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Gendered Structures in Organizations

Tijdens, K.G.

Publication date

1994

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

Gender and organizations - changing perspectives: theoretical considerations and empirical findings

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Tijdens, K. G. (1994). Gendered Structures in Organizations. In J. de Bruijn, & E. Cyba (Eds.), *Gender and organizations - changing perspectives: theoretical considerations and empirical findings* (pp. 153-169). VU University Press.

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6 Gendered Structures in Organizations

Kea G. Tijdens

Department of Comparative Population and Gender Economics
Faculty of Economics and Econometrics
University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Women's work and men's work is highly segregated. Three forms of sex segregation can be distinguished in the labour force: industrial, occupational and hierarchical. Industrial segregation refers to the phenomena whereby men outnumber women for instance in the manufacturing industry, while the opposite holds true for the service sector. Occupational segregation means the unequal distribution of women and men over occupations compared to women's share in the labour force. Hierarchical segregation is the unequal distribution of women and men over job levels. Sex segregation is explained by several theories (see e.g. Rosenfeld 1984; Reskin 1984; Reskin & Hartmann 1986). In human capital theories, in status attainment theories, and in socialization theories, women's labour supply is seen as the main cause of segregation. Employers' demand behaviour is considered the main cause of segregation in economic theories of discrimination, in statistical discrimination theories, and in feminist theories on patriarchy. Most theories focus on occupational segregation, some on hierarchical segregation and only a few on industrial segregation. Hardly any theories exist on interwoven mechanisms between the three forms of sex segregation.

Segregation ratios tend to be higher at disaggregated levels of labour force analysis. This applies especially for occupational segregation which has been investigated for the US (Bielby & Baron 1984), for Sweden (Jonung 1985), and for The Netherlands (Tijdens 1990). To analyze the interweave

of segregational forms organizations - a low disaggregated level - are a proper locus for analysis. This chapter focuses on the three forms of sex segregation in organizations, comparable to the three forms in the labour force as a whole, i.e. departmental, job and hierarchical segregation. The intertwining of these three forms is referred to as the gendered structure in an organization. The main proposition is: how are job segregation, hierarchical segregation, and departmental segregation related to each other? The next section summarizes previous empirical findings and section three provides a theoretical framework. Hypotheses, research method and data are provided in the following four. An overview of female office workers in manufacturing industry -the group under study- is given in section five. Results are presented in sections six and seven. The last section contains the conclusions.

Gendered structures in organizations

Gendered practices in organizations include organizational culture, power assignment, decision-making, etc.. Here, the study of gendered practices is limited to the three forms of sex segregation in organizations, called collectively gendered structures in organizations. This section contains an overview of the empirical findings on gendered structures in organizations. The relationship between the three forms of segregation has only been studied in a few cases, most research focuses on explanations for segregation or on its impact.

Job segregation in the work place is much higher than could be concluded from the overall figures on occupational segregation. In Great Britain, 63% of women work in jobs performed by women exclusively, and 80% of men work in exclusively 'male' jobs (Martin & Roberts 1984). In Canada, the percentage of women in female-dominated jobs is also less than the percentage of men in male-dominated jobs (Chaykowski & Currie 1992). These figures also indicate that women are less likely to enter male jobs than vice versa. Processes of social exclusion are gender biased. Research showed

that women's integration in male-dominated police forces caused more problems than men's integration in female-dominated nursing teams in hospitals (Ott 1985).

Much attention has been paid to the proportion of minorities within groups and the structuring of mutual social relationships within groups (Kanter 1977). Kanter did not acknowledge sex biases in the social relationships, whereas Yoder (1991) states that the minority's behaviour depends very much on the status category he or she belongs to in relation to the majority's status category. However, this applies to special groups, because the majority of workers have colleagues of the same sex only. In Finland, 66% of women and 73% of men work in groups which are composed of one sex (Kauppinen et al. 1988). In the US, the corresponding figure for women is 54% and 70% for men (Treiman & Hartmann 1981).

Some research has been done on the relationship between occupational and departmental segregation. Barker & Downing (1980) argue that women in unskilled or semi-skilled clerical jobs work more often in female-dominated departments, whereas skilled secretaries are likely to work in isolation in male-dominated departments where they have few contacts with their colleagues. Relationships between women's share in organizations and departmental or job segregation have also been studied. If women's share in organizations increases, the chance that they will occupy integrated jobs and/or be employed in integrated departments also increases, but if women's share increases, it is also likely that female-dominated departments emerge (Bielby & Baron 1984).

The impact of occupational segregation on wages has been studied at length. Women in female-dominated jobs earn 6-15% less than women with the same characteristics in other occupations (Sorensen 1989). In the competition-segregation debate on the relationship between labour force composition and wages in occupational groups, a discussion arose on whether the entrance of subordinate groups into occupations would depress the relative income level of the majority, or whether minority groups would not enter due to exclusionary practices, resulting in perfect wage competition within groups (Semyonov & Lewin-Epstein 1989). Effects of marital and

parental history on women's wages are weakest in female-dominated occupations, stronger in integrated occupations, and strongest in male-dominated occupations (Peterson 1989). The wage implications of departmental segregation have been investigated by Chaykowski & Currie (1992). Their findings show that workers in predominantly female bargaining units have more generous leave provisions, but are less likely to have pension coverage than workers in similar predominantly male bargaining units. Finally, industrial segregation explains the magnitude of the gender gap in health insurance coverage in the US (Perman & Stevens 1989).

To summarize, empirical findings show that in organizations women and men are highly segregated along occupational lines as well as along departmental or group lines. Due to exclusionary practices, men work more often in male-only groups than women. Occupational segregation is related to sex-related wage differences; on average women earn less than men, on average women in female-dominated occupations earn less than women in other occupations, and female-dominated departments have more generous leave provisions but less pension coverage than male-dominated departments. Though the mutual relationship between the three forms has not been studied as such, the effects of segregation have been studied to a large extent.

Theorizing segregation in organizations

In organizations three types of sex segregation have been distinguished; departmental or group segregation, job or occupational segregation, and hierarchical or grade segregation. The actors involved in the segregation processes are employers, predominantly male, male employees and their organizations, either trade unions or professional bodies, and female employees and their organizations. There are conflicting interests in the segregation processes among and between the actors. Let us look at these actors.

Employers' behaviour is characterized by conflicting rationalisms. Women's wages are lower than men's, thus employers prefer women due to

lower wage cost. This would imply gender-based wage and employment competition. However, occupational boundaries impede general competition. If for wage policy reasons employers intend to substitute men's labour with women's labour, these occupational boundaries need to be broken down. However, male workers can organize themselves against substitution by strengthening occupational lines. On the other hand, female workers can organize themselves and demand equal pay for equal work by breaking down occupational boundaries. Moreover, occupational boundaries have to be reinforced if the clients of the organization in question prefer stereotyped jobs according to gender. Thus, by reinforcing segregation, employers avoid vulnerability to labour unrest among male workers or client dissatisfaction, but at the same time this limits their possibilities of replacement and they would not meet female workers' demands.

Traditionally, male employees' interests in segregation also have been dual. On the one hand, women's low wages could lead to gender-related wage and employment competition that would benefit women. Male employees could react in two ways, either by demanding higher wages for women agreeing to equal pay for equal work, or they could try to keep women out of their jobs to prevent downward wage pulls. While most unions support equal pay and equal allowances, male employees' strategies in the work place concentrate mainly on exclusion practices. Male employees' strategies also concentrate on subordinating women at work, thus establishing home and social hierarchical segregation also in the work place. That is why women are not likely to supervise men (Nieva & Gutek 1981). These strategies also include sexual harassment as women in male-dominated occupations report sexual harassment much often than women in female-dominated occupations (Gutek & Cohen 1987).

Female employees' strategies for desegregation have been twofold. Breaking through the glass ceiling and forcing one's way into male-only occupations in higher grades has been a dominant strategy for many years. Upgrading female-dominated occupations by means of comparable worth has been a strategy developed more recently.

Hypotheses, research method and data

How do the three forms of sex segregation interlock in organizations? Job segregation does not necessarily imply hierarchical segregation because women might have different jobs than men, but in the same grades. There are also no obvious reasons why job segregation should be related to departmental segregation. Due to employers' strategies on division of labour female-dominated jobs could be concentrated in female-dominated departments, and the same could apply for men. In that case, women working in male-dominated departments would be likely to work in male-dominated jobs. But the opposite hypothesis can also be stated; women in male-dominated departments are likely to work in female-dominated jobs, due to segregation processes in departments. And what about the relationship between job segregation and hierarchical segregation? Is hierarchical segregation related to either occupations or departments? In this chapter the interlocking of departmental, job and hierarchical segregation in organizations is investigated. The following hypotheses underpin this focus:

- 1) For the relationship between departmental and hierarchical segregation, it is first hypothesized that departments are supervised by their own sex. Thus, male-dominated departments are supervised by men and female-dominated departments by women. The second hypothesis states that female supervisors are supervised by men, thus introducing hierarchical segregation one level above work floor departments.
- 2) For the relationship between departmental and occupational segregation, it is first hypothesized that male-dominated jobs are concentrated in male-dominated departments and female-dominated occupations are concentrated in female-dominated departments. If job segregation does not coincide fully with departmental segregation, two hypothesis can be made. First, women in male-dominated departments work in female-dominated occupations. Second, less skilled occupations are concentrated in female-dominated departments and skilled occupations are concentrated in male-dominated departments.

- 3) For the relationship between job segregation and hierarchical segregation, it is hypothesized that male-dominated jobs are supervised by men, and female-dominated occupations by women.

The analysis is based on a questionnaire among female office workers in Dutch manufacturing industry and carried out in 1991 under the auspices of the Industrial Workers Union FNV (Tijdens & Goudswaard 1992). Traditionally, the union is oriented towards blue-collar workers, but they are also expected to represent white-collar workers in manufacturing offices. The survey aimed to fill a lack of knowledge about this group. A few thousand questionnaires were sent to union members throughout the country who had agreed to distribute the questionnaire among female office workers at their firm or plant. Because some respondents had non-office jobs, 1,264 questionnaires could be used in statistical analysis. According to the official Labour Force Statistics 1991, about 60,000 women were employed in offices in manufacturing industry. Thus, the survey covered 2.11% of the population. When comparing the sample with labour force statistics, the sample's distribution is very close to that of the total population of female office workers in manufacturing in so far as the variables age, weekly working hours, nationality, marital status and number of children are concerned. Education level was a few percentage-points higher than expected, and 15% of the respondents were unionized, whereas only 10% was expected.

In the questionnaire, a large number of questions applied to the three forms of sex segregation. Departmental segregation is defined as departmental sex-typing, that is the percentage of women in the respondent's department. Job segregation is defined as occupational sex-typing, that is the percentage of women in the job category (see also section 6 for the job titles). This percentage is based on whether the respondent's colleagues performing the same job as the respondent are mainly women, both men and women in equal numbers, or mainly men. Respondents who had no colleagues performing the same job are assigned the average value of their occupational category. Hierarchical segregation is defined as sex-typing of the respondent's supervisor. In order to classify departmental and job segregation, male-dominated departments and jobs are defined as those

where men comprise more than two-thirds of the work force; female-dominated departments and jobs are those where the reverse applies. Integrated departments and jobs are in between. For the statistical analyses two more groups of variables were used. The individual variables take into account respondents' education level, age, tenure, re-entrance, working hours, and hourly wage. The organization variables used in the analysis are size of the department, whether respondents have colleagues performing the same job, promotion prospects, and previous career steps.

Female office workers in manufacturing industry

Before analyzing the data, the most important characteristics of female office workers in manufacturing industry are sketched. According to the respondents, 47% of the female office workers are married and a further 22% live with a partner. Nearly all women in these two groups are dual-earners. Another 12% of the women live with their parents, and 19% are single or divorced. More than three-quarters (76%) of the women have no children. One-quarter have children, and the majority of these children are over 12. More than 16% of the women are returners to the labour market. The mean age of female office workers is 32.1, and they have been with their present employer for 7.5 years, working 35.5 hours per week. On average, they earn Dfl. 12.76 nett per hour (standard deviation 3.30).

In 1991, about 1,176,000 people were employed in the Dutch manufacturing industry, of which 20% is female (Labour Force Statistics 1991). The percentage of clerical workers is much higher among female workers than among male workers in manufacturing: 32% as opposed to 7%. Thus, 77,000 women and 68,000 men are employed in a broad range of clerical occupations in manufacturing offices. In the survey, the respondents mentioned around 200 job titles. Quite a number of women appeared to have a combined job, for example as secretary and file clerk. For the analysis related job titles have been grouped together into five occupational categories. The miscellaneous clerical workers, mostly clerical assistants, are

the largest category, forming more than one third (36%) of the sample. 29% are secretaries, including executive secretaries, and 11% are telephonists/receptionists. About 21% work in staff departments, and the remaining 4% are supervisor. Three female-dominated job categories were found, together representing 75% of the respondents, and 25% are employed in the integrated occupational categories, i.e. the women in staff departments and the supervisors. No male-dominated job categories were found.

Considering departmental segregation, 40% of the respondents work in male-dominated departments, 35% work in integrated departments and 25% work in female-dominated departments. Male-dominated departments have an average of 29 employees, whereas integrated departments are smaller; on average 11 employees. Again, these are larger than female-dominated departments, which on average have less than 5 employees. Departmental sex-typing appears to be related to departmental size, correlation is significant and rather high ($R = -.32$). The organizational variables show that within female-dominated departments, respondents have colleagues performing the same job relatively more often than in integrated and male-dominated departments, and promotion prospects and previous career steps are lowest. Individual factors show that in female-dominated departments, educational levels, tenure, and hours per week are lowest, whereas the re-entrants percentage and age are highest. Hourly wages are lowest in male-dominated departments and highest in integrated departments.

Focusing on hierarchical segregation, nine out of ten respondents had a male supervisor, one out of ten had a female supervisor, and a very small minority had no supervisor at all. Compared to female supervised respondents, male supervised respondents are employed in larger departments, have fewer colleagues performing the same job, have average promotion prospects, but have made more career steps. The relationship with supervisors' sex-typing and colleagues performing same job is positive and significant though low ($R = .13$). Education and tenure is lower and working hours per week are shorter for female supervised respondents, whereas the percentage of re-entrants is higher. Tenure and working hours having significant, though not high negative correlation coefficients.

Office women's occupations

In this section the five occupational categories are discussed briefly, to get more insight in the way job segregation is related to departmental and hierarchical segregation.

The *secretaries* are the most female sex-typed category. These women work in the largest, most male-dominated departments and have almost the highest percentage of male supervisors. They have made average previous career steps and they have average prospects on the internal labour market. They have a higher than average education women, and are of average age and tenure. Secretaries work more than average hours per week, whereas their hourly wages are below average. The percentage of re-entrants is average.

Though the *telephonists/receptionists* are almost as female sex-typed, this category differs greatly from the secretaries. These respondents work in the smallest, most female-dominated departments and they have the highest percentages of female supervisors and colleagues performing the same job. They have no position whatsoever on the internal labour market. They are the least well educated, the oldest women in the survey, and they comprise the highest percentage of re-entrants. Their tenure has an average score. They are the most likely to work on a part-time basis, and they earn almost the lowest hourly wages.

The *miscellaneous clerical workers* are classified as a female sex-typed job category, working in average-sized, integrated departments. They have an average percentage of male supervisors, and of colleagues performing the same job. Their position on the internal labour market also has an average score. Considering the individual factors, they are relatively young, not very well educated women, who earn the lowest hourly wages.

The *supervisors* belong to the integrated job categories, and are very likely to supervise small, female-dominated departments. They themselves are supervised by men. They consider their position on the internal market the best. They also are the best educated women in the survey, they are of average age, but they have both the lowest years of tenure and percentage

of re-entrants. They work the most hours per week and they have the highest hourly wages.

Finally, the *clerical workers in staff departments* also belong to the integrated job categories. They work in integrated, relatively small departments, where they are very likely to have a male supervisor. Their position on the internal labour market is above average. So are their educational levels, age, tenure, working hours per week, and hourly wages.

Statistical analysis shows that there is no clear relationship between occupational sex-typing and organizational and individual factors. The two most female sex-typed job categories show very different patterns, and so do the two integrated job categories. Organizational variables are hardly related to occupational sex-typing, except previous career steps ($R = -.16$). A few individual factors show negative, significant correlations with the job categories' sex-typing, i.e. hourly wages ($R = -.17$) and working hours per week ($R = -.13$).

The interlocking of sex segregation at work

To analyze the relationship between the three forms of segregation, regression analyses are made to explain the variance in departmental sex-typing, i.e. the percentage women in the department, and in occupational sex-typing, i.e. the percentage women in the occupation. A logistic regression has been made to explain hierarchical sex-typing, i.e. female (=1) or male (=0) supervisor. In addition, the above mentioned four organizational and six individual variables have been used as independent variables to explain departmental, occupational and hierarchical sex-typing.

First, we analyze departmental sex-typing. Correlations show that departmental sex-typing is related positively to hierarchical sex-typing ($R = .30$). This relationship is awry, because integrated sex-typed departments are much more likely to be supervised by men. Departmental sex-typing is also related positively and significantly to occupational sex-typing, though correlation is not very high ($R = .19$). This is due to the

fact that female sex-typed occupations are either found in most female-sex-typed departments (telephonists/receptionists) or in the least female-sex-typed departments (secretaries). Regression analysis shows that departmental sex-typing is explained significantly by number of employees ($\beta = -.31$), followed by sex-typing of the supervisor ($\beta = .26$), occupational sex-typing ($\beta = .15$), and hourly wages ($\beta = -.07$). Therefore, the relationship between departmental sex-typing and hierarchical and occupational sex-typing remains, other variables taken into account.

Secondly, occupational segregation is studied. Relationship between occupational sex-typing and hierarchical sex-typing is not high, though positive and significant ($R = .15$). For occupational and departmental sex-typing $R = .19$. Regression analysis shows that the relationship between occupational sex-typing and hierarchical as well as departmental sex-typing remains, though departmental sex-typing makes a much stronger contribution to the explanation than hierarchical sex-typing ($\beta = .17$ compared to $\beta = .7$). Occupational sex-typing is explained significantly by hourly wages ($\beta = -.23$), followed by departmental sex-typing ($\beta = .17$), number of employees in the department ($\beta = .16$), working hours per week ($\beta = -.12$), age ($\beta = .11$), previous career steps ($\beta = -.10$), and hierarchical sex-typing ($\beta = .7$). Non-standardized regression coefficients show that if the percentage of women in a department increases one percentage point, women's hourly wages decrease by Dfl 0,02.

Thirdly, hierarchical segregation is analyzed. Logistic regression shows that both the sex-typing of the department and the sex-typing of the job significantly contribute to the explanation of the supervisor's sex-typing. Only one more variable explains the supervisor's sex-typing significantly, i.e. tenure ($B = -.07$). If a female office worker has a female supervisor, the sex-typing of her department is 3.1 times more female than if she had had a male supervisor. If a female office worker has a female supervisor, the sex-typing of her job is 1.1 times more female than if she had had a male supervisor. The percentage correct predicted is 90%.

Now it is time to bring in the hypotheses that have been formulated for the interweaving of sex segregation. For the relationship between

departmental and hierarchical segregation two hypotheses were developed. The first considered supervision along gendered lines in departments. Indeed, if female office workers work in female-dominated departments, they are very likely to have a female supervisor. This relationship is rather strong and it holds when other variables are taken into account. In the second hypothesis it was stated that the pattern of supervision according to sex would be broken one level above work floor departments. This appears to be the case, because 90% of the female supervisors themselves have male supervisors.

For the relationship between departmental and occupational segregation, it was hypothesized that job segregation was realized along departmental lines. This hypothesis holds, although the relationship is rather weak, but it remains when other variables are taken into account. This is the case when departmental segregation is predicted from occupational segregation as well as vice versa. Two other hypotheses have been formulated in case where job segregation did not fully coincide with departmental segregation. At first, it was hypothesized that women in male-dominated departments work in female-dominated occupations. This hypothesis also holds. It appears that women in the most female-dominated occupations either work in the most female-dominated or in the most male-dominated departments. Women in integrated occupations are likely to be found in integrated departments. Secondly, less skilled occupations are concentrated in female-dominated departments and skilled occupations are concentrated in male-dominated departments. This hypothesis also holds ($X^2=115.2$, $p<.001$). To describe the results; 55% of women in the most skilled occupation is found in male-dominated departments compared to 20% of the women in the least skilled occupation.

For the relationship between job and hierarchical segregation, it was hypothesized that female-dominated occupations are supervised by women. Occupational sex-typing is positive though not strongly related to supervisors' sex-typing, but this relationship holds when other variables are taken into account. Thus, the more female-dominated the occupation, the more likely these women will be supervised by a woman. However, this

relationship is far more weaker than the relationship between departmental and hierarchical segregation.

Conclusions

In this chapter, gendered structures in organizations have been defined as the interweaving of departmental, hierarchical and job segregation. The survey results show that some important conclusions can be drawn about these gendered structures in organizations.

First, the descriptive statistics show that female office workers are more or less equally divided over male-, integrated and female-dominated departments. Three out of four women work in a female-dominated occupation, and one out of four in an integrated occupation. There were no women in male-dominated occupations. Nine out of ten women have a male supervisor. This is a first glimpse of gendered organizational structures and it highlights the dominance of hierarchical segregation.

The second conclusion is that departmental and hierarchical segregation are strongly intertwined. In general, supervisors at departmental levels are male. This appears to be the case far more often in male-dominated and in integrated departments than in female-dominated departments, though this latter percentage still does not exceed 25. Female supervisors themselves are supervised by males. Moreover, male-dominated departments tend to have far more employees than integrated departments and these outdo female-dominated departments. This suggest that the gendered structures in organizations also include a status hierarchy between departments, female-dominated departments being marginalized.

The third conclusion is that occupational segregation is far less intertwined with departmental segregation than with hierarchical segregation. Irrespective of the type of department, most women work in female-dominated occupations, though this is lowest in integrated departments. Female office workers who work in female-dominated departments are very likely to have a female-dominated occupation. Female office

workers in male-dominated departments are also very likely to work in a female-dominated occupation. In male-dominated departments, women tend to perform solo work, i.e. they do not have colleagues performing the same job, with the opposite obtaining for female-dominated departments. One must conclude that if gendered organizational structures are not realized along departmental lines (women working in male-dominated departments), then they are realized along occupational lines.

The fourth conclusion is that job segregation is strongly related to hourly wages and to working hours, as well as to previous career steps and to promotion prospects. The characteristics of women in integrated jobs probably look more like men's characteristics, whereas women in female-dominated jobs are a fringe group as far as wages and career prospects are concerned. Wage inequality and other forms of inequality between women obviously run along occupational lines. This indicates a gendered pattern as far as the division of benefits in organizations is concerned.

To conclude, gendered organizational structures have been studied in so far as the intertwining of three forms of sex segregation were concerned. These three phenomena are mutually interlocked, the positive relationship between departmental sex-typing and hierarchical sex-typing being strongest. However, relationships between sex segregation, and power and authority in organizations, and how these relate to women's subordinate positions, have not been studied. Further research is necessary on how gendered organizational structures coincide with unequal attribution of power, including for example the allocation of budgets, internal career opportunities, managerial commitment, authority, and contacts within and outside the organization.

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