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Gender on the large scale

Most discussions of gender concern the personal: issues such as identities, motherhood and child-rearing, family life, sexuality, and their pathologies, such as prejudice, domestic violence and rape. We have already seen reasons to go beyond this. To understand personal relations, we must take into account institutions, economies, ideologies and governments. Chapter 5 outlined an approach to the structure of gender relations. This chapter applies the same approach to gender relations on the very large scale: in corporations, governments and global society.

The gendered corporation

The corporation is the dominant form of economic organization in contemporary society, the key institution of developed capitalism. There were 5.7 million corporations in the United States in 2005, according to taxation statistics. Most were small, but more than 2,000 held assets over $2.5 billion dollars each. Transnational corporations are the main players in the international economy. The biggest have workforces in the hundreds of thousands, such as Toyota with 299,000 workers in 2007; profits (and sometimes losses) in the tens of billions, such as Exxon Mobil with $39.5 billion profit in 2007; and annual revenues bigger than the entire national product of small countries.

Corporations are gendered institutions, with a gendered history. 'Companies' of merchants in early modern Europe were entirely composed of men. When ownership began to be divided up and became itself

a kind of commodity, with the creation of joint-stock companies and the first stock exchanges in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these too were socially defined as men's institutions. The creation of the modern form of capital was thus part of the historical process that created a masculinized public realm, which also included the emerging liberal state, and organs of public opinion such as the press.

This went for a long time unquestioned. When, in the nineteenth century, middle-class women in the rich countries challenged their exclusion from universities and the professions, there was no comparable demand for entry to business management. The gender pattern of the corporation itself only came into focus in the 1970s, when liberal and academic feminism challenged organization theory. The change is marked by the work of Rosabeth Kanter in the United States, whose *Men and Women of the Corporation* appeared in 1977. Kanter criticized the absence of gender awareness in organization research, and showed how gender issues mattered, even for the minority of women who did make it into the corporate hierarchy.

Over the next three decades, social research on corporate life accumulated, and a theory of 'gendered organizations' emerged in the global metropole. Some of the studies have already been mentioned: Hochschild's (1983) research on 'emotion work' in airlines and debt agencies, and Pringle's (1989) study of secretaries. Some of the best research has focused on the world of manual workers in large-scale industries. The sociologist Miriam Glucksmann wrote a wonderful account of British factory life in *Women on the Line* (1982). This was based on seven months' participant observation in a motor vehicle component assembly plant, and gives a vivid picture of the corporate hierarchy, daily life on the shop floor, and the connections with home life. There was a rigid gender division of labour in this plant. Women were employed in the low-paid routine jobs only, promotion was blocked, men could get twice the wage for doing easier jobs: 'It was obvious that the only qualification you needed for a better job was to be a man.' The women were disillusioned about men, and supported each other in daily conflicts with male supervisors. But their poverty, fatigue, household demands and the gender segregation of working-class life made effective organizing almost impossible.

Gender divisions are equally strong in corporate agriculture, which is now transforming rural life across the world. A fascinating oral-history study in Chile by Heidi Tinsman (2000) describes the export-oriented fruit industry created under the Pinochet dictatorship. The companies engaged in this business recruited women workers on a large scale. But the consequences were not all as expected. Rural women's command of an income and ability to make shopping trips and purchasing decisions changed the balance of power with husbands. The segregated work groups created by the employers provided an alternative to domestic isolation, and led to new relationships among women. In both respects, the process eroded the dictatorship's official maternalist ideology.

Gender hierarchies are not just 'tradition'; they are in many cases deliberately introduced and actively defended. That was shown in Cynthia Cockburn's classic study of British printing workers, *Brothers* (1983). David Collinson, David Knights and Margaret Collinson in *Managing to Discriminate* (1990) found the same thing in British white-collar work in the insurance industry. For instance, a manager opposed to promoting women justified his hostility by the idea (possibly correct!) that the customers, also men, would not like it.

Research such as this underpinned the development of a theory of gendered organizations, which emerged at the end of the 1980s in the work of Joan Acker in the United States, Peta Tancred in Canada, Clare Burton in Australia, and British researchers such as the Collinsons and Jeff Hearn (collected in Mills and Tancred's *Gendering Organizational Analysis*, 1992). The key idea was that gender discrimination is not an accidental feature of a basically gender-neutral bureaucracy, that can be fixed by changing a few attitudes. Gender is a structural feature of corporate life, linked to gender relations in other sectors of society, that shapes job definitions, understandings of 'merit' and promotion, management techniques, marketing and a whole lot more.

The analysis of gender in workplaces has become steadily more sophisticated since those beginnings, with increasing attention to the extent of unintentional gendering, and the dynamic character of gender at the level of personal interaction within organizations (Martin 2006). A classic example is provided by a study of Italian corporations by Sylvia Gherardi and Barbara Poggio (2001). Women were arriving at a management level here; but as they did, a 'dance' of adjustment and compromise occurred, and the gender order seemed to close around them.

In the United States, significant numbers of women have now reached middle management, and there is endless discussion of the 'glass ceiling' which prevents their getting into top-level management. In 1991 the US Congress set up a 21-person Glass Ceiling Commission to investigate the problem. They found that, among the biggest corporations in the United States, 97 per cent of senior managers were White, and 95 to 97 per cent were men. Of the top 1,000 companies, 2 had women CEOs. That is, one-fifth of 1 per cent of big corporations had a woman in the top job. This was cited as a sign of progress.

The Commission attributed this situation to a set of 'barriers' which prevent access to high places. They include: unsuitable or inadequate educational background; prejudice and bias on the part of men in power;

career paths that divert women from the main promotion pipeline; poor anti-discrimination enforcement by government; inadequate information about the problem; inadequate publicity; and fear of loss among White men in middle management. Evidently the reasons for the absence of women and minority men from top management have to do with broad features of business organizations, and deeply entrenched patterns of division in the workplace – just as the sociologists had been saying. Commenting on the prevailing culture of US business, the Commission (1995: 34) quoted the CEO of a retail firm:

> The old-line companies are run by the white '46 long' guys who practice inappropriate male rituals that are dysfunctional to business. Male bonding through hunting, fishing and sports talk is irrelevant to business. Too much so-called 'strategic planning' takes place after the bars close – that kind of male fellowship ritual is irrelevant to business.

As the remedy for all this, the Glass Ceiling Commission proposed – a change of attitude! They tried to persuade capitalists to see that a more diverse management team would be *Good for Business* (the title of their main report). That is, they relied on the profit motive to drive a massive voluntary reconstruction of business management – somehow failing to notice that the profit motive has been operating full blast since the dawn of capitalism, so far resulting in a management group 97 per cent White and 95 per cent to 97 per cent men. The US government subsequently lost interest in the problem.

There is no reason to think the picture in other industrialized countries is very different. But the response sometimes is. Norway has now passed a law requiring corporations to have women making at least 40 per cent of their boards of directors, and setting other targets for gender change in the corporate sector. The effects have yet to be seen.

Managerial masculinities do change over time. The British historian Michael Roper (1994), in a fascinating book called *Masculinity and the British Organization Man since 1945*, traces changes in the management of British manufacturing firms. An older generation of managers had a hands-on relation with the production process, identified themselves closely with the firm and the quality of the product, and took a paternalistic interest in the engineering workers. With the growing power of finance capital in the British economy, a new cadre of managers has appeared. They are also men, but are more oriented to accountancy and profit, less interested in technology and the product, and not very much interested in the workers. A more generic, and more ruthless, managerial masculinity has taken over.

Capitalism is a turbulent economic system; markets expand and collapse, industries rise and fall, corporations restructure themselves in search of profit. One of the most important of these changes, the rise of transnational corporations, will be considered later in the chapter; here I will simply note that transnational management grew out of management structures in the rich countries of the global metropole. The kind of change mapped by Roper seems to be common. The notorious case of the Enron Corporation, the Texas-based pipeline company that became a huge 'new economy' energy trader, and collapsed with a huge stink in 2001, is an example. Enron epitomized the style of hard-driving, profit-centred management that had little respect for its workforce or for business ethics, provided it could rake in profits and bonuses (Fox 2003). A similar kind of masculinity appears in studies of financial trading floors, though as Peter Levin (2001) notes, it is expressed in different ways depending on fluctuations in the pace of work.

When Rosabeth Kanter studied women in corporations in the 1970s, she found that the social pressures they were under tended to reinforce traditional femininity. When Judy Wajcman (1999) studied both women and men managers in globally oriented high-technology firms in the 1990s, she found the women were under heavy pressure to act just like the men: work the long hours, fight in the office wars, put pressure on their subordinates and focus on profit. In order to survive in this world, the women managers had to restructure their domestic lives so they too could shed responsibilities for child care, cooking and housework. Wajcman found no truth in the widespread belief that women coming into management would bring a more caring, nurturant or humane style to the job. It is not surprising that she called her book *Managing Like a Man*.

From the point of view of gender justice, the picture in top management looks bleak. The picture is equally bleak when we look at the owners of big capital. Mike Donaldson and Scott Poynting, in *Ruling Class Men* (2007), pulled together many sources of information to draw a picture of the social life and culture of the corporate rich, and the picture is not pretty. These men have lives that are materially privileged but socially cut off, have family relationships where women are mostly consigned to being decorative and producing heirs, and practice a deliberate 'toughening' of the young men who will take control of family fortunes.

What about the situation lower down the hierarchy, among the people who actually do the corporations' labour? Here the situation is unquestionably more varied, as corporations have assembled socially diverse workforces. An excellent world-wide review of ethnographies of workplace gender, put together by Winifred Poster (2002), emphasizes not

only the use of gender division and gender stereotyping as means of control, but the great variety of situations in which gender is constructed. Racial hierarchies, sexualization, class distinctions, are all operating in the making of workplace masculinities and femininities – as would be expected from the 'intersection' theory discussed in chapter 5.

What of the institutions that represent workers' interests in battles with corporate power – the unions? Here too we find patriarchal organizations. The union movement originated mainly in men's occupations. Though there have been some famous episodes in union organizing among women, such as the London 'matchgirls' strike' in 1888, union membership has remained predominantly men, and union leadership overwhelmingly men. The difficulty of establishing a voice for women in the union movement, even in a country like Australia where both unionism and feminism have been strong, is documented in Suzanne Franzway's *Sexual Politics and Greedy Institutions* (2000). Resistance from union men, embodying an old, combative style of working-class masculinity, has been a constant problem. Yet as the economy has changed, women have been a rising proportion of the union membership. The latest two presidents of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (the unions' peak organization) have been women.

The gendered state

Most of the world's presidents, prime ministers, cabinet ministers, generals and civil service managers are men. Women gained legal status, and the right to vote, much later than men – and in some parts of the world still do not have legal equality. There are obvious reasons, then, why the state would be seen as a patriarchal institution. In the 1970s and 1980s, feminists in the metropole made a number of attempts to formulate a theory of the patriarchal state. Its main themes can be summed up in six points.

- The state is the core of the wider structure of power relations in gender. Traditional theories of the state in philosophy and political science said nothing about gender because they could not see gender where only men were present, where no 'difference' was visible. But where only men are present, we are looking at a powerful gender effect – that is, the total exclusion of women!
- The state has a well-marked internal gender regime. There is an overall gender division of labour, with men concentrated in departments such as the military, police, infrastructure and economic agencies, women concentrated in social welfare, health and education. The centres of state power, the top decision-making units, are heavily masculine, and women's interests are represented in more peripheral agencies than men's interests.
- The state makes policies concerned with gender issues. As these policies are put into effect, the state regulates gender relations in the wider society. This is not a minor aspect of what the state does. It involves many policy areas, from housing through education to criminal justice and the military.
- This activity not only regulates existing gender relations. The state's activity also helps to *constitute* gender relations and form gender identities. An important example is the role of repressive laws and state-backed medicine in creating the category of 'the homosexual' in the late nineteenth century. The categories of 'husband' and 'wife' are also partly constituted by state action, through mechanisms ranging from marriage laws to tax policy.
- Because of these activities and capacities, the state is the key target in gender politics. It is the focus of most political mobilization on gender issues, as pressure groups and popular movements try to reach their goals via the state. Indeed, the rise of the liberal state was the focus of a historic change in the form of gender politics, which became mass politics for the first time in the nineteenth century.
- Since gender relations are marked by crisis tendencies and structural change, the state as the heart of gendered power is itself liable to crisis and change. Crisis tendencies which impinge on the state include problems of legitimation to do with men's violence, and tensions arising from the gender division of labour ('equal opportunity' and the 'glass ceiling' for women).

These conclusions were drawn from a considerable amount of research on politics and bureaucracies, and they have a certain solidity and realism. But they also have limitations, which are easier to see now, especially when we look beyond the global metropole.

First, the state is only one of society's centres of power. A traditional definition of the state is the institution that holds a monopoly of the legitimate use of force in a given territory. But this ignores the domestic violence of husbands towards wives, a widespread practice which used to be wholly legitimate and which only recently has been broadly contested.

Can we regard husbands as a 'power'? Conventional political analysis does not recognize a husbands' party. In a patriarchal gender order, however, husbands' interests in their wives' sexual and domestic services are institutionalized on a society-wide basis. This is a power to which state agencies have repeatedly accommodated. Wendy Hollway (1994)

documents this fact in a study of Tanzanian civil service employment. Tanzania had an official policy of equal conditions for men and women in public employment, as most countries now do. But this policy was subverted when it clashed with husbands' interests. For instance, women civil servants were sent on training programmes only if their husbands had given approval: 'Applications without a husband's permission were treated as if [official] permission had been withheld.'

Another kind of power has emerged in the form of security companies. There are said to be more private security agents in the United States now than there are publicly employed police. A substantial part of the armed force used in the US occupation of Iraq has consisted of 'security contractors', between 20,000 and 30,000 mercenary soldiers employed by corporations such as Blackwater Worldwide. Increasing numbers of the affluent, even in rich countries, live in gated communities, that is, housing complexes with fences patrolled by security employees, designed to keep out the poor, the Black and the card-less.

These private security systems are gendered: controlled by men, mostly employing men and, in the case of the gated communities, en-gating women. Because their legitimacy depends on property, not citizenship, private security systems so far have escaped the political pressure for equal opportunity which women have been able to exert on the state. The gendered state, then, operates in a more complex field of forces than might immediately appear.

In discussions of politics, 'gender' is often a code-word for women. But it is essential to bring men and masculinity explicitly into the analysis of the state. Especially in an organization as large and complex as the state, it is important to recognize the distinction between hegemonic and subordinated masculinities (Messerschmidt 1993). The masculinization of the state, accurately identified in feminist theory, is principally a relationship between state institutions and hegemonic masculinity.

This principle gives us some help in understanding the masculinization of post-colonial states. In some parts of the world, such as central and western Africa, the state structure left by de-colonization, lacking legitimacy and often cutting irrationally across geographical and cultural landscapes, has been racked with conflict that has often turned into military coups or internal war. The heavily masculinized military forces of the colonial era thus provided the core of the post-colonial state elites – notably so in the richest country in the region, Nigeria. In cases like Algeria, Zimbabwe and Cuba, the leadership of guerrilla forces gained control of the post-colonial state and set up authoritarian regimes. Even where a civilian leadership remained in control, as in India, the attempt to hold together a new republic and the drive for economic development valorized a hegemonic masculinity that was focused on authority and rational calculation, suppressed emotions, and was capable of rolling over local communities and traditions. (At least, that is how I interpret Ashis Nandy's critique of the modernizing state [Nandy 1987].)

The Turkish state, the first modern republic in the Islamic world, was a particularly important model. General Mustafa Kemal, a hero of the First World War, came to power at a time of absolute crisis, drove out occupying forces in what amounted to a war of independence, and led a modernizing elite in setting up a secular state. Emancipation of women was on his agenda, and women now have a presence in the Turkish state greater than in Arab countries; yet a masculinized military has remained a dominant force in the republic. As Sinclair-Webb (2000) shows in a very interesting ethnographic study, military service in Turkey is a rite of passage into manhood, connected with national identity. But it is also a site of tension: professional soldiers, especially the officers, regard the conscripts as poor material. The army, that is to say, does not rely on an already-established masculinity, but tries to shape young men in a new mould. This agenda is, however, running into difficulty – partly from the Kurdish rebellion, partly from the rise of political Islam, and partly from cultural change among youth.

The state is not only a mechanism of authority and force. It is also the site where social interests are articulated and rights claimed. 'Manhood suffrage' was the goal of democratic movements in nineteenth-century Europe, connected with the idea of a family wage and the working man as head-of-household. State guarantees of civil rights provided the context for the emergence of alternative masculinities in the metropole in the later twentieth century. Homosexual masculinities provide the best-known example. Equally interesting is the institution of *Zivildienst*, civilian service, introduced in 1973 as an alternative to military conscription in Germany, which recognized committed non-violent masculinities. It is now chosen by more young men than military service.

Equally we need to acknowledge the complexity of women's relationships with the state. Julia O'Connor, Ann Orloff and Sheila Shaver in *States, Markets, Families* (1999) survey gender and welfare policy in four industrialized countries. They confirm how apparently gender-neutral policies actually have gender effects. For instance, retirement income systems may make better provision for people who have a continuous employment career (who happen to be mostly men) than for people who have done a lot of unpaid domestic work (mostly women). It is clear that the women's movement has been a force in welfare debates but its influence has been uneven. Different areas of state policy may show different gender patterns. The United States, for instance, has relatively poor income security for women, but relatively strong legal support for women's 'body rights'.

Much of state policy in relation to gender concerns controls over women's bodies, and these can be difficult to change. Mala Htun (2003), in a study of gender politics in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, shows that, while women's rights fluctuated under the dictatorships and with the transition to democracy, in no case were abortion rights improved. It therefore becomes very interesting to consider the theory of the 'woman-friendly state' advanced by some feminist theorists in Scandinavia. Borchorst and Siim (2002), reviewing this theory, note the break from feminist pessimism about the state. A combination of feminist mobilization from below, and laws mandating gender equity from above, produces a regime much more favourable to women's interests. Politics does matter.

A feminist presence within the state is found in other parts of the world too. In Australia, where this is a major form of gender politics, the officials responsible for gender equality are known charmingly as 'femocrats'. Their story is vividly told in *Inside Agitators* (1996) by Hester Eisenstein, who spent some time as a femocrat herself, and they have certainly had influence in education, employment rights and some other policy fields. But their influence waned with the rise of the new right and neoliberalism.

Similarly, a comparative study by Philomina Okeke-Ihejirika and Susan Franceschet (2002) points to specific conditions for the success of 'state feminism'. In Chile, women were prominent in the struggle against the Pinochet dictatorship. In the transition to democracy, feminists had access to the top levels of state power. But in Nigeria, though women were involved in the struggle for independence and feminist groups have persisted, the post-independence regimes had no place for feminist ideas. Instead, they promoted tame women's organizations led by the wives of the real rulers – borrowing the US idea of the 'first lady' – which pursued a mild welfare agenda and a conservative view of women's place.

As in Nigeria, it is common that anti-colonial, nationalist or revolutionary movements mobilize women's support. The Chinese revolution is perhaps the best-known case. The Maoist slogan 'women hold up half the sky' was part of an attack on feudal attitudes and laws which had enforced the subordination of women (Stacey 1983). But establishing a post-colonial or post-revolutionary regime has often meant installing a new version of patriarchy. Women have been brought into the labour force, but not equally into the political leadership. Maria Mies (1986) sardonically observes how post-colonial regimes symbolized the new patriarchy with cults of revolutionary Founding Fathers – including Mao. When the government of the new republic of Nepal came into existence in 2008, it was eerie to see posters showing the genealogy of the ruling party – a row of male faces from Marx via Stalin to Mao. Not a woman among them.

In some cases the exclusion of women is explicit. Yemen (since its reunification) has been described as the most oppressive country in the world for women, though Saudi Arabia runs it close. The Wahhabi sect of Islam that predominates in this region is as implacably opposed to women having authority as the Catholic sect of Christianity is to women being priests. Nayereh Tohidi's (1991) narrative of feminist politics in Shi'ite Iran shows how assertive attitudes among women there were seen as evidence of the corruption of religion and culture by Western influences. In other cases the exclusion of women is a matter of practice, not dogma. Most post-colonial states have been dependent on multinational corporations, so have been operating in an economic environment dominated by men. Singapore, one of the striking success stories of dependent capitalist development, has also created one of the most monolithic patriarchies in post-colonial government.

Yet the current is not all one way. There is also a history of women's activism in Muslim countries. In certain cases – Pakistan, Turkey and Indonesia – women have become prominent political leaders. The post-colonial state in India has provided a political environment in which a strong feminist movement could develop. And it is striking that, of the five successor states to the British Indian empire, three have had women prime ministers and a fourth nearly did. One of these was the first elected woman head of government in the world: Sirimavo Bandaranaike, elected prime minister of Sri Lanka in 1960. The one who was nearly head of government, Aung San Suu Kyi, is (at the time of writing) still in detention because the military men controlling Burma fear her so much.

In the countries which were once the imperial centres and are now the financial centres of the global economy, feminist movements have had a good many legal and constitutional victories. There have been defeats, too, such as the attempt in the 1970s to embed gender equality in the US constitution. Broadly, however, equal formal rights between women and men have been won. They include the right to vote, the right to own property, the right to take legal action, equal employment opportunity, and so on. The old form of state patriarchy, with masculine authority embedded in bureaucratic hierarchies, proved vulnerable to feminist challenge.

But the state has been changing recently, in ways that seem to make power less accountable to women (Yeatman 1990). New agendas of 'reform' have privatized many state services, and make remaining public services operate more like corporations. As Néstor García Canclini (1999: 13) observed, under neoliberalism the main decisions that shape everyday life 'are taken in places that are inaccessible and difficult to identify'.

Women's increased presence in the public realm is now counterbalanced by a decline of the public realm itself, or, as Rachel Simon-Kumar (2004) puts it, a tendency for the state and the market to blur into each other. The key neoliberal policies – deregulating markets, reducing taxes and government services, transferring resources to private business – amount to a relocation of power into institutions dominated by men. The state, in both metropole and periphery, is increasingly integrated into the world of global capitalism. So let us turn to consider how gender works at the largest scale of all, the scale of world society.

Gender in world society

In this section I will discuss what Sarah Radcliffe, Nina Laurie and Robert Andolina (2004) have aptly called 'the transnationalization of gender'. This has become a major theme of debate recently, though there has long been a concern with global issues in feminism. Kartini in Java, at the beginning of the twentieth century, could rely on support from women in the Netherlands, the colonial power (chapter 3). International women's organizations have existed for most of the twentieth century, such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, founded during the First World War and still going today. What we now call 'gender' issues have been debated in international forums since before that war (Lenz, Szypulski and Molsich 1996: 10–12).

Contemporary debates have, however, been re-shaped by the creation of inter-governmental forums specifically for discussing gender inequalities and the interests of women. The United Nations Decade for Women 1975–85 made a remarkable change. In the Decade for Women, and after, a series of high-profile conferences created a global forum for these concerns and crystallized a policy agenda around women's interests. I believe that this reflects an important reality in gender relations today. There are significant features of the gender order which cannot be understood locally, which *require* analysis on a global scale.

It has become commonplace to talk about 'globalization', i.e. about social organization at a planetary level, though the question is still poorly understood (Connell 2007). It is not a long stretch, therefore, to think about gender as a structure of world society. We need not assume that gender is everywhere the same, as early theories of patriarchy did. Indeed it seems much more likely, at present, that the links are loose and the correspondences uneven. That is the picture shown by Poster's (2002) review of workplace gender across the world, mentioned earlier in this chapter. All we need to assume is that significant linkages do exist, and are being created.

Transnationalization is happening in all the structures of gender relations defined in chapter 5. The economic relations between women and men can hardly avoid it, in a time where large percentages of national economies are owned by foreigners, large sections of industry are dependent on foreign trade, and major investment decisions are made by transnational corporations. The politics of gender must be affected, in a time when global competitiveness is pursued via state restructuring and privatization of public services, and when masculinized military, paramilitary and police institutions are coordinated internationally. Emotional relations and sexuality are impacted by migration, population policies and international travel; the international dimension of gender in the HIV/AIDS pandemic is impossible to miss (Mane and Aggleton 2001). The symbolism of gender must be affected, as images of masculinity and femininity circulate on a vast scale in global media (fashion, 'celebrities', professional sports), while gender ideologies from different cultures are interwoven by migration and intermarriage. The links that constitute a global gender order seem to be of two basic types: interaction between local gender orders, and the creation of new arenas of gender relations.

Interaction between gender orders

Imperial conquest, neo-colonialism and the current world systems of power, investment, trade and communication have brought very diverse societies in contact with each other. The gender orders of those societies have consequently also been brought in contact with each other.

As I have emphasized through this book, this has often been a violent and disruptive process. Imperialism included an assault on local gender arrangements which did not fit the colonizers' templates. Missionaries, for instance, tried to stamp out the third-gender 'berdache' tradition in North America, and what they saw as women's promiscuity in Polynesia. The 'muu-muu' dresses sold to thousands of tourists in Hawai'i are far from being indigenous tradition; they are the legacy of male religious authorities' attempts to cover up women's bodies. Local gender arrangements have also been profoundly re-shaped by profit-making enterprises: slavery, indentured labour, land seizure and resettlement. In the contemporary world, the institutions of masculine violence in different parts of the world are linked by an international arms trade that amounted to $US 45.6 billion in 2006 (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2008).

The gender practices re-shaped by such means form new patterns which are, so to speak, the first level of a global gender order. They are

specific or local, but carry the impress of the broader forces that make a global society. Let me give two examples.

The first is Nadia Kim's (2006) study of Korean immigrant women in the United States. Korea has a long Confucian tradition with an established model of patriarchal, family-based gender relations. This has been under pressure, with South Korea's rapid industrial development and with the impact of global mass media, especially American images of gender relations. Migration to another country further erodes the Confucian model. The women to whom Kim spoke want to have an active economic life for themselves, more gender equality, and men in their lives who show friendliness, rather than authority, and share in the housework. American men seem to them to represent a modern masculinity better than Korean men. Yet there are complications. Younger women especially are likely to criticize the US military presence in Korea, and the behaviour of US soldiers there; and to criticize American men's promiscuity.

An essay by Mai Ghoussoub (2000) on masculinity in Arab media, especially in Egypt, reveals a tenser situation. She starts with two strange episodes: rumours about an Israeli-invented chewing gum that makes Arab men impotent, and the sudden popularity of mediaeval courtship manuals that celebrate sex in the name of Islam. (One of these is well-known in English translation as *The Perfumed Garden.*) Ghoussoub interprets these episodes as signs of a deep cultural disturbance in the post-colonial Middle East about masculinity. The context is slow economic modernization, political turbulence and the military weakness of Arab states in the face of Israel and the United States. The increasing economic and social status of women in Arabic-speaking societies has posed dilemmas for men whose identities are still founded in traditional gender ideologies. The old sex manuals emphasize women's active sexuality; and mass culture also portrays powerful women, such as the heroine of a popular film, *Mission to Tel Aviv*, who turns the tables on the Israelis. There are many signs, as Ghoussoub argues, of 'a chaotic quest for a definition of modern masculinity'.

The interaction of gender orders is not all one-way. I have previously mentioned Ashis Nandy's observation that the creation of the British empire changed masculinities among the British, as well as among the Indians. There is a small but interesting historical literature on the 'imperial pioneer and hunter' as a masculine model (MacKenzie 1987). Yet there is no question that the pressure of the metropole on the gender orders of the global periphery is much stronger than pressure the other way. We should not think of that as a simple 'modernization' of gender. The two examples just discussed, and the wider historical literature on gender and imperialism (Midgley 1998), show turbulence in the process, and sometimes acute tension.

New arenas of gender relations

Imperialism and globalization have created institutions that operate on a world scale. These institutions all have internal gender regimes, and each gender regime has its gender dynamic – interests, gender politics, processes of change. World-spanning institutions thus create new arenas for gender formation and gender dynamics. The most important of these institutions seem to be transnational corporations, the international state, global media and global markets. I will comment on each in turn.

Transnational corporations. Corporations operating in global markets are now the largest business organizations on the planet. They typically have a marked, though complex, gender division of labour in their workforce, as we have seen, and a strongly masculinized management culture.

Possible changes to managerial masculinity in the new context of transnational business have been the topic of recent debate and research. Charlotte Hooper (2000), in a study of the imagery in a business newspaper, found some evidence of a shift away from a tough, hierarchical model towards an emphasis on teamwork and high technology. A small group of interviews with Australian businessmen (Connell and Wood 2005) certainly supported the emphasis on technology, but in other respects found ambiguous evidence of new patterns. The research continues.

What is at stake is shown by a study of an international merger of finance companies in Scandinavia, where gender orders are among the most egalitarian on earth. Janne Tienari and colleagues (2005) conducted interviews with the top executives of the merged firms, and found a remarkable situation. The senior managers were overwhelmingly men, and basically did not want to hear about gender equality problems. They took management to be naturally men's business, 'constructed according to the core family and male-breadwinner model'. The researchers think that the conditions of transnational business intensify the discursive construction of managerial masculinity as competitive, mobile and work-driven – overriding the Scandinavian social discourse of gender equality. If they are right, the outlook for gender relations in the wider world of transnational corporations is not good.

The international state. A striking feature of twentieth-century political history was the growth of agencies that link territorial states without themselves having a territorial base. They include the International Labour Organization, the League of Nations, the United Nations and its various agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. The European Union, equally important, is a more traditional political form: a regional customs union which has partly evolved into a federal state. Regional bodies such as the African Union, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, and Mercosur remain much looser.

All these agencies are gendered, and have gender effects. Mostly their gender regimes copy those of the conventional states that gave rise to them. Being an outgrowth of diplomacy, they are mainly staffed and run by men, as Cynthia Enloe's (1990) study of the diplomatic world showed. Yet women have been moving into the world of international diplomacy; since Enloe's book was written, the United States has had two women as Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright and Condoleezza Rice. Dorota Gierycz (1999) observes, while documenting all-too-familiar gender inequalities in UN agencies, that they often have staffing rules that guarantee geographical diversity, and so have an element of gender multiculturalism. Inter-governmental forums emphasize a formal equality between participants.

I have been at one meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (effectively, a standing committee of the General Assembly) and watched a remarkable ritual. Diplomat after diplomat, most of them men in business suits, stood up in turn and gravely declared their governments' absolute commitment to equality between women and men.

Further, the United Nations organizations adopted the 'femocrat' strategy pioneered in Scandinavia and Australia, and set up internal agencies to pursue this agenda. The leading one is the Division for the Advancement of Women in the UN Secretariat (i.e. the Secretary-General's department). Development aid agencies now generally have women's programmes, and many associated non-government organizations do the same. There is, now, an international policy machinery concerned with gender equality, and at least one very widely known policy document, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Global media. Multinational media corporations circulate film, video, music and news on a very large scale. There are also more decentralized media (post, telegraph, telephone, fax, the Internet, the Web) and their supporting industries. All contain gender arrangements and circulate gender meanings. The newer media and applications, such as Web-based marketing, have a rapidly growing global reach.

Some commentators have seen this as a new frontier for gender change. The Web especially seems to offer infinite opportunities for playing with gender meanings, for re-inventing oneself, adopting new identities, and so on. Certainly websites such as the 'pro-ana' sites for anorexic girls provide an alternative to everyday relationships, and a cultural context for alternative embodiments.

How far this involves progressive change in gender relations, however, is debatable. The Internet is flooded with pornographic spam that promotes extremely reactionary views of gender – women presented as objects of male desire and consumption, men who think their manhood depends on increasing the size of their penis. The celebrity culture that is a staple of the international mass media for women is cartoon-like in its heteronormativity. Sports programming presents an unremitting diet of competitive, muscular masculinity. The modest excursions into change represented by programmes such as *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* seem marginal in comparison.

Nor have electronic media proved a major arena for cultural integration. The English language is massively dominant on the Internet, and most of the cultural assumptions are North American. The US market shapes international news. Again, there are counter-forces. There is a large Indian film industry that is gaining international audiences; there are television stations such as al-Jazeera; the Chinese government (among others) attempts to control the Internet.

Global markets. It is important to distinguish markets themselves from the individual corporations that operate in them. International markets – capital, commodity, service and labour markets – have an increasing 'reach' into local economies. They are strongly gender-structured and are now (with the political triumph of neoliberalism) very weakly regulated. The gendered character of markets as social institutions is emerging in recent research, that has revealed an aggressive, misogynist culture in areas such as commodities, energy, stock and futures trading.

I will give as one example a passage from an interview with an Australian finance company executive, one of the few women who actually worked as a trader in this environment, at the time when the Australian economy was being 'opened' to international capital movements. Joyce has clear memories of 'that very macho culture of the dealing room', with its long lunches and high alcohol consumption, a milieu where aggressive behaviour 'is just par for the course, that is just acceptable behaviour, and it is not only accepted, it is expected':

> In the dealing rooms, oh, full of the macho bravado, and the liar's-poker type environments. Where, you know, they're [saying] how big their positions are – the bragging, the womanizing, the whole bit. And all of which is entirely forgiven because they make a load of money . . . it attracts a certain type of person. [How did Joyce survive in this environment?] I ran a futures book. Futures isn't sexy these days, but they were [then] at the sexy end of the market, they were sophisticated, and people didn't really understand what you were doing . . . So they could have thought I was a green tree frog, I knew I was making money. So to that extent the simplicity of the performance criteria goes your way. But the culture was very very hostile . . . You'd get the whole kit-and-caboodle, you know: the nude posters went up, and all this sort of stuff, the comment on everything you wore, and everything you did.

Her picture is like that emerging from some US research on traders (Levin 2001). There is still a lot to be done before this is confirmed as an international picture; but on the early indications, the spread of market relationships under neoliberalism is not looking like a paradigm of gender equality.

In these four arenas we can detect elements of an emerging world gender order. It is imperfectly linked up, and far from homogeneous, but is already an important presence. Its weight in our lives will undoubtedly grow.

In chapter 1, I presented some of the statistics of gender inequality and toxicity on a world scale. The measures are fairly rough, and hardly ever go beyond the crude classification of people into 'men' and 'women'. But they are what we currently know. If we had to describe, on a postcard to a being from another galaxy, the state of gender justice among humans in the early twenty-first century CE, what would we say?

The great majority of the very rich and powerful on planet Earth are men. They compete among each other for more wealth and power, and mobilize workforces of both men and women to do so. There is a good deal of violence on the planet, most of it by men, and a good part of it from armed forces, police and prison systems, overwhelmingly composed of men. Women's average incomes are a little over half of men's average incomes, less than that in the poorest countries. As well as doing an increasing amount of wage labour, women do most of the world's care-giving and unpaid domestic labour, and most of the work of bringing up young children. Masculinities and femininities are generally constructed around these conditions, and many of the planet's inhabitants accept them without protest. People who violate accepted patterns of masculinity and femininity often suffer, and are sometimes killed. In many parts of the world men hold power within the household, and there are few places where women do; but negotiation often equalizes domestic relationships in practice. Most of the authority figures in religion, science and the arts are men; women are allocated specific and usually limited roles in those spheres. However, women's access to education has been rising world-wide for the last two generations. This has gone so far that, in rich countries, young women's levels of education now exceed men's. In these countries women's health and expectation of life is also, on average, better than men's. The balance of power and benefit is far from equal, world-wide, but it is more equal than it was in earlier generations.

Hmm, a long postcard. But perhaps this gives a basis for thinking about the political processes that have brought us to this point, and may take us beyond it.