, in professional and in technical and clerical occupations, contrasting the management styles of these men with those of corporate finance managers. © 2001 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

One of the most significant changes in the long economic ‘sea change’ (Harvey, 1989) that has transformed the labour markets of postfordist economies since around 1973 has been the extensive movement of women into the workforce. In Britain, for example, in the final quarter of the 20th century, as manufacturing employment continued to decline and service employment grew, the numbers of women employed at all levels in the workforce expanded, whereas the number of men declined and the labour force participation rates of men and women began to coincide. Whereas in 1975, 92% of all men of working age (aged 16–65) were in waged work compared with only 59% of working age women (aged 16–60), by 1998, men’s participation was down to 80% and women’s had risen to almost 70% (69.3%). Noticeable gender inequalities in participation patterns remain, of course, as women’s participation is related to the age of their youngest child, as well as to educational differences between women as women with post-school

qualifications are far more likely to be employed on a full-time basis than less well-educated women.

Among men, in recent years significant differences have begun to emerge in participation rates. While low-skilled men in general have always been more vulnerable to unemployment, especially in the former manufacturing-dominated labour markets (and in 1999 despite an overall rise in participation rates in Britain, one in two of the least well-qualified men were out of work (Gregg and Wadsworth, 1999)), a new distinction between men has become evident from the early 1990s. This is the distinct decline in the participation rates of men over 50 in all social classes. Whereas age brought physical decline and often industrial illnesses for manual workers, for white collar men, the down-sizing and delayering of middle management has also been associated with unemployment and early retirement. So marked was this trend becoming by the end of the decade that one in six men over 50 were not in employment and the Labour Chancellor singled them out in his 1999 budget as a ‘lost generation’ in need of special financial assistance and advice in order to re-enter the labour market. As participation in waged work has long been the single most important characteristic in the social definition of successful masculinity, loss of employment for growing

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numbers of men began to manifest itself in an evident social unease. It has been among the younger generation, however, that this unease has become most evident as a spate of literature of various types coalesced in its identification of a ‘crisis of masculinity’ (see McDowell, 2000). The growing achievements of young women, especially in school leaving examinations, were interpreted not as a success for women but as a reflection of failure among young men. This was accompanied by rising anxieties about how to parent boys (Phillips, 1993). Indeed there has been a noticeable shift in both popular and scholarly debates about gender inequality, marked by a rapid expansion of work on the social construction of masculinity by feminists¹ and others.

This refocus is clearly welcome in light of the significant gender restructuring of urban labour markets and yet it creates unease among some feminists, who are anxious that the new emphasis in academic work about gender on men seems to deny the long effort involved in making women visible.² It is evident that there is a need for hard and careful thought given to how to analyse masculine practices and multiple forms of masculinity in the labour market and in workplace organisations, and indeed in other locations, without re-excluding women, or denying the continuing inequitable experiences of the majority of women. As Cockburn firmly insisted almost a decade ago, it is important not to ‘deflect attention from the consistency of men’s domination of women at systemic and organizational levels, from the continuation of material, structured inequalities and power imbalances between the sexes’ (Cockburn, 1991, p. 225). However, in contemporary feminist scholarship there is also an insistence that an analysis of the ways in which class and gender divisions are both inter-connected and have more or less significance in different circumstances is always a central focus (Phillips, 1999). In the debates about youth and labour market opportunities, for example, current debates about the ‘trouble with boys’ disguise the ways in which class intersects with gender (Arnot et al., 1999; McDowell, 2000). Similarly, structured inequalities on the basis of ethnicity are a key part of contemporary social divisions that also complicate too easy assertions about masculinity per se. However, one of the great advantages of the exciting expansion of work on masculinities is that it has made crystal clear that gender is not an attribute solely possessed by women and, somewhat galling though it may seem to some feminist scholars, added a new and important di-

mension to gender scholarship. It also provides an intellectual and research challenge to the one-dimensional man, garbed in his unyielding patriarchal power, by insisting that masculinity, too, is also an uncertain and provisional project, subject to change and redefinition. Geographers have perhaps, however, been slow to accept this challenge and many of us working on issues connected with gender and economic restructuring have tended to ignore the significance and variations in masculinity, relying too heavily on a singular masculinity, defined as the unchanging ‘One’ against which multiple and contested femininities are constructed. In a thought-provoking review of my book *Capital Culture* (McDowell, 1997), Trevor Barnes and his students (Barnes et al., 2000) suggested that I had focused on femininity to the detriment of masculinity. Their comments sent me back to my empirical work which I re-read in the light of the growing studies of masculinity, especially those about masculinity in organisations. In this paper, I want to provide a guide to some of the new literature, to reflect on the methodological implications of re-analysing interview data and make some provisional comments about the multiple ways in which men relate to other men in the context of managerial responsibilities.

2. Masculinity and/in organisations

It has only been in the last decade or so that the social construction and significance of masculinity in the work place has been analysed rather than taken for granted (Chapman and Rutherford, 1988; Collinson and Hearn, 1994, 1996a,b; Connell, 1985, 1995; Hearn and Morgan, 1990; Kimmel, 1987; Mac an Ghail, 1996; Morgan, 1992; Segal 1990). In the classic post-war studies of organisations and workplaces, the position of men in the workplace and the assumptions about masculinity that suffused workplace practices were so invisible or taken for granted as not to warrant explanation. It was men who dominated industrial and managerial workplaces, and this dominance was simply documented rather than questioned.³ It took the rise of feminist scholarship to question men’s dominance and authority as well as to document the implications for women’s position in the labour market and in the workplace. However, in the majority of the pioneering feminist workplaces studies, the social construction of masculinity itself was not theorised nor its variations investigated. Instead men and masculinity were counterposed as a dominant and

¹ Susan Faludi’s (1999) popular analysis *Stiffed: The betrayal of modern man* received an enormous amount of media attention when it was published in Great Britain in September 1999.

² See for example Coward (1999) and Greer (1999) for two recent books by feminist commentators presenting divergent views (and my review of these two and other recent texts that might be designated ‘popular feminism’ (McDowell, 1999a,b).

³ This is the case even in Kanter’s classic *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1977) which stimulated numerous later studies of masculine power in organisations.

singular category to a subservient and inferior category of femininity.

If men's gender and sexuality was taken as the norm in organisations, and so remained invisible, women's gender and sexuality was seen as atypical, out of place and troubling. An exciting feminist literature about organisations and economic change developed, in which the ways in which women are constructed as inferiors in the labour market, lower paid and undervalued compared with men in the same occupations and organisations, have been investigated in a wide range of places (see for example Bradley, 1989, 1999; Cavendish, 1982; Cockburn, 1983, 1985, 1991; Crompton and Sanderson, 1990; Game and Pringle, 1983; Glucksman, 1990; Halford et al., 1997; Hanson and Pratt, 1995; Marshall, 1984, 1995; Milkman, 1987; Mitter, 1986; Savage and Witz, 1993; Spencer and Podmore, 1987; Wajcman, 1998; Walby, 1987, 1988, 1997; Ward, 1990; Westwood, 1984). As this work became more sophisticated, and as the number of case studies of organisations and professions grew, the multiple ways in which gender identities are constructed at work have been unpicked. Ideas about sexuality and desire, about the discursive construction of femininity and psychological investments in fixed gender identities paralleled an emphasis on material inequalities and the effects of economic restructuring (see especially the studies by Pringle 1989, 1998). Yet, because of the stability of the dominance of men and masculinist assumptions about the structure and value of work, especially in high status and professional occupations, the construction of masculinity in the labour market remained relatively unexplored. Although numerous studies have explored the ways in which masculine values pervade organisational cultures, workplace practices, recruitment, retention and promotion schemes, as well as the centrality of paid work in the construction of masculine identity and status (see for example Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Gorz, 1982; Kanter, 1977; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Thompson and McHugh, 1990; Walker and Guest 1952; Whyte, 1956) variations in masculinity were left under-theorised.

Despite this, however, a large number of studies of particular organisations and sites of labour had been undertaken, predominantly of men in manual occupations, reflecting both the past concentration of men in this type of work but also the greater ease of access researchers often experience when 'interviewing down'. There also seems to be something particularly fascinating for academics in more 'heroic' forms of masculine labour, perhaps on a par with urban sociologists' fascination with 'deviant' youth. More recently, studies of male work in service industries have begun to appear and so men in high tech firms (Massey, 1995), universities (Prichard, 1996), local government officers, politicians and local entrepreneurs (Tickell and Peck, 1996), professional officers (Halford et al., 1997; Lehman,

1996), and in corporate (Wajcman, 1998) and scientific workplaces (Casey, 1995) have joined older, as well as more recent, studies of men working in manufacturing industries (Collinson, 1992), on the assembly lines for Fords and Vauxhall, for example (Beynon, 1975; Goldthorpe et al., 1969), and in heavy industries such as coalmining or fishing (Dennis et al., 1956).

But even so, as Collinson and Hearn (1994) noted in the mid 1990s, the authors of these studies too often failed to 'name men [at work] as men' (p. 2), and when they did, assumed a commonality among men and a singular masculinity. In the last few years, however, there is beginning to be the growth of studies that look at the ways in which masculinity, like femininity,⁴ is multiple, variable, context-dependent and unstable in contemporary workplaces. 'Like all identities, masculine selves constantly have to be constructed, negotiated and reconstructed in routine social interaction, both in the workplace and elsewhere, through simultaneous processes of identification and differentiation' (Collinson and Hearn, 1996a, p. 65). The differentiation is not only from women or femininity but also from other men and masculine practices which are troubling, subordinate or run counter to dominant or valued versions in particular occupational categories (Connell, 1995). Whereas class divisions have always separated manual workers from managers, wage earners from salaried professionals, the different ways in which masculinity is constructed and enacted in daily social practices across the whole range of occupations within a workplace has seldom been analysed.

While Collinson and Hearn – perhaps the dominant scholars at the current debates about the social construction of masculinity in the workplace – have not, as yet, in their own empirical analyses compared men across the occupational hierarchy within a single organisation, their work has been extremely important in placing masculinity under the spotlight. In their introduction to an edited collection of papers about men as managers in a range of organisational settings, Collinson and Hearn (1996b) argued that relationships between men in senior management positions, whether cooperative or competitive, are often highly gendered, creating fluctuating bases for alliances or conflicts between individuals or groups of men. Although the competition, rivalry, patronage and rise and fall of

⁴ Space precludes a thorough analysis of the exciting shifts in the ways in which femininity has been theorised and understood in the last few years but I recommend the recent book by Lynn Segal (1999) *Why Feminism?* for a thoughtful consideration of the links between socialist feminism's analysis of material inequalities and the more recent turn to social constructionism and deconstructivist analyses of subjectivity. A summary that is specifically concerned with the links between identity and place might be found in my book *Gender, Identity and Place* (McDowell, 1999b).

departments and individuals within a range of organisations have been the focus of attention in numerous management and organisational studies (see for example Collinson et al., 1990; Hofstede, 1993; Hickson and Pugh, 1995; Jackall, 1988; Knights and Morgan, 1991; Knights and Murray, 1994; LaNuez and Jermier, 1994), the analyses have seldom adopted an explicit gender perspective nor have they interpreted the strategies in terms of conflicts between alternative versions of masculinity.

3. Idealised managerial masculinities

In a provocative agenda setting paper, Collinson and Hearn (1994, pp. 13–16) outlined five potential competing discourses of masculinity in organisations – authoritarianism, paternalism, entrepreneurialism, informalism and careerism – drawing on their reading of a number of organisational case studies. They emphasised, however, that in practice, the categories often overlap and co-exist within particular processes. The value of their schema, however, lies in its basis as a comparator for interpreting empirical case study material. I outline these five masculinities below, drawing for my descriptions not only on Collinson and Hearn's initial distinctions but also on more recent studies, before using them as a template for comparison with my own interview material.

Paternalism reinforces not only the power of the men concerned but also the 'rights' of management and men to manage. The moral basis of management is emphasised and power is based on 'the familial metaphor of "the rule of the father" who is authoritative, benevolent, self-disciplined and wise' (Collinson and Hearn, 1994, p. 13). This is a familiar hegemonic version of masculinity that is dominant in many organisations where 'both managers and men frequently seem to take for granted asymmetrical power relations, often disregarding the hierarchical nature of organisational life and/or neglecting its gendered character' (Collinson and Hearn, 1996a, p. 11). This version of masculinity, and the social relations it implies, is reproduced through both informal and formal structures and dynamics of power and has been the explicit or implicit focus of most studies of organisational culture. Sometimes termed patriarchal (see, for example, Kerfoot and Knights, 1993) rather than paternal, the reliance on informal homosocial relations as well as formal hierarchies has led Morgan (1992) to suggest that this form of masculine managerialism may be at one and the same time fraternal as well as patriarchal. Older men in particular are likely to be paternalistic to younger men, whereas managers at similar levels develop more equal or brotherly relationships with each other. Dominance is achieved not only through formal controls but also by

the encouragement of group solidarity and camaraderie, illustrating the complexity and fluidity of relations between men in the workplace.

Authoritarianism tends to be a subcategory of paternalistic management style and masculine performance where the right to manage is unquestioned but is reinforced by explicit power-based rules and practices. Management is based on obedience and frequently on coercion. It is a more brutal and aggressive form of masculine power than paternalism and so has some parallels with entrepreneurialism. This form of managerial practice is often a reaction to uncertainty and unpredictability, developed in the attempt to predict and control organisational practices and maintain an hierarchical and stable organisation in increasingly complex circumstances. As a number of studies have shown (Crompton, 1989; Crompton and Jones, 1984; Halford et al., 1997) old-fashioned retail bank branch managers often personified authoritarian paternalism – a management style that is increasingly out of place in more recent 'flexible' practices in retail banking (O'Reilly, 1992). Kerfoot and Knights (1993) have also demonstrated from research in the insurance industry that paternalism is a style of masculinity that is increasingly under threat.

Entrepreneurialism is an image of masculinity that is common in the media, especially through the 1980s, with its mixture of the 'self-made' man and the macho, virile, swashbuckling and flamboyant entrepreneur (Collinson and Hearn, 1996b; Denham, 1991; Mackay, 1986). This managerial style is 'masculine, abrasive and highly autocratic' (Collinson and Hearn, 1996a, p. 3), based on a 'hard-nosed and highly competitive approach to business' (Collinson and Hearn, 1994, p. 14). This form of managerial masculinity is more frequently found among younger than older men and is often typical in 'selling' occupations in which highly (hetero)sexualised language is common – penetrating markets, getting into bed with suppliers etc – and/or sporting metaphors are part of daily verbal exchanges (Leidner, 1993; Lewis, 1988; 1991). Participation in male-dominated sports and client entertainment at masculine sporting venues and events are common elements in shaping entrepreneurial managerial careers. As I have noted elsewhere, these features were common elements in managerial practices in the City of London in the early 1990s (McDowell, 1997). Kerfoot and Knights (1993) in their study of masculinity in the financial services industry, especially high street banks, distinguish between a paternalistic masculinity and a competitive masculinity which parallels Collinson and Hearn's depiction of paternalism and entrepreneurialism.

Careerism: Entrepreneurial and careerist strategies shade into each other in their emphasis on professional, competent and rational self-images 'infused with an air of total confidence, detachment and control' (Collinson

and Hearn, 1996b, p. 4). However, careerists are pre-occupied with hierarchical advance in the organisation. Careerism thus demands total commitment and a willingness to subjugate personal responsibilities, to strive for professional credentials and is nicely illustrated by Woodward's (1996) assessment of the 'transcendent rationality' of the bureaucratic masculinity of the European Union administration. The practices of Eurocrats, as she demonstrates, are actually far from rational and neutral but are rather 'a crystallization of masculine corporate culture, expressed in the dominance of certain professional subcultures, language and corporate material symbolism' (Woodward, 1996, p. 167) that excludes women and certain men.

Careerism is related to new forms of management structures and controls for managers themselves, such as performance targets and appraisal schemes, as well as the growth of fixed term contracts and other less secure forms of employment relationship (Goffee and Scase, 1992; Heckscher, 1995; Herriot and Pemberton, 1995; McGovern et al., 1998). But these trends also, in the view of Collinson and Hearn (1996b), challenge the straightforward associations between managers and hegemonic masculinity. Managers themselves are the objects as well as the subjects of organisations and new forms of management valorize different attributes. Complex types of managerial discourse develop which challenge the binary distinctions between masculine and feminised discourses and men and women managers (Maile, 1995). Contradiction and ambiguity increasingly affect the construction of gendered identities in organisations in the late 1990s (Gherardi, 1995), especially as the unthinking hegemonic dominance of masculinist working styles are challenged.

Informalism is perhaps the least distinctive of the five discourses of managerial masculinity. It is defined by Collinson and Hearn (1994) in terms of the development of 'informal workplace relationships on the basis of shared masculine interests and common values' (p. 14). These interests and values, in their description, tend not to be the same class background or common schooling which help male bonding among paternalists and their 'sons' but rather the 'locker room' attributes of sex, sport and drink that unite men and exclude women in a wide range of occupations, in both working class and middle class employment. Well before the contemporary focus on multiple masculinities, Kanter (1977), in her study of a large US corporation, and Morgan (1981), in his study of British academia, both noted the tendency of men to feel more comfortable with other men. While Kanter used the term 'homosexual reproduction' to describe men's networks in organisations, and Morgan termed the characteristic 'homosociability', both authors used the terms without the specifically eroticised overtones they have come to have in later work on masculinity. I shall discuss this concept in more detail below. Although

the boundaries between any of the five discourses of masculinity in organisations may merge or blur, it is clear that informalism in particular may co-exist with other masculinist discourses.

By 1996, in the introduction to their edited collection of men as managers, Collinson and Hearn (1996b) had dropped authoritarianism from their schema and replaced the term informalism by personalism, although in this case the specific attributes that link 'particular masculinities and managerial practices' (Collinson and Hearn, 1996b, p. 11) were not specified in detail. However, in the series of empirical case studies of particular sectors, including finance, university teaching, accountancy, and the bureaucracy of the European Union, the contributors to the collection explored some of the interconnections in depth, despite the fact that not a single one of them explicitly adopted Collinson and Hearn's schema. Although most of the papers in the collection focused on relationships between professional workers, in an interesting paper, Hollway (1996) characterised the shifting practices of the management of subordinates as a move from the regulation of 'factory hands' to the current self-disciplining of what she terms 'sentimental workers' (p. 25). Hands are simply labour power whereas subordinates are now constructed in management discourses and practices as individuals with feelings and emotions that affect their relationships to work. Nevertheless, there are still complex and contested power relationships between men in different positions within an organisation. Hollway focuses on the power relations through which what she terms 'defensive masculinities' are rehearsed and reproduced in relations to one another. She notes that the dominance of white middle class men in management positions other men as Other, based on a range of attributes, both personal and occupational. This notion of a defensive masculinity is a useful one in interpreting the interviews with 'back office' employees in banks, as I shall illustrate below.

3.1. *A methodological cautionary note*

Through a re-reading of my interview material,⁵ I hope to add to explorations of the multiple construction of masculinity, looking at the relationships between

⁵ The original project was funded by the ESRC (grant number R 00023 3006) and was initiated at the Open University in 1992 as part of a wider project into structural change in the South East of England (see Massey et al., 1998 for a summary of the overall project and its findings). With the assistance of Gill Court, I undertook over 80 interviews in three merchant banks in the City of London in 1992 and 1993, 75 of which were the basis of a book, *Capital Culture* (McDowell, 1997). The three banks were then British-owned and consisted of the investment arm of a large retail bank (Merbank), a small independent bank (Northbank) and a 'blue-blooded' long established institution (Bluebros). Pseudonyms were used to protect the confidentiality of the informants.

managerial practices, personal style and masculinities in merchant banks. Here, I shall focus not solely on managers but also on men in non-professional positions in the financial sector. In my original distinction of different forms of masculinity in merchant banks, I was primarily interested in how women were positioned within male-dominated hierarchies and the strategies they adopted in the face of exclusive masculinist strategies and interactions rather than the differences and divisions between men. Although I challenged the assumption that women were always and automatically disadvantaged within organisations, showing how some women achieved power and success, as Barnes et al. (2000) noted, I neglected the *gendered* power relations between men, focusing rather on differences in their *class* backgrounds and their cultural capital. Even in the interviews with men the dominant discourse was about women, as I asked men their views of women, about the way in which men saw the relative advantages and disadvantages of femininity, about new styles of management practice and forms of daily interaction which re-valued 'feminine' ways of being. However, behind this dominant thread in the work, the men also spoke directly, as well as in comparison to their women colleagues, about themselves as men, about the way in which their own workplace persona was related to their masculine identities in other arenas and their hopes for the future. Re-reading the transcripts with a more explicit focus on men, it became apparent that there was an interesting sub-discourse about masculinities, about men's relationships to other men as well as with their women colleagues and co-workers. As well as the hegemonic, and so more explicit discourse of masculine superiority, differences between men and masculinities are also woven into the discourses and practices of merchant banks. While the dominant culture and practices of an organisation may be based on the collective power of men, this clearly does not rule out differentiation and tensions amongst men.

Re-analysing interview material is a challenging task. Some of the important details about the interactions between the interviewer and her interviewees are no longer as clear as they were, although I found that I had a surprising fresh recollection of many of those interviews, that I had carried out. However, a more problematic issue is re-reading an interview to search for information that was not the main focus of the initial study. I want, therefore, to offer the rest of the paper more as an indication of what might be interesting questions to explore in a study explicitly designed to explore the bases of interactions between managers, rather than as a set of definitive findings. The work was, of course, a case study of three organisations that were chosen to uncover some of the class distinctions between banks as institutions. The opinions and practices uncovered are therefore, as is the case in all case studies,

particular to those places at that time (the early/mid 1990s in London). My comments are also provisional as they rely on a single research strategy – the in-depth, unstructured interview. What men say, especially to women interviewers, may differ from how they behave, perhaps especially in their interactions with men, although it also seems likely that male interviews might be more guarded in what they say about their attitudes towards and interactions with their women colleagues. In the early 1990s, banks were beginning to introduce equal opportunities policies and to think more seriously about personnel and human relations training. However, most of the senior men who were interviewed neither had female colleagues nor had they participated in any training programmes that dealt with questions of gender-awareness in, for example, recruitment and appraisal. None of the banks, which were generous enough to grant me this degree of access to their employees, were prepared to allow me to observe everyday social practices nor more formal types of interaction, such as recruitment and promotion interviews or training sessions. Important ethnographic work⁶ remains to be undertaken here by researchers who have greater powers of persuasion, or more luck in the access granted to them.

The 'findings' reported below, therefore, are more in the nature of some speculative indications of avenues that might repay further investigation in a study of men's relationships with other men in the particular world of merchant banking and, indeed, in other organisations and institutions. In what follows, I focus solely on men's relationships to other men, ignoring the strategies that men adopt in managing women.

4. Multiple masculinities in merchant banking

In merchant banking, social status, as well as appropriate gendered forms of identity and behaviour, is related to location and occupational position, constructing a class-based as well as a gendered hierarchy of masculinities. The pecking order takes something like the following form:⁷ (1) corporate finance/investment management; (2) money making – dealing trading, sales and analysis; (3) IT and other support functions – legal,

⁶ Ellen Hertz's (1998) splendid ethnography of the Shanghai stock market provides a model to develop.

⁷ Both categories 1 and 2 are the most highly valued as they are the money making parts of banking. Their position might be equally well reversed as it is difficult to rank the generally bourgeois and 'cultured' atmosphere of corporate banking where the currency is advice against the spectacular or carnivalesque nature of direct money making in trading and dealing. Some of this visceral excitement, however, has disappeared as banks have moved to screen-based trading and a more technical culture.

accounts etc.; (4) the settlement offices, or what many of my interviewees disparagingly referred to as ‘the sausage factory’ or ‘lowest of the, although below this is; (5) all other support staff: messengers, caterers etc. Here, I shall focus on the hegemonic masculinities in the corporate finance divisions and the ‘defensive’ masculinities of men working in categories three to five.

In my earlier work, I distinguished between a set of patriarchal attitudes, held by senior managers in corporate finance divisions and two versions of what I termed young princehood. Whereas the characteristics of the patriarchs closely paralleled Collinson and Hearn’s (1994) description of paternalism, the masculinities of younger men fell into two distinctive patterns, based on their embodied performances in the workplace. There, I distinguished corporate bankers from money makers which is a gender identity riven by class distinctions.⁸ I shall, therefore, forbear to return to the distinction and in this paper, I shall concentrate instead on the gendered relationships between male managerial staff and between managers and the male employees whom they manage.

5. Emotion, desire and seduction at work

One of the main achievements of the ‘new’ organisational analyses has been their critique of the assumption of the rational basis of workplace interaction, although as Roper (1996) noted ‘some of the post-war classics did depict management as an emotional activity’ (p. 211) (see for example, Dalton, 1959; Gouldner, 1955; Kanter, 1997 whose classic study perhaps marks the beginning of the new wave’). Kanter (1977) in her path-breaking study of a US corporation, suggested that one of the ways in which women were excluded was through the development of a ‘masculine ethic’ that represented managers in tough, rational and abstract terms – the

classic non-emotional organisational man of the times. However, this construction obscures the emotional and intimate relationships that develop between workers in organisations in their everyday social interactions. As Hochschild (1983) argued in her influential study *The Managed Heart* emotional labour is a key part of servicing occupations. What Hochschild so vividly demonstrated is that emotional labour was often feminised and upheld a gender division of labour in which women were subordinate workers. While she hinted at men’s participation in emotional labour, especially in the role of managers, she left unexplored the extent to which men themselves undertake emotional labour and how this affects their position in an organisation.

Since the early 1990s, a growing number of analysts have begun to investigate men’s emotional labour (Flam, 1990a,b; Hearn, 1993; Roper, 1994a). In this new work, however, the relationship between emotions and desires is problematic⁹ as the terms are too often used interchangeably and conflated with the concept of homosocial desire. Hearn, who is a key theorist in the field of masculinity and organisation, suggested that ‘the place of organisations in men’s lives is contradictory. They may offer status and meaning and threat and competition to men, as well as acting as circuits or pyramids of men’s (suppressed) desire for men’ (Hearn, 1992, p. 205). This is a useful recognition of the complexity of place of waged work in the social construction of identity, one which perhaps has been more evident in analyses of the ways in which femininity and waged work are related, compared with over-simple assertions of the significance of employment in the social construction of masculinity. However, what Hearn leaves unclarified is the social construction of desire in the workplace. Here work on male bonding in dominantly heterosexual interactions/sites (such as the sports field, the army etc.), where the boundaries between heterosexual and homosexual desire are blurred and/or transgressed, is provocative (see Simpson, 1994). The distinction between particular masculine desires is not a binary one, but rather a continuum. Paralleling Adrienne Rich’s (1984) notion of the lesbian continuum, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has argued that there is a ‘continuity between men promoting the interests of other men and men loving other men’ (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 3). In his work, on men’s relations with other men in managerial positions in a management college in Australia, Roper (1996) has drawn on Sedgwick’s notion of a continuum to explore their social interactions as a series of complex and fluid interactions. To capture the range from promotion to desire in men’s regard for and promotion of

⁸ A recent fascinating illustration of the popular (mis)understanding of this distinction is provided by an analysis of the treatment of the film version of Nick Leeson’s autobiography – *Rogue Trader*. When the film came out in 1999, Leeson was played by Ewan McGregor instead of Hugh Grant, who had originally been suggested for the part, in a complete misreading of the class divisions between corporate financiers and traders. Grant, who has played on his close resemblance to an upper class twit in innumerable movies, might more realistically have personified the public school/stuffed shirt masculinity of the corporate financiers of Barings Bank who stood aside and let Leeson be characterised as a single ‘bad apple’ when the losses were revealed (McDowell, 1997; Tickell, 1996) but, with his media characterisation of charming hesitancy, Grant could never have metamorphosed successfully into an East London grammar school boy who took risks. This distinction between the aggressive, embodied money makers and traders and the smooth advisers who are also money makers is well-known – the stuff of academic and more popular texts (Lewis, 1988, 1991; Thrift, 1994; Leyshon and Thrift, 1997) as well as celluloid representations (see for example *Wall Street* as well as *Rogue Trader*).

⁹ I should like to thank one of the referees for pointing out this in my work and so making me think harder about how the terms are used interchangeably by others.

other men, Roper rejected the earlier term ‘male homosociability’ used by organisational theorists (see for example Morgan, 1981; Savage and Witz, 1993). Despite its utility in its recognition of the structural mechanisms through which men both reproduce themselves in their own image and construct managerial practices which create ‘a close and gendered circle’ (Witz and Savage, p. 15), Roper suggests that the term homosociability insufficiently acknowledges ‘the aspects of desire that give male bonding in management its peculiar intensity’ (Roper 1996, p. 212) and he replaces it with the term ‘homosociality’.

Whether and how to distinguish between emotion and desire or to place the interactions between men on a continuum are difficult issues to address, although perhaps the very purpose of emphasising the idea of a continuum is to deny the differences between forms of desire. It seems, though, that to adequately explore the intimate practices of management, innovative forms of research methodology might have to be developed based on trust. However, in his study of an educational institution Roper relied primarily on the reported attitudes and behaviour of two informants, although he was able to supplement their interviews with participant observation in meetings and seminars as he was a member of the college for a two month period. Roper argued that management in the department, while outwardly relying on the rational ‘masculine ethic’ also involved a ‘shadow structure’ in which men were emotive subjects. Specifically, Roper identified the importance of sexualised play in interactions, expressed in physical appearances, bodily movements and unconscious mimicry that is based on seduction, as well as the ways in which leadership strategies and succession between men depend on seduction. In re-reading my own interviews, therefore I specifically focused on questions about appearance and leadership in both formal and informal settings, attempting to link the notion of homosociality to the different managerial discourses identified by Collinson and Hearn that I outlined earlier in the paper. In the re-analyses that follow, I hope to raise, rather than answer, questions, about the nature of masculinity and interactions between men at work as a potential area for fruitful future research, as masculine authority in organisations is increasingly challenged by new managerial practices and the rising number of women in many professional occupations, as well as a pervasive social anxiety about masculinity.

6. The gendered construction of corporate finance managers

In *Capital Culture* (McDowell, 1997) I suggested that the relationship between senior and more junior men in corporate finance divisions might be represented as fa-

ther/son relationships, which I portrayed in terms of power and succession. If I were now to characterise these men in terms of Collinson and Hearn’s fivefold categorisation, the older men would, in the main, be paternalists, and some, though few, authoritarians, whereas the younger men are both careerists, reflecting the changing style of managerial practices in banks and other organisations over the last two or so decades, and informalists. However, in retrospect I think that I underplayed the subtext of desire that Roper and Sedgwick suggest structures all-male relationships and intimacies. By emphasising the power between male corporate financiers who were unequal in the hierarchy – the father/son, patriarch/prince relationship – I under-emphasised the relationships between men in the same position – brothers perhaps to continue the familial analogy. It may be that here, despite the positioning of all corporate financiers in formally dominantly heterosexual settings – both the corporate boardrooms and offices as well as male drinking and sporting clubs – their social interactions nevertheless involve potentially erotic desires, as Roper has suggested. By erotic, I understand Roper to mean feelings of love between men that, in the analogy with the lesbian continuum, are not manifested in explicitly sexual exchanges. The desires are more ambiguous and ambivalent.

6.1. Masculine desires

As I have argued elsewhere, in the interviews that I carried out with managers in the corporate finance divisions of three merchant banks in the City of London there was a consistent emphasis throughout the interviews on the significance of clothes, weight and appearance, a focus that Roper noted as significant element of homosocial¹⁰ interactions and as evidence of desire in his study of an academic department, and which Mort (1988) identified as crucial in an earlier and classic study of masculinity. Perhaps one of the most revealing comments about clothes that seems to illus-

¹⁰ Interestingly in one of the few explorations of masculinities by geographers, Tickell and Peck (1996) also use the term ‘homosocial’ to refer to the environment of local business and politics. They suggest it is composed of ‘the shared knowledges which underpin masculine ideologies’ (p. 610) and identify these as including ‘a passion for sport, the ability to share a (sexist) joke or the use of masculine metaphors of aggressive behaviour and physical labour (p. 610–611). Although they do not explicitly discuss male desire, it is interesting that the quotation that they use to illustrate homosocial interactions is about the ‘chemistry that developed between the individuals’. More recently Tickell (personal communication) has expressed reservations about Roper’s identification of homosocial desire as the basis of male bonding suggesting that he perhaps over-interprets his interview results in terms of his ‘own Oedipal drama’ – a phrase from Roper’s (1994b) book: *Masculinity and the organisation man from 1945*.

trate the continuum in male homosociality was made by a manager of his subordinate:

There's somebody who works for me who is only 22 years old, and you know, he has a very short haircut, but apart from that, I mean I've seen him on a weekend and I know he's a young guy basically, and he's very sharp and he's good.

But on a weekend . . . !

I'm sure if Robert (the overall director of their section) saw him on a weekend with a bandanna on his head and so on, then it would be a whole different ball game . . . and his two earrings and everything else . . . (previously quoted in McDowell, 1997, p. 190).

It seems to me that this passage embodies an element of desire as well as envy on the part of the manager. This is partly in the intonation of the words 'But on a weekend!' that I have tried to capture in the layout and punctuation.¹¹ The tone was one of incredulity, inviting me as the interviewer to share the senior man's amazement at the outre appearance of his subordinate compared to his conventional everyday workplace appearance. I wondered, but did not ask, how he knew what his co-worker wore at the weekend. I suggest that this careful observation of a subordinate's different styles at work and outside reveals something of his own homosocial desires, at least as the term is defined by Roper.

From the interviews, it became clear that men, as well as women, engage in covert sexual displays through dress, in which public performances – men watching other men – are significant. Almost every male interviewee commented on the significance of clothing and the ways in which certain men were able to 'personalise' or subvert the uniform dark suit and pale shirt, through colourful accessories for example. It was clear that men are aware of each others' style and image and often teased each other about weight gain or loss. The men also often spoke of each other in a language of intimacy and/or affection. As I shall demonstrate below, men spoke about their work in terms of passion but they also

referred to each other in a noticeably fond way. Although there was no explicit talk of homoerotic desire – I interviewed only a single out gay man who was extremely cautious in the interview – several men referred to others as being 'great to work with', a huge help to me', 'I loved working with x' and so forth. This is not to deny, however, that the dominant discourse of the workplace was one of heterosexuality, with women being the major focus of attention and butt of jokes and wordplay that too often breached the distinction between jocularity and harassment.

Homoerotic behaviour, as well as talk of desire, is also perhaps more common in male-dominated workplaces and organisations than is commonly recognised. It is often disguised in horseplay or initiation rituals, which, at the same time, often co-exist with homophobic language and behaviour. As Sedgwick noted, homophobia is a way of maintaining the distinction or cultural divide between heterosexuality and homosexuality, a distinction which she argues is actually false or untenable. However, as she suggests, hostile distinctions need to be maintained and revealed as they are 'the effective force, the glue, even when its manifestation is hostility or hatred, that shapes relationships of empowerment' (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 27 and see also Simpson, 1994). As I described in more detail elsewhere (McDowell, 1997), overtly heterosexual horseplay, especially in the dealing and trading arenas, is common in banks, in which homophobic speech and actions are both implicit and explicit. In the corporate offices and board rooms, which are the focus of this part of this paper, and in the back offices, analysed below, physical horseplay was not an evident part of everyday social interaction.

6.2. *Emotional work at work*

Are men involved in managing or controlling intimacy and emotions at work? In the earlier literature about men and management, organisations were often seen as sites of rationality, as arenas from which emotions are purged: an image which is still prevalent in some current feminist research (see for example Massey's, 1997, characterisation of high tech companies). Men's lack of emotional expressivity was contrasted with women's purported lack of emotional control and/or their work as 'emotion managers' and 'emotional labourers' (Hochschild, 1983). But as Hearn (1992) has argued this contrast confuses 'the myth of organisational monoculture' which represents men in a singular or unitary fashion as non-emotional with their actual daily social practices and experiences. Indeed, as I noted above, Hochschild recognised that men, as well as women, perform emotional labour at work. 'For each gender a different portion of the heart

¹¹ In a personal communication, Adam Tickell raised an extremely interesting point about how to present interview based material. He noted that 'I strongly believe that – unless we are making bad mistakes – usually our theoretically-derived analysis is right here but it is difficult to write this up'. He suggested that, as he found in writing the 'Manchester men' paper (Tickell and Peck, 1996), sometimes the quotes don't quite live up to what the authors hope they show. Like Tickell, I believe that understanding often develops not only in the interviews but also in interrogating the transcripts afterwards, and a combination of 'you had to be there' to know what was going on and 'I wish I could go and explore that a bit more now' often informs the analysis.

is enlisted for commercial use' (Hochschild, 1983, pp. 163–164).

For managers, a great deal of emotional labour is invested in controlling, motivating and getting the best out of their 'subjects', including both their team and their clients. The strategies of control and motivation vary, but most managers adopt a mixture of the five masculine managerial styles outlined by Collinson and Hearn, which notably excluded an equitable or egalitarian style of management which has sometimes been designated a 'feminine' managerial style (Helgeson, 1990; Marshall, 1984 but see also Calas et al., 1991 on the dangers of essentialism in describing certain styles of management to women). The different strategies Collinson and Hearn distinguished are notably reliant on male relationships based on power and competitive domination, in informal as well as formal circumstances, neglecting the ways in which they might be underpinned by Roper's 'shadow structure' where emotional management is also important. In my initial analysis of the interviews with corporate financiers, I emphasised management through the control of everyday behaviour – controlling jokes and pranks, for example, – through advice – advising their subordinates on clothes and body image, for example, – as well as through the establishment of informal camaraderie in sporting and other social events. But as Calas and Smircich (1991) argued, based on their re-reading of the classic post-war texts of organizational leadership, 'seduction is also embodied in the discourse' (p. 570) and it is 'a form of seduction that thrives on sameness' (p. 571) – that is relationships of men with men.

I draw on three interviews with corporate financiers to illustrate the importance of emotional work and different management styles in personal interactions in the area of merchant banking that might be expected to be the most rational and disinterested. These interviews are characteristic of many I undertook in corporate divisions. The first interview is with a corporate finance executive, then aged 25, who had attended an all-boys public school and then studied classics at Durham University; the second and third are with more senior employees, both assistant directors are ten years older than the first man, but from similar class backgrounds. The first interviewee talks about his experience of the contrasting management styles of assistant directors, while the latter interviewees comment on how they manage their teams.

I first asked the executive about his recruitment to the bank and what sort of characteristics he felt made a good corporate financier.

They were looking for someone who was going to be presentable to clients. It was your personal skills that were most important. You also have to be a team player.

It's a male dominated environment and a sort of bonding occurs. Your humour is the same as your sex. It's a very public schoolboy environment.

Here informality as a masculine managerial style is clearly evident. It might also be argued that this extract, in the talk of bonding for example, represents a version of homosocial desire. Whether it might also be argued that homosexual repression is evident, which is, as Lynn Segal (1990) has suggested, 'central to male bonding' (p. 159), is not clear to me but it does seem possible to locate this form of interaction centrally within the conceptual notion of a continuum of desire. More detailed exploration of the ways in which bonding occurs in different circumstances is needed and it is possible that this sort of investigation is not easily accessible to a woman researcher.

The interviewee then expanded in a most honest and open way about his opinion of his own attributes:

It's important to have a certain arrogance but not too much because that just irritates people but you have to have a little bit of cockiness. Above all you've got to be able to work in a team and initially you have got to be able to accept the fact that you are going to be wrong a lot . . . It's shattering to start with and that's tough . . . again it's sort of how much character have you got at the . . . you've got to be a helluva character at the end of the day.

You have got to be a tough man in this world. You've got to be prepared to take a lot of knocks, to be ridiculed to be made to look stupid. It's not – it can be pretty oppressive.

I don't think I have got the genius, the sparky ideas – whatever it is that makes an exceptional corporate financier.

Here the bonding of an informal masculinity seems tempered by a more authoritarian or paternalistic style of management – a man has to be tough, but also able to accept that he is wrong. It seems clear too from this interchange that this man feels that he will not measure up to the idealised requirement of the best corporate financiers – he lacks that particular spark that is expected.

However, he then began to explain in detail significant differences in the management styles of the assistant directors of the teams he had worked in since joining the bank and the effects they had on his own sense of self and his confidence:

When I first came I had two very able assistant directors. They were single-minded, intolerant of people who were learning. I changed teams and I

walked into such a different culture. Really the culture depends on the ADs in your team and the sort of environment they create. We have someone who is as driven and motivated as the first AD but who is a much better manager of people. I'm now much more confident of my ability. I've got respect from the AD and consequently I enjoy it so much more. In the previous team there was no bonding at all – no atmosphere except one of oppressiveness and I used to feel I had this sword of Damocles over my head waiting . . . For me self-confidence is possibly the most important thing in my working life. Just to know that what you're doing is what is expected, and you're doing it correctly. I feel my writing is good, my numeracy skills are good and I'm not frightened when somebody says to me do something. I don't think, 'hell what if I get this wrong', which is something I used to feel.

This extract makes clear that the emotional labour undertaken by the managers of the second team this man joined transformed his working life. As I did not ask who initiated the move, it is impossible to judge whether the more authoritarian managers wielding their swords realised that their impact was counter-productive in this case.

In the second extract, from a later interview, this time with an Assistant Director, but not one of men involved with the previous interviewee, the importance of emotional labour by men for men and mentoring of men by men is extremely clear.

I want people to play as a team but who at the same time have got initiative, can be left to get on with doing their own thing provided they can do that responsibly . . . I want the department to move ahead as quickly as it can, there's a lot to be done but a stable team is happier and happy people work to whatever is required. I want people who are ambitious too.

. . .

To get on in an organisation you have to be known by certain people. You have to have people to sponsor you to push you up.

It would be interesting to explore this 'need to be known' though more ethnographic work, watching daily interactions between subordinates and their managers and the ways in which strategies are developed by individuals to make themselves known. Here the ideas about seduction and succession, only partially explored in Roper's case study, might provide a useful framework for analysing the interactions.

Turning to the interview with another Assistant Director of Corporate Finance further ways of motivating a team were uncovered:

I work as a team – we have early morning meetings to sort of swap ideas, a reactive meeting, what people did yesterday. At the other end of the day I spend about an hour wandering about. I think you can pick up a lot by just wandering around. You can learn a lot about what the rest of the department is up to.

It would be hard to classify this sort of wandering work in a cost-based, rational task-oriented framework but it clearly brings (unquantifiable) rewards. This Director forcefully argued that the people in his group need to be

'team players – willing to do things again and again and again until they get them right and won't say I'm going home now because I've got to do *x*, *y* and *z* . . . You have to have a certain love for it. There are people here who really do have a passionate love for being here late at night, it doesn't worry them . . . but the slightly tricky area is when somebody does have that passion, and they are working with someone who has more passion, so you actually get to the situation where somebody feels he is working his guts out but he is still not doing enough, or he's still not putting enough hours in, or that sort of thing and that is quite wearying – I've been in that situation myself.

There is an interesting combination here of an authoritarian form of management – this director had high expectations and his team had to reach the required standards, through repetition of tasks if necessary – and yet they also had to have passion. I wonder whether this contradictory set of attributes are, in fact a common attribute of authoritarianism, or whether the strategies adopted here fall outside the strict definition of authoritarianism developed by Collinson and Hearn (1994). The complicated and personal comment about degrees of passion is difficult to assess but seems to confirm the complexity of emotional management and the fine judgements that need to be made to balance the individual efforts of team members. Indeed, the interviewee expanded on this by commenting on who would not fit into the type of team he was trying to build:

'The sort of person who doesn't fit are people who sort of fire off on their own, loose cannons I suppose you'd call them. People who think that they know it all, they'll do something without talking to their client about it when actually the answer is probably something completely different.

This AD seems to combine a number of the management styles identified by Collinson and Hearn (1991) As well as a version of authoritarian personalism, he also developed some of the strategies of informalism to weld his group together. He clearly has a passionate attachment to his work and to his team, referring a ‘passionate love’ for the work in the extract above and later in the interview he reiterated his attachment to work in similar terms: ‘at the moment I actually love what I am doing’. Whether this is an example of homosociality, however, is debatable. This man clearly felt strongly about both his own work and that of his team and was prepared to undertake a great deal of emotional work to achieve high standards, but the expressions of passion and love are task-related rather than specific references to his colleagues, despite the argument that this type of interactive work involves an embodied performance (Leidner, 1994).

When asked what the criteria of success for younger men are he gave an interesting answer:

Erm, taking as much of the workload from above you, i.e that which your director would be expected to do, doing it for him and presenting it in the answers so that he can then sort of review it and skate through it. Getting things right. Giving good advice, cultivating the relationships, erm, identifying market targets which are relevant and meeting them.

Here, it seems to me, is some support for the argument that succession involves the cultivation of a personal relationship in which caring for a superior (albeit in a taken-for-granted way) is part of a continuum of emotional connections that may embody desire for the other. While I may have underplayed the extent of emotional work in relationship between men in my earlier publications, I want to re-emphasise the utility of the familial metaphor I developed. Emotional labour and support in the corporate finance divisions of the three then-English owned merchant banks in which I interviewed is undertaken in a familial atmosphere where ‘sons’ support their fathers and vice versa. Responsibility worked both ways in this team as both the more junior and the more senior men provided support for and care of each other. Indeed, this man noted that, after a rather flat period in the bank in the recession years of the early 1990s, ‘ADs have had to work hard to keep the jobs interesting, and focused and relevant . . . people now feel that there are things going on which is very important’. This comment shows that serious work had to be undertaken to ensure that the team felt that its work was valuable and so to retain their commitment to the joint ‘family’ project.

As well as mutual support among men in a team, individual mentoring of a junior by a man in a more

senior position is common practice in corporate finance divisions. This mentoring might also be defined as an example of male desire or homosocial behaviour in the workplace, although, interestingly, it is typically only when cross-gender mentoring is considered that overt questions are raised about desire and mentoring is seen as an expression of sexuality. This is particularly so when the mentor is a man in a senior position mentoring a female subordinate. A number of women interviewees expressly mentioned that they took care to avoid male mentorship because of its association with the potential development of an explicit sexual relationship between co-workers that was regarded as inappropriate. But men routinely mentor other men in merchant banks and develop close personal relations with them. I re-read all the corporate finance interviews to trace the ways in which mentoring was referred to but I found few examples of the explicit expression of discursive desire. Instead mentoring was more likely to be referred to as an example of informal management style, where sporting links and, especially, old school connections were the basis of mentoring relationships. This demonstrates the importance of interpreting masculinities at work through class and status lenses as well as explicitly gendered relations between men. If masculinities at work are multiple, then so too are the bases of their construction and maintenance. Indeed, as Roper himself warns, the current literary turn in organisational ‘threatens to conflate all manner of intimacies into the category of the sexual. Organisational sexuality has gone from being nowhere to being present even when it is absent’ (Roper, 1996, p. 223).

7. Masculine defensiveness: back office professions and sausage jobs

I want to turn now to management tactics in a different part of the banks. Whereas corporate finance is usually regarded as one of the highest occupations in merchant banking in which a hegemonic white, male and middle class masculinity is the norm, but which nonetheless, as I have shown, involves aspects of homosocial desire and emotional labour, back office support functions have a lower status and correspondingly lower financial reward. As an interviewee in corporate finance explained, on joining the bank he was anxious not to ‘end up in personnel or marketing or jobs which weren’t seen as “real” jobs’, whereas another interviewee who had started in a back office position but who had successfully made the leap into an analyst’s job talked about how hard it was to escape ‘the stigma of well, you know, he started in back office’. Back office occupations are in fact varied in terms of reward and status and include accountancy, taxation, information systems, computing and settlement divisions, dealing with seem-

ingly unemotional aspects of financial and legal record keeping, as well as the more ‘people’ oriented jobs such as personnel and marketing, and, in some banks, an archives department. In the professional and semi-professional occupations there is, therefore, a hierarchical structure depending on qualifications, age and experience. In most of the back office sections, however, but in personnel particularly, women are more numerous than in the money-making departments which exacerbates the low status of the positions. But in all the support departments, men, whatever their level of seniority, tend to be seen as inferior to their male colleagues elsewhere, and so they are to a greater or lesser extent, as a tax specialist explained, ‘not part of the investment banking culture. We’re servicing it’. The role of support staff might therefore be regarded as a ‘feminine’ one – support and service, and exclusion from the arenas of real action and power, although the emphasis on hard technical skills in financial departments mitigated the perceived inferiority of these sections and enabled the men in these sections, as I argue later, to interpret their work as congruent with essentially masculine traits. Throughout the interviews, men in finance and in accountancy, as well as in more mundane occupations, often compared their own work and the demands made on them in defensive comparisons with money making occupations. ‘Our work is not as tough, but . . .’ was a frequent refrain, supporting Hollway’s (1996) distinction of a defensive masculinity in organisations.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that emotional labour by managers is also significant in ensuring the smooth functioning of these departments. While an Assistant Director of the Tax Department said that in his job ‘technical competence should be uppermost, getting on with people runs it close’. And he insisted that in these back office occupations ‘you have to be imaginative and assertive. You really do have to be switched on’.

Another key support section, albeit less prestigious than accounts and taxation, is the settlements office which ensures payments due to the bank are made. This department deals with leasing, guarantees and so forth. While this is an essentially clerical department and tends to employ non-graduates, its function is essential and the work is often undertaken under pressure. Here, too team building and people management is crucial and emotions are often high. This is a senior settlements clerk at Bluebros explaining the social relations in his department:

You need a sense of humour, definitely, yeah, I think . . . not strong individuals exactly, it’s difficult to say really. We’re not averse to gently digging at people and what have you, and everyone takes it and gives it back, as it were. And somebody who is used to mucking down to it, not someone who wants to sit around all day.

In another interview, this time with a man who was Settlements Supervisor, the significance of emotional labour in motivating and managing the team became extremely clear:

I’ve got one man working for me and I shout at him quite a lot. I push him because I know he’s going to be an ideal trader sooner or later. You know I’m gonna push him to do it . . . I can tell him and I can tell him in no uncertain terms and he will take it and it’s forgotten. Whereas the other chap who works for me, you tell him in a stern manner and you may as well forget it for the rest of the day because he will constantly be thinking about what he’s done wrong . . . This second man he’s not a career person, he’s here for a job.

This man seems to have a more differentiated management style than the authoritarian ADs that so terrified the executive in the previous section. He used threats where he judged it appropriate, but empathy and consultation too, where they were more likely to produce positive results. Overall, however, the managers of support teams tended towards an egalitarian management style, engaging in team building and consultation. This manager in an information systems section is typical:

I tend to spend a reasonable amount of time talking with the team, erm, I think, erm, I like communication and I don’t like people being kept in the dark, because I honestly don’t see what it achieves except anxiety.

Later he was even more explicit:

My role now is, very much . . . I feel . . . getting the team happy, dealing with their problems and understanding them. I feel I am giving people user satisfaction but also making my team happy and achieving the results.

This managerial approach is distinct from the five outlined by Collinson and Hearn, although it has some parallels with both careerism and informalism, where a sort of team solidarity at work is constructed, in the main between men.

The financial departments in the support services – tax, accounts, IT and settlements – tend to be dominated by men – a dominance explained by one respondent as an historical legacy as employment turnover in these sections, especially in the settlements division is relatively low. The fringe benefits offered by investment banks – especially good mortgage deals and generous pensions – partially compensate for relatively low basic pay (especially when compared to the ‘money makers’) and encourage loyalty to the organisation. The

dominance of men also enabled employees in these sections to interpret what were often essentially repetitive clerical tasks as masculine, in similar ways to the insurance salesmen studied by Leidner (1993) and the newspaper compositors interviewed by Cockburn (1983). As these authors have argued, it is the gender of the employees rather than intrinsic characteristics of the work that is often important in gendering jobs. The men in these back office sections tend to be sober and serious, rational and technically competent; there is little of the brash camaraderie of the traders and dealers nor the 'high culture' informal associations of corporate bankers and far less emphasis on the embodied appearance of different masculinities. None of the respondents in these occupations, for example, referred either to the personal appearance of their colleagues nor to their work in terms of love or desire, although as I demonstrated above, emotion management is a common part of managerial practice. But for many of the male managers, work is just a job, for some, with limited career prospects. However these jobs also entail considerable company loyalty, in part because of the excellent conditions of work and fringe benefits offered by merchant banks – unless, of course, an unforeseen crisis hits the bank, as happened to Barings and others in the 1990s. The managers in these sections are perhaps closer to the standard or traditional view of masculinity as a disembodied suit and their defensive position as 'others' denies them the more flamboyant versions of masculinity and more flexible and ambivalent styles of management open to men in the key money-making sections.

8. Servicing the organisation: masculine other Others

There is a third type of masculinity in merchant banks that remains to be explored. Despite the privatization and out-sourcing of services such as catering and cleaning, many merchant banks remain large employers of manual workers, many of them men. If the professional back office occupations in banks are riven with an uncertain masculinity for male employees, as a result of their inferiority when compared either with the hegemonic rationality of corporate financiers or the embodied machismo of traders and dealers (not discussed in this paper but see McDowell, 1997), then the low status non-professional jobs in merchant banks raises a different set of issues about the multiplicity of masculinities in organisations. The men in the catering departments, in cleaning, security and in messenger services are in working class occupations but not in the sort of heroic manual occupations that used to confer hegemonic embodied (as opposed to rational managerial) masculinity on working class men at work. These men in menial positions, as men, have more in common with the back office men in accounts and settlements in

the sense that they both service the main functionaries of the banks but their class status is different.

Although there are a growing number of case studies of manual occupations in contemporary organisations (Allen and Henry, 1996, have looked at some of these jobs in the city of London for example, and also see Gabriel, 1988; Leidner, 1993) the main focus of this work has been on the precarious nature of the employment conditions and practices rather than on the variations in the social construction of masculinity. Allen and Henry (1996) have hinted at the ways in which male managers of cleaning teams imbue the tasks with idealised masculine notions of strength and skill but a range of questions remain to be asked of men in 'servicing' occupations. These include an investigation of the ways in which masculine dignity is preserved in what initially appear as feminised tasks, as well as issues about management practices and the impact of new forms of human relations management that attempt to transform men in these occupations from labour or 'hands' to 'sentimental workers' (Hollway, 1996). In an interesting study in the steel industry, Bacon (1999) found that the gains for workers were illusory as the management aimed for greater compliance, work intensification and the suppression of trade union activities through the rhetoric of 'new human relations'. Male employment in 'traditional' industries such as the steel industry, however, is declining and service sector employment for men, in which 'emotional work' is of even greater significance, is an expanding part of employment opportunities in many parts of the UK and in the inner areas of US cities. Questions about the construction and management of masculinity in organisations are, therefore, assuming a growing importance for analysts of employment change and offer an interesting area for comparative work. However, as I interviewed only tiny numbers of low-skilled employees in banks, I am unable to do more than speculate about some of the implications for the social construction of multiple masculinities in 'servicing' jobs; this is, however, an important arena for research as the bottom end of the economy is increasingly dominated by 'feminine' occupations.

9. Conclusions

The increasing dominance of advanced industrial by service sector employment, at both the top and bottom ends of the wage and status distribution is connected to an interesting regendering of occupations and employees, as well as a new emphasis on the culture of organisations (Marcus, 1998). As Tickell and Peck (1996) concluded, in their study of local governance, regendering is not driven by, nor drives, restructuring, whether economic or political, but is 'part of what is a complex, multi-layered and complex transition' (612).

Part of the impetus for this transition lies in women's own rising educational credentials, in new forms of work and in changing managerial and recruitment practices in a climate more open to debates about equality. It is also connected, however, to changing labour market opportunities for men, especially for those with few skills and credentials and for a diverse group of older men who have become economically 'inactive' for a range of reasons. Further, the focus by the current Labour Government on labour market participation as *the* defining criterion of citizenship for an increasingly inclusive section of the population has led to a re-emphasis on the importance of employment participation. It might be too instrumental to suggest that the extensive literature about gender and employment is directly connected to these material changes but there is little doubt about the current material and discursive significance of the gendering and regendering of organisations, employment practices and occupations. The notion of a singular dominant masculinity informing the discursive construction of organisations has begun to be replaced by a more complex, ambiguous and fluid theorisation of the social construction of gendered identities in the workplace and of workplace-based social practices. This is paralleled by a similar shift in the understanding of the organisation. An earlier focus on the rational basis of organisational behaviour and principles of scientific management is currently being replaced by theorisations of organisations as complex and fluid institutions that are the sites of struggles for power and domination as well pleasure and desire (Schoenberger, 1996; Marcus, 1998). Within organisations, within the growing emphasis on the notion of 'corporate culture', the human relations departments seem to be achieving a new significance, no longer 'just the 'soft framework' for the discourse of liberal experts . . . [but] rather, values, norms, collective ethos, authority in personal relations, and participatory structures of groups now seem to be a salient and very serious frame of thinking for corporate managers at all levels' (Marcus, 1998, p. 5). In this context, new ways of relating to colleagues, be they men or women, are beginning to be demanded, replacing older masculinist and hierarchical forms of organisation and presenting interesting new questions to researchers.

In this paper, I focused solely on the deconstruction of that dominant rational idealisation of masculinity that purportedly lay behind both bureaucratic organisations such as the Civil Service and knowledge-based institutions such as universities in order to argue that masculinity, like femininity, is a contested, complex and contradictory construction. While the relationships between caring and emotional work in the workplace and the social construction of feminine identities and inferiority are now well-recognised and documented in numerous case-studies, the ways in which men undertake emotional work and care for, as well as desire, each

other at work are less well-explored. Here I have drawn on a typology outlined by Collinson and Hearn (1994; 1996a,b) and other recent studies by the 'new wave' organisational theorists to extend my original two-fold distinction between male employees in a small sample of merchant banks in the city of London.

Although this work is limited, like all case studies by its particularity, and, in this specific instance by being not only based solely on interviews but also in part on a re-analysis of interview material, I believe there are some significant methodological and theoretical implications that flow from the study. The first methodological point to make is about the interpretation of interviews. As is now widely accepted by many geographers, especially those who have been influenced by the 'cultural turn' and those who are interested in the exploration of complexity through a range of essentially qualitative methods, the interpretation of 'data' is always theory-laden and is a complex and provisional process. Clearly interview material cannot be infinitely rethought – the initial aims of the investigation restrict that – but, as I hope I have shown here, it is possible to return to material and to look at it again from a slightly different perspective. I was pushed to do this by the combination of popular debates about a crisis in masculinity, the publication of new organisational studies and a challenging assertion from reviewers of my work that I had focused on the multiple construction of femininity to the partial neglect of multiple masculinities.

While I believe that a great deal more interesting work remains to be done on the social construction of gendered identities in the workplace, there is also a broader point to make here and that is connected to the recent debates about the methodological and theoretical strategies adopted by economic geographers. Like Gordon Clark (1998), I strongly endorse the shift from stylized modelling to the development of a greater understanding of the complexity of economic life through what Clark terms the method of 'close dialogue', which is a form of case study research, among many British and American economic geographers. As Amin and Thrift (2000) have noted too, attempting to understand complexity and diversity brings economic geography closer to anthropology, economic sociology and organisational studies than to economics per se just as a focus on daily lives, situated practices and discursive representations of economic structures and institutions leads to greater methodological diversity. In both cases, economic geographers might look with profit to the specific literature about the relationships between gender and economic restructuring, as well as at more general theoretical attempts to come to grips with the relational and multiple construction of femininities and masculinities. While social and cultural geographers have begun to develop exciting links with a range of feminist, post-structural and post-colonial theorists, economic

geographers seem to have a greater reluctance to explore the connections between theories of diversity as it is constructed in different spheres and arenas. When gender is the focus of geographical case studies of restructuring too often the comparison remains a singular one between men and women. If this paper has any overriding purpose, it is to introduce new and exciting work about the complex and contested construction of masculinity in the workplace to a wider audience.

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