What's New in New Forms of Organizing? On the Construction of Gender in Project-Based Work

Monica Lindgren and Johann Packendorff

KTH – Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm and Stockholm School of Economics;
KTH – Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm

ABSTRACT   In several industries, projects are now the normal form of work for individuals. The consequences of project work have not so far been subject to critical inquiry, however. This implies inquiry not only on how people handle project work at work, it also means inquiring into how they live their lives when working by projects. In this paper, we study this from a constructionist gender perspective, in which project work is seen as an ongoing construction of patterns of femininity and masculinity in society. The aim of the paper is to contribute to an understanding of how project work is related to the ongoing construction of femininity and masculinity in the work and lives of human beings.

From a narrative study of individuals in the same project team in an IT-consultancy company, we discuss masculinization and femininization in project-based work. It appears that current project work practices imply reproduction of masculinities such as rationality, efficiency, control, devotion to work etc, while femininization is instead found in the rhetoric of the organizational context and the expectations on newly recruited women. The organization was in the process of femininization through rhetoric on 'family friendliness', but everyday life for consultants was not spent at the organization but in project teams in the customers' offices. Projects are special in the sense that they are clearly delimited episodes of work in which it is possible to apply entirely different norms than 'outside' the project – which makes the tendency to reproduce traditional masculinities even stronger.

PROJECTIFICATION OF SOCIETY AND INDIVIDUAL LIFE

During the last decades, projects have become a common form of work organization in all sectors of the economy. One reason for this development is that many products and services have become so customized and complex that their execution demands an unique sequence of actions, another that the increasing pace of

change in society results in an abundance of change and development reforms in organizations (Ekstedt et al., 1999). An increasing number of firms become 'project-based', i.e. firms where almost all operations are organized as projects and where permanent structures fill the function of administrative support (cf. Cicmil and Hodgson, 2006; Nandhakumar and Jones, 2001).

The basic reason for this diffusion seems to be that the project – viewed as a task specific and time-limited form of working – is perceived as a way of avoiding all the classic problems of bureaucracy with which most 'normal' organizations are struggling (Packendorff, 1995; Pinto, 1996). In that sense, project-based work is a part of the wave of new 'post-bureaucratic' organizational forms that has entered most industries during the last decades (cf. Clegg and Courpasson, 2004; Gill, 2002; Hodgson, 2004).

The project form is strictly defined in project management theory, a set of formal methods and techniques derived from systems thinking and operations analysis (Packendorff, 1995; Söderlund, 2004). Project work in practice is usually depicted as an opposite to 'ordinary work', an opposite positively described as challenging, knowledge-intensive and controversial (cf. Gill, 2002; Pinto, 1996). Projects imply new, unique tasks, time limits, clear objectives, selected teams etc, and a projectified work life will thus become a journey through a number of such limited task and social contexts (Jones, 1996). As a post-bureaucratic work form, projects could thus imply work lives characterized by complexity, uncertainty, high involvement and continuous negotiations concerning tasks, responsibilities and boundaries (cf. Hirschhorn and Gilmore, 1993; Mohrman and Cohen, 1995). This is obvious where people with temporary employment are concerned, but also for those working by projects with full-time employment as a basis.

Changes in the ways people work imply changes in how people live their lives and relate to each other. Industrialism implied a far-reaching hierarchization and specialization in society, which also came to characterize human relations insofar that traditional masculine norms on the importance of formal positions and merits influenced how people interacted with each other. From a gender perspective, bureaucratic organizations and industrial mass production can be seen as contributing to a gender order that manifested itself in the whole life of modern human beings (cf. Ferguson, 1984). When new forms of organization and work emerge (such as virtual corporations, distance work, projects) it is important to analyse how these are related to how human beings live their lives in future society (cf. Kunda, 1992; Watson and Harris, 1999). While this has been a part of a general discussion within gender studies concerning, for example, knowledge-intensive work (Alvesson, 1998; Gill, 2002), de-bureaucratization of organizations (Morgan, 1996), high-tech work (Burris, 1996; Kvande and Rasmussen, 1994), and work-family life boundaries (Fletcher, 1998), consequences of project-based work for the life situation as whole have not been studied specifically using a constructionist notion of gender.

The question is then in what way projectification of work life is related to life as a whole for human beings, and how it contributes to changes in the gender order. While there are parts of project management thinking that could imply an increased importance of traditional femininities (such as teamwork, absence of hierarchies etc), there are also tendencies such as an increased variation in work-load, short-sightedness, control of objects and goal rationality (i.e. already established masculine ways of thinking and working, cf. Buckle and Thomas, 2003; Collinson and Hearn, 1996; Kerfoot and Knights, 1996). In a study of social workers, Mulinari (1996) claims that projects are constructed as masculine phenomena, aimed at establishing control over time and space and at rational planning for active change. She then views the project as the opposite of traditional 'permanent' forms of organizing, aiming at the taken-for-granted continuity of everyday life (i.e. a feminine way of thinking). In a similar vein, Buckle and Thomas (2003) deconstruct the international standards for project management (as they are expressed in the PMBOK – Project Management Body of Knowledge), and find that masculine concepts and conceptions exert a far more direct influence over how the content of project management practices are defined than do the feminine ones. Another line of thought – albeit based on statistical studies counting people of different sexes in project-based industries – is that many project-based industries and organizations maintain a male culture that is hard for women to accept (Cartwright and Gale, 1995). Gill (2002) draws similar conclusions from her study of new media workers, claiming that the notion of egalitarianism in the industry is a way to hide the remaining male dominance behind individualist rhetoric.

As many researchers within the poststructuralist gender studies tradition have pointed out, conceptions of what is masculine and feminine are not stable over time. They are every day subject to continuous reproduction or change by people in society (cf. Billing and Alvesson, 1994; Butler, 1999; Calás and Smircich, 1996; Collinson and Hearn, 1996; Kerfoot and Knights, 1996). It is thus more interesting to study what conceptions of gender are reproduced and changed through project work, rather than aiming for static conclusions concerning if the project form of working is masculine or feminine by nature (cf. Alvesson, 1998).

To conclude, project work is a widespread and increasingly important work form in many contemporary organizations. The consequences of project work have not so far been subject to critical inquiry, however – most project management research has been concerned with internal project efficiency (Cicmil and Hodgson, 2006; Packendorff, 1995; Söderlund, 2004), and most work life research has been concerned with traditional forms of organizing (Barley and Kunda, 1998). The perspective employed here (i.e. the consequences of project work for human beings) implies inquiry not only on how people handle project work at work, it also means inquiring into how they live their lives when working by projects (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2006). In this paper, we study this from a constructionist gender perspective, interpreting project work as an ongoing construction of patterns of

femininity and masculinity in society. The aim of the paper is to contribute to an understanding of how project work is related to the ongoing construction of femininity and masculinity in the work and lives of human beings. While primarily addressing the emergent literature on work life aspects of project work through including the gender perspective, we also intend to contribute to the ongoing debate on new organizational forms.

The paper is structured as follows. First, we discuss the implications of a gender perspective on work life and new organizational forms. Then, an empirical study of a number of individuals working with the same project in an IT-company follows. Their stories are analysed in terms of construction of femininity and masculinity, and we conclude the paper with a discussion on femininization and masculinization in project-based work and new organizational forms.

A GENDER PERSPECTIVE ON NEW FORMS OF ORGANIZING

Relationships between masculinity and femininity have been discussed both in theory and practice for several years. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1953) is well known in both research and media, but it is only during the last decades that the gender system has been recognized as one of the power systems of society (cf. Scott, 1986). Within management theory, we recognize Kanter's study, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1977), as path breaking in the sense that it precluded a vast stream of fieldwork and literature in the intersection between management research and gender studies.

Hirdman (1990) claims that the gender system is the foundation for social patterns identifiable in most societies, patterns that are constituted by two logics: the separation of sexes (segregation) and the primacy of masculine norms (hierarchization). Even though there are differences between societies in time and space, these two logics can be found as well in the organization of society as in the ongoing construction of identities. Male and female bodies are attributed masculine and feminine characteristics, and what happens to be regarded as 'feminine' is thus separated and subordinated to what happens to be regarded as 'masculine' normality (Butler, 1999). Butler claims that 'there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results' (Butler, 1999, p. 33). In other words, gender is incessantly constituted in our daily actions and interactions (Martin, 2001).

In this study, we focus our interest primarily on how gender (i.e. culturally constructed notions on femininity and masculinity) is constructed in project work, and the consequences of this for human beings (i.e. both men and women). Femininity and masculinity constitute two different discursive dimensions and both female and male bodies combine these dimensions in their ongoing identity construction (Hodgson, 2000; Kerfoot and Knights, 1996). Hence, every man

and woman has access to both femininities and masculinities (Billing and Alvesson, 2000; Holmquist and Lindgren, 2002).

Masculinity is usually characterized through toughness, impersonality, independence, rationality, reductionism, competition, control etc, while femininity is defined as the opposite in terms of intuition, emotionality, caring, empathy, interdependence, holistic thinking, cooperation etc (Gherardi, 1994; Hines, 1992; Kanter, 1977). The relationship is dynamic by nature, however, and what is regarded as feminine and masculine depends on the social and temporal context (Billing and Alvesson, 2000). Moreover, there are also different types of discourses within, for example, masculinity (cf. Collinson and Hearn, 1994, 1996; Kerfoot and Knights, 1993). That something is regarded as 'masculine' does not mean that all individuals with a masculine identity approves of it – i.e. hunting or boxing. Notions on ethnicity and class further complicate the analysis in the sense that cultural differences imply differences in what is seen as masculine and feminine behaviour. We can thus also relate such a discussion to different industries; one might, for example, say that the Information Technology (IT) industry – which is the empirical basis of this paper – is regarded as a masculine one (Kvande and Rasmussen, 1994). And within single human beings there are contradictions and ambiguity concerning the relation to institutionalized identity bases (cf. Collinson, 2003; Kondo, 1990). Femininity and masculinity is thus regarded in this paper as constructed in time and space and subject to reconstruction over historical epochs and life paths of human beings (Lindgren and Wåhlin, 2001).

Given these notions on the construction of femininities and masculinities in work life, the main question is how new forms of organizing – such as project work – contribute to the ongoing construction of these notions. Is there a discursive shift in emphasis from one to another, or it is even so that gender discourses are basically changed? During the last decade, there have been increasing claims that the present development of society will imply an increased importance of traditional feminine characteristics and that traditional masculinities will have to step back due to ineffectiveness (cf. Fondas, 1996). There are also general notions of an increased emphasis on life quality issues and 'soft values' in work life (Perlow, 1997), notions that can be interpreted as an ongoing 'femininization' of work life discourse. It is, for example, not unusual that women are expected to get higher positions in new, non-bureaucratic organizational forms and that they make conscious choices not to organize by hierarchies (Ferguson, 1984).

The problem of the abovementioned claims is that they often rest upon a static notion of what is 'feminine' and what is 'masculine'. As earlier stated, we view gender as ongoing constructions in everyday life, implying that people are embedded in institutionalized views of femininities and masculinities but that they also develop these views through ongoing interaction with other people – at work and outside work. When leaders introduce new values and practices in organizational

settings, new and alternative views of work tasks, intra-organizational relations, leadership, careers, work/family linkages, etc meet the old ones. People make sense of such changes in differing ways, drawing upon existing views of what is feminine and what is masculine – which could also mean changes in their views of gender. Such changes are rarely simple and straightforward, however; it has, for example, been claimed that while bureaucracy is in itself not an organizational form characterized by femininity (Ferguson, 1984), the measures taken by organizations in order to enhance working conditions for women (such as equal opportunities initiatives) often follow the bureaucratic logic (Morgan, 1996). For the study of how project-based work can be related to changed life conditions and reconstructed notions of femininity and masculinity, it is thus central to analyse narratives as expressions of femininization and masculinization of work life rather than as static accounts of institutionalized gender categories.

EMPIRICAL CASE: PROJECT C

Construction of femininities and masculinities in project-based work has been studied in the empirical setting of an affluent company within the Information Technology sector, here called 'Compute'. Our study of Compute was a part of a larger study on project-based work from an individual perspective, and we wanted to find organizational contexts that were explicitly organized as project-based firms in order to be able to analyse how gender was produced and reproduced in such settings. The consultancy sector, not least the IT part of it, appeared at the time to be in the forefront of this development towards project-based organizing. On its homepage, Compute presents itself as an employee-friendly employer, and in the consulting department – in which we made our study – equal opportunities ambitions have led to a situation in which about one third of the employees are women.

Compute is a Swedish subsidiary of a large US software developer, and has been very profitable for years despite the general turbulence in the IT industry. The company sell, install and maintain a range of different business systems to large and medium-sized firms. When one of the salespersons at Compute receives an order, the consulting manager assigns a project leader and a project team of consultants to implement the software into the computer network of the customer.

When we made this empirical study, we had the previous experience that individual experiences of project-based organizing should be studied within one and the same project. By having interviewees referring to the same delimited work episode, the differences between them in the construction of everyday experiences became much clearer than if narratives from people without a common project experience were analysed. The project was to be 'just another project' for this firm – not one of the extreme success or disaster stories of which project management

literature are so full – and when we found this project we interviewed the project team. We also wanted a project that was in its closing phase, still not formally evaluated (formal project evaluations often tend to create an 'official story' about a project in organizations). In the case presented below, we interviewed four individuals (here called Eric, Carl, Matthew, and Eve) on how they perceived their work in 'Project C' and the relation to private life during that period. The project was, according to James (the resigning consulting manager), a typical project. It was neither big nor small, neither a brilliant success nor a disastrous failure. Project C implied installation of a data warehouse solution at the large car retailer Trucks with the intention to end inventory problems in their spare parts operations. The project was thus seen as a common episode of work practices during which masculinities and femininities in their work lives were constructed and reconstructed.

At the time of the study, all interviewees were full-time employees at Compute's consulting department. James, a married business graduate with two children, was 35 years old at the time, and had spent his entire career in the software industry. Eric, who was about to take over James' position as consulting manager, was 34 years old, father of two children and married to an engineer. Like all the other team members, he had a degree in computer science. He had spent his entire career within Compute, and he was now head of Project C. Also in the team were programming consultants Carl and Matthew, 28 and 26 years old, respectively. Carl lived with his fiancée, a medical student, while Matthew had just broken up with his girlfriend and now shared a flat with a friend. Eve, 38 years old, had recently been recruited to Compute to improve project methodologies, and participated in the team as an adviser. She lived downtown on her own. The fifth member of the team, Andrew, worked in the team during the first two months only, after which he went on paternity leave, and was thus excluded from the study.

The study was made with a narrative approach, through individuals' stories about the project and their lives in general during the project. During the last decade, the narrative approach has been taken far beyond its origins within the field of literary analysis (Boje, 2001; Czarniawska, 1997; Gabriel, 2000; Lindgren and Wåhlin, 2001). It is emphasized that human beings are exposed to numerous different, sometimes contradictory and competing, discourses, and the narrative on the personal work life episodes can thus fill a sense-making function for both individuals and their social contexts. Recent developments in the use of narrative methods stress the importance to make a distinction between narratives and stories and to take into consideration what happens 'before narrative' (Boje, 2001; Gabriel, 2000). A story can be seen as an account of incidents or events, and a narrative comes after. 'Story is an "ante" state of affairs existing previously to narrative; it is in advance of narrative. Used as an adverb, "ante" combined with narrative means earlier than narrative' (Boje, 2001, p. 1).

This implied that individuals were asked for spontaneous stories on their lives, including both work and life in general during the implementation time of Project C. These interviews lasted for about two to three hours with each person. At the end of every interview, we spent some time clarifying details and critical incidents in their stories. From our theoretical preconceptions we had identified some themes to be covered by their stories: their view of how the project had unfolded, their view on work as related to life in general, their view on themselves and others, their view on participating in organizations and projects, their view on boundaries between project, organization and life in general. After typing the tape-recorded material, we extracted different narratives linked to the ongoing production and reproduction of femininities and masculinities in project-based work by means of thematic analysis. Boje (2001) described thematic analysis out from deductive and inductive approaches, and in this case it has been a combination of these two ways, where a number of general theoretical themes have formed a framework for the inductive extractment of specific narratives. Inspired by Martin's (2001) method we have thus emphasized narratives concerning the production and reproduction of projects, how the individuals relate their way of living to what happens in such 'projects', and the relations between organization and 'project'. In order to find instances of femininization and masculinization processes, we took a special interest in contradictions, competing discourses and critical incidents in the interviews (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 1999; Lindgren and Wåhlin, 2001). Below, the empirical material is organized along different narrative themes that that were extracted given this interest.

Projects as the Rational Solution

> I think project work is inevitable. If you are a consultant, you work in projects. I don't think there is any other way. Projects are good in the sense that you define exactly what to do and when it is to be ready. (Matthew)

Project C was the beginning of a long-term business relation between Compute and Trucks. It was thus important for Compute to make a good first impression and show that they were able to handle all of Truck's problems. The seemingly uncomplicated task of constructing an inventory system became the obvious project to start with.

Together with the system designer Andrew, Eric spent January and February designing the architecture of the system. When it was ready in early March, he assigned the system development consultants Carl and Matthew to the project team. Their common view was that Carl and Matthew should be able to deliver a functioning system to the customer by the middle of June. In reality, this did not happen until the middle of December. Hardly troubled by this, the consultants

now look forward to new and better project experiences. Eve describes what the ideal project should be like:

> First of all, a dedicated customer. It all goes back to the contract process; the customer must be there and have the right expectations. It is also important to have enough time preparing for the project so that everything is clear from the start. Good team members, who think that the project is going to be great fun. Moreover, that you run it on time, without any major disagreements. Everybody should work with everybody else, towards a common goal. That's what the ideal project should be like. But in reality, projects are never ideal. (Eve)

Responsible Individuals and Dedicated Teams

After finally having delivered the project in December, the project team celebrated together with a satisfied customer. Eric was to deliver further software installations to them, but he still considered Project C a failure:

> It is my responsibility as project manager to deliver the right thing at the right time to the right cost. I took it quite hard, I must say, despite the satisfied customer. I should have seen the problems coming. I am a very good project manager when I am able to devote all my time to the project. I'm really good, if I may say so. (Eric)

As the project manager, Eric viewed himself as fully responsible for everything that happens in the project, and he expected the same degree of self-responsibility from his team members too:

> We try to make people plan their own time. If you have a deadline, you have a deadline. It shows a lack of respect to the project and all the people in the project if you go away. A lack of respect to the customer, the project manager, the team members, you put them all in a bad situation. (Eric)

To Eve, team recruitment was crucial to project success, and she wanted people that were both committed and technically competent around her. When she sets up a project team she wants the best ones at each task, but in practice, she has to take those available for the moment:

> If they are tired after earlier projects, I just have to go on anyway. The only thing that I cannot change in their schedules is planned vacations. You know, a project is an outburst, you work in a team for some months and then it is over. It is always stress in the end, you can't avoid that. And then it starts again. First, there

is a party, then there is a day off, and then you go on to the next project. I'm never really away from it. (Eve)

Time as a Scarce Resource

What I have been doing earlier – and this is of course nothing that anybody here should know about – is that I have been working 11–12 hours a day on the average. It is OK with my girlfriend – she also works a lot – but I am always tired. Throughout the first part of Project C I felt 'burned out' from the previous project, and I could not really find the energy to commit myself. (Carl)

During spring, the project proceeded as planned, with Carl and Matthew working at the headquarters of Trucks while Eric worked with other projects and managerial duties at Compute. Andrew had planned to be on paternity leave for some months, and he left the project team in the end of March. In May, unforeseen hardware problems appeared in the installation process, and Carl and Matthew spent increasingly long hours at work:

They worked very hard throughout May. Once – and this is something they will tell you about – they actually worked until early in the morning. Then they drove around trying to find a hotel in the vicinity, but since all hotels were fully booked, they returned to Trucks and continued their work. It was insane! It is OK to work like that for a single week, but in the long run it is harmful for everybody involved. (Eric)

Neither Carl nor Matthew recalled this incident, not even when being reminded of it. The problems appeared when they were to start running test data through the system, they said. It appeared that Trucks' server had an insufficient memory capacity, and they had a computer policy not allowing external consultants direct access to the server. Matthew got 'incredibly irritated' by this, and felt frustrated and stressed. When the project was supposed to be finished in May, Matthew worked 100 extra hours, and describes it as:

. . . throwing away one month of my life. Despite all that work, we could not finish the project anyway, so I went on vacation as planned in June. After summer, I was scheduled for a new project at CellCom, so I could only be at Trucks in evenings and weekends. Our contact persons only worked daytime, so our communication deteriorated. Sometimes, I was actually afraid to meet them in the corridors; I knew that they had been complaining to Eric. We actually called Andrew during his leave, he should have been available the whole time, I think. (Matthew)

The basic reason for the problems in Project C is the general project thinking in the IT industry, Carl said:

> . . . because the salespersons will always promise the customers quicker and cheaper projects than possible. They will always make them believe that we will fix their problems through a fast installation of our software, but in practice, we always have to make far-reaching modifications. And those modifications mean delays. When the project schedule cracks down, we just have to sit there with our extra hours. It has been like that in almost all my projects. (Carl)

To some extent, Carl's project manager Eric agreed:

> Well, you don't actually plan for that kind of work peaks. When you make a time schedule, you estimate the duration of each work package and then add some slack. You don't plan for any bigger problems. No projects go exactly as planned and you don't know everything from start. But if you were to investigate and estimate everything beforehand, you would never come to the implementation phase. (Eric)

Eve, who had worked with IT project management since the 1980s, thought that there is a long-term development towards faster and cheaper projects putting everybody in the industry under time pressures:

> Customers are extremely cost-conscious today, and put high demands on their systems. Before, there were no limits upon how much money that could be spent on computers. (Eve)

More Women Would Be Good for the Company

> When I became consulting manager, there were only young guys here. Kind of immature atmosphere, a lot of jokes about gay people and women. It's not good for the internal climate, not for our customer relations, not good for anyone really. For some years now, we have recruited women amost exclusively, and now we have about 40 per cent women in the consulting department. Women work more and complain less, and we actually often give them higher salaries than they ask for. Men always want more money than we think they deserve. You should really only hire women, but then I guess you would run into other problems. (James)

James' ambition to bring in more women seemed undisputed throughout the consulting department, and so is the conviction that women are good at IT

consulting and project work. The relative lack of women in Project C was unintentional, since the policy of recruiting women relates to the consulting department as a whole and not to the single project teams. Eve explained her view of female project managers:

> Women are better at keeping many things going simultaneously. That is a proven fact and we should really only have women as project managers since that job is all about coordination. The best project manager I have met was actually a man, however. He got the whole team going along with him, and he was able to hit upwards and defend the project. Young women often do not hit upwards as hard as they should. You must be able to tell the boss to shut his mobile phone off, knowing the tricks of the trade, get respect. (Eve)

Eve thought that women are not always as competitive, and that they want a better work-life balance than the one offered by the IT industry. Matthew was of the opinion that computer work is stimulating not least because of his interest in technology. He deprecated that so few women are attracted to the IT industry, and like Eve he explains this by referring to the male dominance in computer science programmes at university:

> Some guys here are quite immature sometimes. Eric and James try to find women, but there are not many available. There are more women in software firms like Compute than in the hardware firms, and all our top salespersons are women. Women work as good as men, but there is a better atmosphere in the team when it is mixed. In general, the IT industry is a man's world. (Matthew)

Eric agrees, but thinks that women could be better at negotiating and demanding things from the company:

> The difference is visible when we hire young university graduates. Men are more self-confident and demanding, and they are able to negotiate a nice salary from the beginning. Women often accept our initial offer, because that is good money too. As an employer, you don't throw money after people unless they really want us to. Often, there is a salary gap between men and women already from the start, and is is not a natural thing for an employer to close that gap later on. (Eric)

The Family-Friendly Organization

> This is an American company, you are expected to work a lot but you are also paid well for it. We have a utilization rate of about 75 per cent, much higher than our competitors. The basic salary requires 120 billed hours per month and

then you can work overtime up to 10 hours a week with extra pay. We don't have fixed working hours, which I use to leave at 4 pm to pick up my children at school. If someone constantly works ten hours a day, you let them do that for a month or two, but then the responsible manager tells them to calm down. Sometimes you even have to order them to go home. It's quite usual with a lot of work before deadline in a project, but if the level is constantly high something is probably wrong. (James)

The youngest employee also shared James' image of the family-friendly organization:

It's a good thing here at Compute, managers respect our free time, and they don't want us to work too much. It is a sound culture in that sense. If you compare to other IT companies, we really take care of the employees here. You can control your time and take responsibility yourself. If you get the stuff done, you can leave after lunch on Friday and work some more hours another time. (Matthew)

Despite his high workload the past year, Eric was very satisfied with Compute as an employer, and he intended to stay for several years. Unlike most companies in the industry, Compute generously provides development opportunities and high salaries, he said. Everybody in the team agreed that Compute actively tried to create a work situation where their employees can combine successful careers and commitments to families and hobbies:

My philosophy as an employer is to give people the opportunity to maintain functioning private lives. I think that if your private life falls apart, your career will fall apart as well. I don't want people to work more than seven or eight hours a day. It is not a failure if they sometimes work ten to twelve hours – we all have to accept that, and we are paid for it as well. We had a recrutment interview with a young woman the other day; she had just been at a similar interview at one of the big firms. They had told her that she was expected to work 60 hours a week. To me, that is a materialistic view of human beings! (Eric)

Eric thought that paternity leave was something that the company should support, and he tried not to call Andrew during his leave, despite the systems architecture problems in Project C. To secure the future of the organization, Compute must be able to retain their employees even when they start to form families:

Most of our consultants are between 25 and 30 years old, and they will start to form families in the years to come. It will imply some serious planning on my behalf, but we must embrace it if we want to keep our personnel. There is a good

basis for that, both James and I have small children, and Compute encourages individualized solutions for how you can and want to work when you have small children. (Eric)

Private Life – Projectified or Nothing At All

My priorities are with my family. If I would have problems with the kids or in my marriage, I would not be able to work like this. Of course, it has been like a jigsaw puzzle this year, since I have worked 400 hours extra. You know, I have a fixed number of hours to charge the customer, but my employment contract also says that all commitments shall be fulfilled. (Eric)

The one having the most relaxed view of work, careers and private life was Matthew:

By 9 o'clock in the morning I am at work, and I deliver the seven hours. Sometimes I put in some extra hours. I usually end at 5 pm. I then go home and watch TV with my roommate, and occasionally I see some friends downtown. Sometimes you try to start some projects at home, but it never lasts. We use to joke about it, my roommate, and me, when you find out something new to do, it always become too intense. You start to play squash or practice long-distance running . . . You run for a month and then you just stop. (Matthew)

The IT industry is a work-intensive one, Carl said, and referred both to himself and to his network of friends from university. Almost no one he knew had children, and many lived as singles. He wanted a family himself, and he thought that he would then return to his hometown in order to be able to live a more balanced life:

I think that I will still be working, but I will cut down on the hours and I will take leaves of absence whenever possible. When I'll raise a kid I want to do every-thing I can for it, my parents have done that as well. The possibilities of doing so is not so good in this town, unfortunately, so when I become a father I will probably live somewhere far away. In Northern Sweden or so. (Carl)

Eve provided her own career in project management as an example. In her previous job, she started to work in smaller projects, but then became project leader for an 'incredible project big as hell' with 16 team members and a large budget:

I felt totally burned out after that project. I worked 65 hours and six days per week for half a year, and I guess that it was about the third time that I did not

have any friends left. You don't have that if you never leave the workplace. Saturday was my day off, all other days I worked. (Eve)

At Compute, most consultants had not formed families yet, but at her previous job parental responsibilities was a never-ending source of discussions:

> For instance, one female programmer always left early to pick up her 10 year old boy at school. It was hard to accept – in that age, kids can take care of themselves, so we felt it was a bad excuse to get away. We also had a widowed man with a 12-year-old son. He worked long days Monday through Thursday, knowing that the two grandmothers took care of the child, and then he took the whole Friday off. It was a much better attitude to work, and everyone accepted it. I am not saying that people should always work; I have actually sent people home several times. But those who always arrive late and leave early, they create extra work for everybody else. (Eve)

To Carl, maintaining some sort of work-life balance was a matter of monitoring your own behaviour and voicing any discontent to his superiors:

> A lot of people don't say so much when they feel bad. I cannot be silent myself, I like to yell when I'm tired – it's enough, damn it! Then it is hard to change things in practice, of course, and that goes for me as well. But it is good to let your feelings out and make others aware about how you feel. (Carl)

ANALYSIS: FEMININIZATION AND MASCULINIZATION IN PROJECT WORK

From our empirical study we have identified thematic descriptions of project work and of how individuals handle consequences of project work in their daily life. We see different expressions of project work as an ongoing gender construction and we can identify expressions of the relationship between project work and life in general. The last theme is about separating projects, organization and private life – generated through our reflection around contradictions within their stories.

Project Work as an Ongoing Gendered Construction

Reproducing rationality as an ideal for project work. From the empirical study, we make the interpretation that the project as a work form implies a masculinization of work lives. Our interviewees describe projects as necessary efforts to achieve total control over a course of action through the construction of boundaries in time, space and scope. This rationalist view thus also dominates individual descriptions and evaluations of different projects. One example is Eric, who blames himself for the delays

and cost overruns in Project C. In each new project, individuals internalize the responsibility to meet un-realistic demands by reference to commitment and professionalism (cf. Hodgson, 2002).

Within the projects, the time aspect seems to be the basic structural condition around which work is organized (cf. Nandhakumar and Jones, 2001). Since all customers want their problems solved immediately and at a very low cost, most projects are given unrealistically short time estimates. This is reproduced through a 'tacit agreement' between customers and providers, an expectation influencing all sales negotiations and thereby impossible for individual actors to resist. Moreover, most projects are regarded as impossible to plan in detail (cf. the unforeseeable hardware problems in Project C), which is viewed as problematic but unavoidable. Eric says that they cannot plan for all possible problems in the projects, but at the same time, they are all aware that most projects do not conform to time and cost limits. Their daily acceptance that project plans still represent the best possible practice is an ongoing masculinization of project work.

Reproducing projects as competitive challenges. Basically, Compute employ a 'go for the stars, you'll reach the trees' philosophy, implying that human beings are confronted with very high demands which make them perform better than they thought possible themselves (cf. Kidder, 2000; Lindgren and Packendorff, 2006). Despite earlier experiences of failing projects, each new project is always going to be the ideal and successful one – and individuals also use these unrealistic expectations to judge their own performance afterwards. The earlier experiences of incoming individuals, such as them being tired due to earlier projects, become irrelevant to the new work episode. The expectation that there will be deadline stress in the end of the project is also institutionalized; even the experienced project managers view that as inevitable (cf. Eve). This traditional masculine way of reproducing project work as a competitive challenge is hidden behind feminine rhetoric on taking care of the employees and enforcing restrictions on extra work. In the end, project delivery is the main concern.

Each time they launch a new project in this way, it implies another instance of masculinization of the work lives of Compute's employees. If you show you are a 'good' project leader (i.e. being able to deliver a project in a satisfactory manner) you will be assigned more exciting and stimulating projects next time. Otherwise, someone else gets them. Hence, different forms of masculine expressions are filled with tensions and create problems for men as well. 'Careerism' and competition to obtain material security and dignity can intensify insecurity in individuals (Collinson, 2003).

The reproduction of friendship and closeness? In project management theory, there is also an image of project teams as characterized by friendship, closeness and affinity (cf.

Gill, 2002; Miles, 1964; Pinto, 1996) – often equipped with the warning that an excess of team spirit might endanger goal fulfilment (Miles, 1964). According to the people interviewed here, the teams rarely work together; it is rather so that project success is seen as dependent on breaking down the task into small pieces that can be taken care of by lonely individuals. Insufficient team communication *per se* is not an unusual factor behind project failures, they say. In this sense, projects are made efficient in the same masculinist and reductionist way in which Taylorism made industrial operations efficient: by splitting wholes into parts, goals into tasks and collectives into individuals. The difference is of course that in case of failure, Taylorism blamed management for bad planning and unrealistic goals, while the university-educated project workers of today have to assume responsibility themselves (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2006). Since projects are well-defined, separate entities, it is also much easier for management to evaluate performance and hold individuals accountable in project-based work than in the traditional, vast corporations. This is most evident in the characterization of good project managers as having the (masculine) courage to defend their project against their superiors; you are not only supposed to take responsibility for your project, you are also expected to fight for it.

Reproducing technology, men and women. In this particular industry, technology is also a part of the work form, which they mean are reasons for difficulties in employing women due to traditional gendered notions on computer-based work. Technology is seen as masculine and what is masculine is seen as an issue for men (and not for women) (Gill, 2002). Compute management seek to recruit women, but they say there are too few women that meet the requirements on formal competence. The women that are actually recruited are not only expected to be competent in the field of computer science, they are also expected to compensate for men's questionable social habits by bringing in 'female skills' such as coordination abilities, relational expertise, and thus a positive impact on work morale, company loyalty and team climate in general. Thereby, the notions of programming expertise as something masculine and team climate issues as feminine are reconstructed and embodied in men and women in the recruitment process. While active recruitment of women represent a process of femininization of the company, women are also reconstructed as 'deviant others'; women are expected to have double competences, both the formal/technical competence in computer science and the social/female competence that they are perceived to embody. The same is not required from men.

   Problems with technology are just a natural part of work circumstances; it affects the project but cannot be affected very much by the project team. They know almost for certain, that there are going to be some problems with delays in the project, but the explanation is always that technology has its own logic that cannot fully be captured and controlled by means of careful planning. Moreover, the way

technology is used in the work setting (i.e. lone individuals working by themselves) can also be seen as a masculinization in that work is deprived of relational practices (cf. Fletcher, 1998). Technology also introduces problems of social belonging; the consultants spend almost all their charged hours at the customers' offices (where the problems to solve and the systems to change are physically located) and some of them even identify more with the customer organization than they do with Compute.

Project Work and Life in General

Producing the family-friendly company through reproducing the work-family boundary. Fletcher (1998) suggests that a gender analysis of work life must include inquiry into the work-family boundary. The traditional masculine way of separating work from family life implies neglect for the employee's relations outside work, which leads to assumptions such as that family life means less commitment at work and that the male-dominated public spheres are entirely different from the female-dominated private ones. From this perspective, project work practices imply a masculinization in that work is separated from private life and that work is prioritized over private life.

   In the Project C team, this could be seen in different ways. Eric viewed the two spheres of life in terms of conflict, and found it necessary to maintain and strengthen the boundary between them. In the case of Matthew, it was evident that private life was just a relaxation from work and not an end in itself. Carl was of the same opinion, even though he felt that this was a negative and unavoidable consequence of his present work conditions. Eve used her free time differently in that she actively maintained social networks, but she still was of the opinion that work and private life were two different things. It appeared that she did not think that project work should be affected too much by private life, and that other persons around the project worker should be involved in taking care of family matters. Traditional masculine priorities and views on the relation between work life and family life are thereby reproduced through Eve's daily management of projects. If the boundary between work and private life is indeed relaxed, it is always in the sense that work needs more time that must be taken from private life – but not in the other direction.

Reproducing the primacy of work. Project work, as it has been described so far, is in many ways similar to managerial work in that it does not only require long hours but also a readiness on behalf of the individual to work extra hours at short notice (cf. Watson and Harris, 1999). This implies that everyday life is characterized by detailed time planning and that activities in evenings and weekends are narrowed down to the most necessary ones. Work is allowed to take the time and space

necessary with the eternal excuse that it will get better later on. For some, this might be true (e.g. for Eric who has been rewarded with a managerial post), but few follow Eve's example and take time-outs without obvious reasons like paternity/maternity leave. Time-outs seem to be used primarily as a relaxation from work, not as a way to reconsider and change one's way of living: afterwards, life goes back to what it was before.

The consultants and their managers always have a high workload, and many of them feel inadequate since they have many parallel things to do and lack the time for long-term personal development. Since they are always working on urgent matters (cf. Lindahl, 2006; Perlow, 1997), they do not have the energy to initiate stimulating activities in evenings and weekends and it is hard for them to have many social contacts unless they actively plan for them. Carl was more or less 'burned out' throughout Project C, he lost interest in things, and the solution for him was a conscious ambition to work less hours.

An interesting aspect is that they all maintain that Compute is much better than any other company is; they work a lot, but others work much more. Even though this might be partly the case, it is still used as some sort of justification for whatever happens in the consultants' own work situation. Any resistance to the working conditions could thus be seen as illegitimate, unnecessary and even as an example of poor individual performance (Hodgson, 2002).

We have already observed that many young people live as singles, permanently or while waiting for the choice to do something else. Single life is not acknowledged as a life form in itself in traditional life form literature (Jakobsen and Karlsson, 1993), but it is definitely an important phenomenon in modern urban life (Gill, 2002) that is related to gender and work. When reproducing the image of the ideal project worker, Compute and other project-based organizations tend to 'point out' a person that is fully flexible to devote time to projects when needed – a person without any private-life hindrances such as spouses, children, voluntary work-responsibilities etc. The traditional masculine 'norm' of devotion to work and career is strongly reproduced in project work with its recurring and un-planned periods of extreme stress and workload, which in the post-housewife society tend to reproduce also a private life where dependencies on spouses and children are postponed or deemed impossible. Those who have families usually live by dual careers, which – theoretically – mean that both partners pursue careers and therefore must share responsibility for children, housework etc.

Separating Projects, Organization and Private Life

In Compute, work is said to be consciously designed to allow people to have well-functioning family lives, and top management is most proud of this. The individual consultants have also understood these messages from their employer in

that top management do not want them to work too hard and that a rich family life is seen as an asset rather than a burden. At the same time, many of them work very hard, which means that when they come home to their home and/or families, they lack time and energy to live that rich family life. This contradiction is perhaps most visible where Carl is concerned; he admits that he has been working eleven hours a day, but he does not want his manager (Eric) to know about it – thereby indicating that long working days may happen, but not officially. Likewise, Eric tells us about the night-work incident as an example of bad working conditions, and he expects Carl and Matthew to use that story against him for critical purposes – which they never did. The organization is thus equipped with femininity through rhetoric on 'family friendliness', but everyday life for the consultant is not spent at the organization but in project teams in the customers' offices. This also means an ambivalence concerning Andrew's paternity leave; while Eric said that this was natural and nothing that anyone at Compute could say anything about, it was clear that Andrew was both needed and in fact used throughout the project (cf. Matthew's criticism).

The organization Compute and the organizing of the single projects are in a sense two different things in terms of construction of masculinity and femininity. While most people describe the company in positive terms with reference to its feminine orientation, there are many negative comments about project-based work (which in fact is what 90 per cent of their entire workload is about). Most individuals admit that Compute needs to improve its project work practices in order to create better working conditions, and they maintain that such improvement must involve better control systems, better planning, more effective methodologies etc, i.e. a masculine way (cf. Buckle and Thomas, 2003; Collinson and Hearn, 1996; Kerfoot and Knights, 1996; Morgan, 1996).

This implies that the image of the work-family boundary (Fletcher, 1998) is not sufficient for the analysis of femininization and masculinization through project work practices. What we find in the case of Project C is not only a narrative separation between work and private life, but also a separation between project work and organizational ideology. In practice, Compute is reproducing a most appreciated femininized organizational ideology (including relaxed boundaries between work and family life), while they are also reproducing masculinized daily project work practices, implying work as prioritized over and clearly separated from private life. The separation between activities and institutions has earlier been discussed and theoretically explained in terms of temporary mismatches between daily activities and institutional norms in organizations (Barley and Tolbert, 1997), but it has not been related to individuals' lives on the whole and it has also been assumed that daily activities would eventually result in changed institutional norms. In this case, the clear narrative separation between projects and organization seems to imply a de-coupling that will live on as long as everybody involved can live with it without active resistance.

PROJECT WORK AS CONSTRUCTION OF FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY IN THE LIVES OF HUMAN BEINGS: IS THERE SOMETHING NEW?

The project work form originates from the needs of large, technology-based organizations to find systematic ways of handling exceptional operations, and as such, it is an expression of masculinization of work life both in theory and in practice. At the same time, project organizing has implied creative, flexible and non-bureaucratic work forms in a variety of industries and applications, thereby responding to decades of demands from the critics of bureaucracy. The analysis of femininization and masculinization in relation to this kind of work forms is not a straightforward one (Alvesson, 1998). The division of work into feminine and masculine occupations is not very visible (even though it exists), and the expressed views of desired leadership and co-worker characteristics are in accordance with the popular beliefs on a femininized work life.

At the same time, it appeared that the project work form implied reconstructions of several traditional masculinities, for example, control, dedication to work and competitiveness. The individuals described a need for controlling and dominating the environment while implementing the project; being able to follow the time plan and the project budget was an important part of their identity as 'project workers'. Since time plans and budgets are always narrowly defined, a total involvement was required from all project participants, implying, for example, long work hours and an expected readiness to work even during weekends with short notice (cf. also Kunda, 1992; Nandhakumar and Jones, 2001; Perlow, 1997). From a managerial perspective, project management often means to 'improvize' in order to deliver the project as planned, and the employees become the instruments of such improvization (Lindahl, 2006).

Projects also become arenas where individuals can demonstrate their abilities, strengths and professionalism by conforming to project goals (Hodgson, 2002). In that sense, a project is an exercise in masculine control (Kerfoot and Knights, 1998), which, in the case of Project C, partly failed. Those who suggested solutions to the lack of total control over the project (i.e. Carl) were of the opinion that projects should be even smaller, more task-focused and narrowly defined. The failures of bureaucracies that led to the emergence of temporary forms of organizing (cf. Bennis, 1968), are now used as arguments for splitting big projects into smaller and smaller ones in the eternal strive for total control.

Many of these expressions of masculinization and femininization were justified in terms of project efficiency. The total commitment to the project was justified by the fact that it was only for a short period, but the problem is that individuals working in projects go on to new projects all the time. Each project is managed as an episode in itself, separated from its context, history and past. It is thereby constructed as a temporary exception where normal rules do not apply, a 'state of

emergency' that must be handled by means of prompt and dedicated action (Lindahl, 2006). In a time when the traditional masculinities of managerial work are subject to a lot of debate and criticism in society (cf. Fondas, 1996; Perlow, 1997; Watson and Harris, 1999), project work seem to be a way of reintroducing many of them in the guise of short-term efficiency. An individual constantly involved in demanding project work will be just as separated from her/his family life and emotions as managers and entrepreneurs have always been.

The individuals interviewed in this study are thus probably representatives of an emerging work life pattern. In contemporary society, project teams usually consist of an increasing number of young men and women, who at the same time are confronted with masculinization at the work place and new (femininized) patterns of family life (such as dual careers, no housewives, active involvement in the upbringing of children, etc). While some struggle to make all this work (Eric, James and Andrew), others think about some other kind of life with another life balance (Carl's future vision) or have been socialized to let work life practices guide their life (Matthew, Eve).

It thereby seems necessary not to delimit the analysis of project work from a gender perspective to the individuals' situation in the workplace. From the individuals' point of view, life is a whole in which work forms and private life interact with each other. As shown by, for example, Jakobsen and Karlsson (1993) and Fletcher (1998), the work form is a part of the entire life form of the individual, and society is gendered in quite a traditional manner. Earlier studies of this have often resulted in a kind of theoretical gender dilemma, where researchers cannot assess whether new work forms implies a transition from masculinity to femininity or just a reconstruction of masculinity that can continue to dominate work life. We do not claim that we have solved this dilemma, but from this study of project-based work, we think that we might equip the dilemma with some new dimensions to be considered in further scientific inquiry.

One such dimension concerns the narrative separation of organization and organizing; new work forms often appear within the boundaries of existing organizations, and there seems to exist a 'division of labour' between them that can be analysed in terms of femininization and masculinization. In the case of Compute, it appeared that employees perceived that the company was in a process of femininization in terms of values concerning work and life, while project organizing practices implied reconstruction of several traditional masculinities that has been continuously inscribed into the project form since decades. One could say that this is a consequence of organizational hypocrisy (Brunsson, 1989) or a temporary mismatch between actions and institutions (Barley and Tolbert, 1997), but it is rather a consequence of that different actors in the organization have internalized the separation between projects and organization.

Another dimension is the tendency to view construction of femininity and masculinity as collective phenomena in work life, at the same time as human lives

might look entirely different from individual to individual despite similar work situations. In order to understand how individuals construct femininity and masculinity in work life, one must also understand how femininity and masculinity are constructed in private life (and thereby society). The link between micro and macro processes is therefore important (cf. Martin, 2001) in studies about gender and organization.

A 'pessimistic' practical conclusion of this analysis would be that as long as people accept demands on cost and time efficiency in project work, the current masculinization of project work practices will persist. It is often a masculinization hidden behind seemingly 'feminine' rhetoric on equality and flexibility, rhetoric that redirects attention from collectives to individuals and presumes real equality instead of gender differences (Gill, 2002). In order for femininisized organizational ideologies to have any impact on project practices, a narrative reconnection between projects and organizations is needed, probably through the means of resistance and/or bureaucracy. Resistance would imply that individuals actually require someone to take their perspective on work rather than the atomistic focus on single projects, and bureaucracy would imply that such shifts in perspective are also inscribed in the organization by means of rules, regulations and standards. Hence, the recent calls for improved formal Human Resource Management practices in project-based firms (cf. Bredin and Söderlund, 2006). This might imply accepting lower profitability in the projects, but not necessarily for the organization as a whole since many of the costs arising from inadequate work practices are taken at the company level as, for example, HR-related costs rather than at the project level. It might also imply reasonable living conditions for employees and their lives in total. In this lies both positive and critical future research agendas, inquiring into both what projects do to people and what people can do about projects. Not least from a post-structuralist notion of gender, research is needed in order to enhance our understanding of how and why new work and management practices contribute to the construction of femininities and masculinities in business life and society.

Concerning our initial concern with the work life consequences of new forms of organizing, it is natural to ask if the above observations concerning project work are also valid for other new, post-bureaucratic work practices. Partly, the answer is yes. Post-bureaucratic forms share the characteristic that they place most responsibilities upon individuals, which often imply reconstruction of traditional masculine notions of work (Gill, 2002; Kunda, 1992; Kvande and Rasmussen, 1994). Still, projects are special in the sense that they are clearly delimited episodes of work in which it is possible to apply entirely different norms than 'outside' the project – which makes the tendency to reproduce traditional masculinities even stronger. The project is thus a combination of the general tendency of individualizing work responsibility and accountability in the post-bureaucratic world, and the project form-specific construction of temporary micro-bureaucracies where people

are expected to deliver the impossible notwithstanding the consequences for life in general. Over and over again.

REFERENCES

Alvesson, M. (1998). 'Gender relations and identity at work: a case study of masculinities and femininities in an advertising agency'. *Human Relations*, **51**, 8, 969–1005.

Alvesson, M. and Sköldberg, K. (1999). *Reflexive Methodology. Interpretation & Research*. London: Sage.

Barley, S. R. and Kunda, G. (1998). 'Bringing Work Back In'. Paper presented at the SCANCOR Conference 'Samples of the Future', 20–22 September, Stanford, Palo Alto, CA, USA.

Barley, S. R. and Tolbert, P. S. (1997). 'Institutionalization and structuration: studying the links between action and institution'. *Organization Studies*, **18**, 1, 93–117.

Bennis, W. G. (1968). 'Beyond bureaucracy'. In Bennis, W. G. and Slater, P.E. (Eds), *The Temporary Society*. New York: Harper and Row.

Billing, Y. D. and Alvesson, M. (1994). *Gender, Managers and Organizations*. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

Billing, Y. D. and Alvesson, M. (2000). 'Questioning the notion of feminine leadership: a critical perspective on the gender labelling of leadership'. *Gender, Work and Organisation*, **7**, 3, 144–58.

Boje, D. M. (2001). *Narrative Methods for Organizational and Communication Research*. London: Sage.

Bredin, K. and Söderlund, J. (2006). 'Perspectives on human resource management: an explorative study of the consequences of projectification in four firms'. *International Journal of Human Resources Development and Management*, **6** (forthcoming).

Brunsson, N. (1989). *The Organization of Hypocrisy*. London: Wiley.

Buckle, P. and Thomas, J. (2003). 'Deconstructing project management: a gender analysis of project management guidelines'. *International Journal of Project Management*, **21**, 433–41.

Burris, B. H. (1996). 'Technocracy, patriarchy and management'. In Collinson, D. L. and Hearn, J. (Eds), *Men as Managers, Managers as Men*. London: Sage.

Butler, J. (1999). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.

Calás, M. and Smircich, L. (1996). 'From the woman's point of view: feminist approaches to organization studies'. In Clegg, S. R., Hardy, C. and Nord, W. R. (Eds), *Handbook of Organization Studies*. London: Sage.

Cartwright, S. and Gale, A. (1995). 'Project management: different gender, different culture? A discussion on gender and organizational culture – part 2'. *Leadership and Organization Development*, **16**, 4, 12–16.

Cicmil, S. and Hodgson, D. (2006). 'Making projects critical – introduction'. In Hodgson, D. and Cicmil, S. (Eds), *Making Projects Critical*. London: Palgrave.

Clegg, S. and Courpasson, D. (2004). 'Political hybrids: Tocquevillean views on project organizations'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **41**, 4, 525–47.

Collinson, D. L. (2003) 'Identities and insecurities: selves at work'. *Organization*, **10**, 3, 527–47.

Collinson, D. L. and Hearn, J. (1994). 'Naming men as men: implications for work, organization and management'. *Gender, Work and Organization*, **1**, 1, 2–22.

Collinson, D. L. and Hearn, J. (1996). 'Breaking the silence: on men, masculinities and managements'. In Collinson, D. L. and Hearn, J. (Eds), *Men as Managers, Managers as Men*. London: Sage.

Czarniawska, B. (1997). *Narrating the Organization: Dramas of Institutional Identity*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.

de Beauvoir, S. (1953). *The Second Sex*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Ekstedt, E., Lundin, R. A., Söderholm, A. and Wirdenius, H. (1999). *Neo-Industrial Organizing: Action, Knowledge Formation and Renewal in a Project-Intensive Economy*. London: Routledge.

Ferguson, K. E. (1984). *The Feminist Case against Bureaucracy*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Fletcher, J. K. (1998). 'Relational practice: a feminist reconstruction of work'. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, **7**, 2, 163–86.

Fondas, N. (1996). 'Femininization at work: career implications'. In Arthur, M. B. and Rousseau, D. M. (Eds), *The Boundaryless Career*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gabriel, Y. (2000). *Storytelling in Organizations: Facts, Fictions, and Fantasies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gherardi, S. (1994). 'The gender we think, the gender we do in our everyday organizational lives'. *Human Relations*, **47**, 6, 591–610.

Gill, R. (2002). 'Cool, creative and egalitarian? Exploring gender in project-based new media work in Europe'. *Information, Communication & Society*, **5**, 1, 70–89.

Hines, R. D. (1992). 'Accounting: filling the negative space'. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, **17**, 3/4, 313–42.

Hirdman, Y. (1990). 'Genussystemet' [The gender system]. In *SOU 1990:44 Demokrati och makt i Sverige*. Stockholm: Fritzes.

Hirschhorn, L. and Gilmore, T. (1993). 'The new boundaries of the "boundaryless" company'. In Howard, R. and Haas, R. D. (Eds), *The Learning Imperative. Managing People for Continuous Innovation*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Book.

Hobday, M. (2000). 'The project-based organization: an ideal form for managing complex products and systems?'. *Research Policy*, **29**, 871–93.

Hodgson, D. (2000). *Discourse, Discipline and the Subject: A Foucauldian Analysis of the UK Financial Services Industry*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Hodgson, D. (2002). 'Disciplining the professional: the case of project management'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **39**, 6, 803–21.

Hodgson, D. (2004). 'Project work: the legacy of bureaucratic control in the post-bureaucratic organization'. *Organization*, **11**, 1, 81–100.

Holmquist, C. and Lindgren, M. (2002). 'Why Opposites Attract – On the Problems of Dichotomisation in Research'. Paper presented at the Academy of Management annual meeting, 11–14 August, Denver, Colorado.

Jakobsen, L. and Karlsson, J. C. (1993). *Arbete och kärlek: En utveckling av livsformsanalys* [Work and love: A Development of Life Form Analysis]. Lund: Studentlitteratur/Arkiv.

Jones, C. (1996). 'Careers in project networks: the case of the film industry'. In Arthur, M. B. and Rousseau, D. M. (Eds), *The Boundaryless Career*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kanter, R. M. (1977). *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York: Basic Books.

Kerfoot, D. and Knights, D. (1993). 'Management, masculinity and manipulation: from paternalism to corporate strategy in financial services in Britain'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **30**, 4, 659–75.

Kerfoot, D. and Knights, D. (1996). ' "The best is yet to come?" The quest for embodiment in managerial work'. In Collinson, D. L. and Hearn, J. (Eds), *Men as Managers, Managers as Men*. London: Sage.

Kerfoot, D. and Knights, D. (1998). 'Managing masculinity in contemporary organizational life: a "man"agerial project'. *Organization*, **5**, 1, 7–26.

Kidder, T. (2000). *The Soul of a New Machine*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company.

Kondo, D. K. (1990). *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kunda, G. (1992). *Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Kvande, E. and Rasmussen, B. (1994). 'Men in male-dominated organizations and their encounter with women intruders'. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, **10**, 2, 163–73.

Lindahl, M. (2006). 'Engineering improvisation: the case of Wärtsilä'. In Guillet de Monthoux, P., Gustafsson, C. and Sjöstrand, S-E. (Eds), *Aesthetic Leadership: Managing Fields of Flow in Art and Business* (forthcoming).

Lindgren, M. and Packendorff, J. (2006). 'Projects and prisons'. In Hodgson, D. and Cicmil, S. (Eds), *Making Projects Critical*. London: Palgrave.

Lindgren, M. and Wåhlin, N. (2001). 'Identity construction among boundary-crossing individuals'. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, **17**, 3, 357–77.

Martin, P. Y. (2001). ' "Mobilizing masculinities": women's experiences of men at work'. *Organization*, **8**, 4, 587–618.

Miles, M. B. (1964). 'On temporary systems'. In Miles, M. B. (Ed.), *Innovation in Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Mohrman, S. A. and Cohen, S. G. (1995). 'When people get out of the box. New relationships, new systems'. In Howard, A. (Ed.), *The Changing Nature of Work*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Morgan. D. (1996). 'The gender of bureaucracy'. In Collinson, D. L. and Hearn, J. (Eds), *Men as Managers, Managers as Men*. London: Sage.

Mulinari, D. (1996). 'Kvinnoprojekt och feminism' [Women's Projects and Feminism]. In Sahlin, I. (Ed.), *Projektets Paradoxer*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Nandhakumar, J. and Jones, M. (2001). 'Accounting for time: managing time in project-based teamworking'. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, **26**, 193–214.

Packendorff, J. (1995). 'Inquiring into the temporary organization: new directions for project management research'. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, **11**, 4, 319–33.

Perlow, L. A. (1997). *Finding Time: How Corporations, Individuals, and Families Can Benefit from New Work Practices*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Pinto, J. K. (1996). *Power and Politics in Project Management*. Sylva: PMI.

Scott, J. (1986). 'Gender: a useful category of historical analysis'. *American Historical Review*, **91**, 1053–75.

Söderlund, J. (2004). 'Building theories of project management: past research, questions for the future'. *International Journal of Project Management*, **22**, 183–91.

Watson, T. and Harris, P. (1999). *The Emergent Manager*. London: Sage.