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Misogyny and Organization Studies

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Abstract

Misogyny is a significant but unspoken presence in organization studies, in terms of people's experiences of work and as a theorized concept. In this essay we argue that our community should dare to name misogyny for its unique insight into the enduring patriarchal power relations that condition so many organizations and so much of our organization theory. We develop this argument in two ways: first, we suggest that misogyny provides a unique descriptive linguistic label for experiences of gendered hatred, violence and social policing; and second, a philosophical understanding of misogyny enables analysis and understanding of, as well as challenges to, the physical or symbolic violence that many experience in and around organizations as sites for the reproduction of patriarchy. Drawing on recent developments in feminist analytic philosophy, we follow the movement away from understanding misogyny-as-individual-emotion to misogyny-as-affective-practice. This allows us to frame two related concepts, organized and organizational misogyny, demonstrating the potential that misogyny brings to understanding individual experiences, collective affect and influential social forces. Despite the discomfort produced by hate-based concepts such as misogyny, we conclude that their exclusion from organization studies has two effects: the continuing reproduction of violent hostility, and acceptance of a partial account of multiple forms of oppression and inequality. Our research agenda, founded on this need for naming such experiences, the significance of affect and aggregated oppressions, demonstrates the potential contribution of misogyny to addressing these issues and finding some hope for change.

Keywords

affect, change, feminism, hate, inequality, misogyny, oppression, patriarchy

Introduction: Why Misogyny, Why Now?

Maria Ressa, a Filipina journalist who publishes critical analysis of disinformation in politics, continually experiences a maelstrom of misogynistic attacks via social media, attacks which also encapsulate ableism, racism, xenophobia and homophobia. Her sanity is questioned, her

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journalism is trashed and her physical appearance is mocked, often through disturbing sexualized and violent imagery. Ressa, 2021 Nobel Peace prize-winner, is currently charged with nine counts of libel by the Philippine state, charges which have a 'symbiotic relationship' (Posetti, Shabbir, Maynard, Bontcheva, & Aboulez, 2021, p. 46) with the online abuse that Ressa and other women journalists around the world receive. Ressa's work and self are attacked through 'platform capture', coordinated responses by organized groups of (mainly) men who aim to discredit women journalists across the globe, especially those who write about the far right and misinformation online (Posetti et al., 2021). It is striking that social media platform leaders and owners do very little to remedy or even challenge this, journalists' employers are fundamentally powerless to protect their employees given the industry's now near-total reliance on these platforms for market reach, and legal prosecution of individuals or organizations is exceptionally rare.

Perhaps this last observation as to the reach of law is unsurprising. The London Metropolitan Police Service, which serves more than 8 million people in it host city, has recently been denounced as 'institutionally sexist' in (yet another) government-ordered review of hate crimes committed by officers (Baroness Casey Review, 2023). This report is enraging reading, particularly because of the number of times people have spoken up, only to be bullied, ostracized and ridiculed into silence. Casey's review was commissioned following a litany of high-profile abuses of women at the hands of serving police officers, including a terrifying strip-search of a teenage girl in a school setting, and officers taking and sharing 'for their own amusement' photographs of murdered sisters Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry. The abduction, rape and murder of Sarah Everard in 2020 by a serving officer who used the authority, symbolised in his warrant card, his position carries to abduct her, was initially downplayed by organizational leaders. This position began to be untenable when at a vigil for Sarah women protestors were surrounded, arrested and physically removed, often with disproportionate violence, by male colleagues of the officer accused of rape and murder. Again, these experiences are common around our world; the (literal) man-handling of women at the vigil in Clapham echoes scenes across the globe of feminist protests being over-policed, leading to physical injury for peaceful protestors. In May 2023 women wrestlers in New Delhi, India, protesting against the protection of a serial sexual harasser by the government, were beaten and arrested on terrorist charges (Al Jazeera, 2023); in Mexico, police consistently fail to properly investigate cases of missing women (D. T. J. Rodriguez, 2022), mirroring minimization and evasion of investigating violent crimes against women there and around the world; in China police cite the risk of protestor violence against them and citizens to justify cancellation of events marking International Women's Day (Pang, 2023), despite the violence demonstrably happening *against* women every day everywhere in that society (Fincher, 2022).

In Cambodia, Bangladesh and other garment producing countries women have been facing increased levels of gender-based violence in factories and in the home (Asia Floor Wage Alliance, 2021). Facing order cancellations from fashion brands in 2020, many suppliers suspended and then fired their female garment workforce, leading to malnutrition, increased debt, stress and anxiety, and domestic violence (Brickell et al., 2023). Support for garment workers has been minimal, meaning women, particularly older women with multi-generational caring responsibilities, increasingly take work in unregulated subcontracting factories where conditions are even worse. When women try to organize, resist or protest, they are threatened with termination, or ejected from the factory for dubious reasons (Lawreniuk, Brickell, & McCarthy, 2022).

Speaking out about work-based sexual harassment often provokes more misogynist state-sanctioned discrimination and violence. Again China is perhaps the most prominent example of this; International Women's Day events are also marked by pre-event arrests, such as the incarceration of five high-profile feminists known for their work on LGBTQ and workplace rights in 2015, and the arrest of #MeToo activist Huang Xueqin, detained for two years and counting (Davidson,

2023). State-sponsored censorship has also hindered progress in challenging workplace sex-based harassment (Fincher, 2018), especially where well-known men working in broadcast or news media are accused. Accounts of sex-based harassment and rape on university campuses, especially faculty-student violence, has become a strong focus of #MeToo in China, but these are also vigorously suppressed or, at best, investigated behind closed doors (Liao & Luqiu, 2022).

These examples, of which there are many, many more, demonstrate the relevance, urgency and ubiquity of misogyny in organizations around the world, and the need to bring philosophical understandings of its presence into organization theory in a structured way. Each example demonstrates two aspects of misogyny's presence in all of our lives: first, how complete, and sometimes unrecognized, that presence is; and second, how misogyny can be networked, formalized and globalized in and through organization, such that organization is central to its maintenance and reproduction. In this essay we therefore explore the practice and theory of misogyny, presenting it as an experience and concept with considerable unrealized analytical potential for organization studies. Our essay draws on understandings of misogyny across the social sciences and moral philosophy, especially the groundbreaking work of Kate Manne, to define two ways of seeing misogyny in relation to organization studies: as organized and as organizational. These two, sometimes overlapping, perspectives in turn shed light on how logics of misogyny are networked, formalized and globalized as part of policing and oppressing women.

To reiterate: we believe a better understanding of misogyny is urgently needed for three reasons. First, misogyny has become a prominent, highly contested and controversial term in contemporary feminist analysis (Manne, 2018, 2020) and in cognate disciplines such as cultural studies and sociology (Banet-Weiser, 2018; Wrisley, 2023), but not as yet in organization studies. Second, misogyny is a term whose everyday referent, hatred of women, is an increasing empirical presence in everyday life and media, including industry publications (People Management, 2022) and popular long-form journalism (Bates, 2020). Third, misogyny is starkly evident in a range of unequal outcomes in workplaces, up to and including physical violence (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2022), with demonstrated negative wellbeing impacts on women who experience and men who observe misogyny (Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2007, p. 1254). Simply put, this essay is necessary because organizations are sites of misogyny, and organizational dynamics are part of contemporary misogynistic practice. Time, then, for our field to step up, recognize, analyse and propose change.

Where is Misogyny in Organization Studies?

Our field is, of course, alive to gender dynamics in all of their complex variety. Organization studies has a long and rich (although not always universally welcomed) engagement with both gender and feminism (Bell, Meriläinen, Taylor, & Tienari, 2020; Broadbridge & Hearn, 2008). A gender lens brings greater understanding of how workplaces are enmeshed in patriarchy (Walby, 1989), highlighting gendered experiences, and sexism, in a wide variety of organizational forms and locations, including within academic institutions (Bourabain, 2021), often through feminist analysis (Acker, 1990; Benschop & Doorewaard, 1998; Calás, Smircich, & Holvino, 2014). Observations of gendered violence in workspaces (Seymour, 2009) ranges from obvious settings, such as the military (Alvinius & Holmberg, 2019), to the less obvious, such as non-profit care work (Baines & Cunningham, 2011). Attention sometimes turns to the role of men and masculinities in organizations (Hearn, 1994; Liu, 2017; Martin, 2001; McCarthy, Soundararajan, & Taylor, 2021), with obvious connections of interest between men, masculinities and power. More recently analyses of online life and social media, such as contestations of power in online gaming (Just, 2019) and men's rights groups (Eddington, Jarvis, & Buzzanell, 2023), suggest the power of both feminist

theory and misogyny in understanding contemporary organization. Similarly, turning the analytical mirror on our own discipline as a profession, Mandalaki and Pérezts (2023) detail their experience of misogynistic 'sexist cyberbullying' in business and management academe, and its embodied, tangible effects on their personal and professional lives.

Despite all of this, the term *misogyny* is largely missing from our field as an empirical descriptor or as a conceptual frame. Exceptions to this are rare enough to be able to review them in detail in a single paragraph. First, Sharon Mavin's research conceptualizes 'female misogyny' as 'negative behaviours and responses from women to other women in organizations and management, arguing that as women disturb the gendered order by progressing up the managerial hierarchy, they invoke the wrath of both men and women who are socialized to associate management with masculinities and men' (Mavin & Williams, 2013, p. 189; Mavin, 2006). Second, Marianna Fotaki (2013, 2023) argues that women are consistently and persistently positioned as the 'Other' within organizations and in organization studies itself, and that reacting against this incurs penalties in the form of misogyny. Her 2018 book with Nancy Harding, written to 'address a certain misogyny that continues to haunt management theory' (Fotaki & Harding, 2018, p. 9), notes the 'injurious speech of misogyny' (p. 31) as a strong presence in the language some of us use to talk about work organizations. While Fotaki and Harding's argument mostly refers to language in use in workplaces, organization studies as a research field (and some of its highest-profile male researchers) are also clearly implicated by them. This argument is supported by reading key texts in organization theory as cultural artefacts, and therefore also has implications for how we understand ourselves and our practice. Finally, Victoria Pagan (2023) presents a compelling argument analysing the use of non-disclosure agreements to suggest that they operate as covert epistemic silencing of women that produce significant embodied effects. Pagan shows how this legal technology can be understood as a means of perpetuating structural sexism and misogyny, as a means of denying witness to its practice and silencing women (cf. Kenny & Fanchini, 2023, on women whistleblowers). Pagan's work provides the first detailed theoretical treatment of misogyny as social practice in our field.

Given how insightful these examples of the use of misogyny are in understanding organizations, why has there been such rare use of the term and such determined under-conceptualization? This is puzzling, frustrating and intellectually problematic. Perhaps misogyny is too emotive to research or theorize? Yet organization theorists are increasingly comfortable with emotion and affect in many forms, in workplaces and in theory (Bell & Sinclair, 2014; Fotaki, Kenny, & Vachhani, 2017; Hartmann & Meier, 2023; Vachhani, 2015; Zietsma, Toubiana, Voronov, & Roberts, 2019), and with experiences such as humiliation (Varman, Al-Amoudi, & Skålén, 2023). Despite this, misogyny, along with a number of other emotional and emotive forms of hate and hostility operating as social control, remains mostly in the shadows, unobserved (or ignored), and untheorized. Misogyny is therefore unchallenged, yet still experienced daily and productive of differential affective or material outcomes depending on which social category people occupy or are placed into. Perhaps, as Fotaki and Harding (2018) hint, our discipline itself is misogynistic? The frequent erasure of feminist (Bell et al., 2020), Black or postcolonial experiences, theories and knowledges (Dar, Liu, Martinez Dy, & Brewis, 2021), and queer theory (Rumens, de Souza, & Brewis, 2019), shows our form as a community in excluding uncomfortable aspects of organization and challenging ways of thinking about them. There is once again increasing recognition that 'malestream' theorizing (Cunliffe, 2022, p. 2) continues to dominate the spaces said to publish the 'best' research in our field; thinking and writing outside the restrictive paradigm our most prestigious journals require is policed by 'disciplining practices and micro-aggressions of influential gatekeepers' (Cunliffe, 2022) and in the policing of gendered norms that women and non-binary people experience within higher education (Prothero, 2023). Mandalaki and Pérezts' (2023) experience of sexist cyberbullying is, for us, a very clear expression of this. Or maybe misogyny is occluded in our field because the term is seen

as dated, extreme and essentializing[1]? The word misogyny invokes violence – specifically, violence directed towards women, usually by men who hate women or wish to discipline them. This common understanding suggests that misogyny is something that a 'few bad apples' are guilty of as individuals, not as something that can be usefully conceptualized and analysed in an organizational setting.

Each of the assumptions about misogyny that underpins these explanations must be challenged. Misogyny can and does look violent, and certainly organizations are sites of and conduits for gendered violence (Costas & Grey, 2019). But physical violence is only one manifestation of misogyny and, while sadly common, it is supplemented by misogyny expressed through a range of other social violences: professional norms and the purposeful exclusion of experiences and concepts that provoke discomfort, especially within groups that currently hold most positions of power, for example (see Dar et al. (2021) on a related hatred, racism). For these reasons, in this essay we clearly conceptualize misogyny to demonstrate its *theoretical* importance and relevance for organization studies as an academic discipline, and as a stark reminder of the work to do to get our own professional house in order in terms of practice (Prothero, 2023).

Conceptualizing Misogyny

Misogyny is commonly understood as male hatred of women. The term's roots are in Greek *misos* (hatred) and *gune* (woman); it was first used in English in the 17th century (Holland, 2012). The *Oxford English Dictionary* changed its definition from 'hatred of women' to 'hatred or dislike of, or prejudice against women' in 2002, following a slow change in the word's usage. Since then misogyny has increasingly been used not just to describe a man's emotional response to women (e.g. hatred, dislike, prejudice), but for specific language, activities and behaviours towards women. This gradual shift in usage informs Kate Manne's (2018) reasoning when she observes that misogyny has a 'naïve conception' (p. 32) as agentic pathological hatred of women *qua* women. She goes on to suggest that intuitively it seems unlikely that many men carry a deep-seated hatred of all women through everyday life, including working life. But it is evident that many men, and some women, will act against women who appear to cross some kind of line when it comes to being a woman, especially if we understand our world as patriarchal. Thus, Manne (2018) provides an analytical and potentially ameliorative definition of misogyny that locates it as an aspect of 'social systems and environments as a whole, in which women will tend to face hostility of various kinds *because they are women in a man's world* (i.e. a patriarchy)' (p. 33, emphasis in original). This approach is echoed in Sarah Banet-Weiser's (2021) parallel work in cultural studies: 'Misogyny . . . control[s] dominant narratives, practices, policies, and bodies; [and] promote[s] an agenda that is about controlling groups of people' (p. 212).

Manne's work fits into a resurgence of academic debate exploring misogyny in disciplines as diverse as classics (Zuckerberg, 2018), mass media (Banet-Weiser, 2018), technology (Vickery & Everbach, 2018), criminology (Zempi & Smith, 2021), social work (Ukockis, 2019) and philosophy (Clack, 2016). Loewen Walker (2022) argues that much of this still draws on a traditional definition of misogyny rooted in emotion, such that academic usage of the term focuses overwhelmingly on men, often individual men, as perpetrators of hate. Perhaps ironically then, some discussions of misogyny have been accused of being misogynistic in their framing and effects, as they centre men's agency and silence women's experience (Hart, 2006 on Gilmore, 2001).

To avoid this, we follow Manne (2018, 2020) closely in departing from an individualized approach, to conceptualize misogyny as a *logic built into patriarchal (organizational) power structures and cultures*. This breaks with psychologistic ideas of misogyny as individual feeling giving rise to action, and orients towards systems of power and control that disadvantage, silence and exclude women. This means that understanding misogyny centres on 'the hostility that women and

girls face, due to patriarchal forces, rather than the hostility men feel, deep down in their hearts' (Manne, 2020, p. 50). The felt and experienced hostility that is misogyny is then theorized as 'the law enforcement branch of a patriarchal order, which has the overall function of policing and enforcing its [sexist, discriminatory] governing norms and expectations' (Manne, 2018, p. 78).

Manne supports this argument carefully through a series of high-profile examples of political and public misogynistic attitudes or actions, such as the patriarchal positioning of Julia Gillard while she worked as Australia's Prime Minister, Donald Trump's sexist speech and behaviour while working as a property developer, television personality and politician, and American radio presenter Rush Limbaugh's misogynistic interpretations of news stories about violence against women. From these and other examples, Manne suggests that misogynistic social action seeks to enforce a specific, inferior, place for women, attempts to reduce women's autonomy, and tries to withhold access to valuable resources such as professional or organizational prestige, structural power, recognition, esteem or status, and associated forms of wealth or reward. It is not hard, as the following sections of this essay show, to see how Manne's conceptualization of misogyny reads across into organizations and organizational theory.

In this it is essential to work with the closely related processes of patriarchy, sexism and gendered organization. At the macro level is the patriarchal order: a system of social structures and practices manifest in public institutions and organizations and in private settings, that result in men dominating, oppressing and exploiting women (Walby, 1989). Sexism and misogyny then work in tandem to uphold this system of power, in ways that vary over time and place. Sexism here is the 'beliefs, ideas and assumptions which rationalize and naturalize patriarchal norms and assumptions' (Manne, 2020, p. 8). Perhaps the most pernicious form of this is the ideal of binary gender, which provides a framework for 'being' a 'man' or 'woman' with little room for alternative modes of living (at least during the 20th century). Specific binary sexist beliefs, such as male entitlement or women as 'natural' carers and givers, pervade organizations, as shown in myriad research into the unpaid care roles women are 'encouraged' into at work (J. K. Rodriguez, 2023), the resistance of (some) men to sharing power (Smolović Jones, Smolović Jones, Taylor, & Yarrow, 2021) and the unrelenting expectations that surround binary gender roles more broadly in workplaces (Rumens, 2017). Upholding gendered systems of power by enforcing sexist beliefs is misogyny, the foot soldier of patriarchy. Misogyny is therefore at root *a social practice*, in the sense that it exists in everyday language, actions and affect, infusing organizations and how we think about them. Misogyny looks like belittling, policing, humiliating, blaming, rebuking, minimizing, gaslighting and many other forms of symbolic violence (as well as some physical violences, especially in denying speech or breath). The relationship between patriarchy, sexism and misogyny, however, is not an analytical hierarchy that moves from structure to agency. Rather, misogyny is located simultaneously in individual behaviours, in its collective reproduction, and as an active social force with material effects on everyone's lives in organizations.

This is summarized effectively by Loewen Walker (2022, p. 3, our emphasis):

> Misogyny operates to police *particular people* who engage in *particular activities*, that is the Indigenous sex worker, the trans woman, even the gay man . . . By shifting the lens from the individual misogynist who hates women, to the patriarchal society in which women are controlled, punished and policed, Manne's logic of misogyny reminds us that patriarchal societies operate by surveilling their subjects, especially the degree to which their subjects submit to required gendered behaviours.

Loewen Walker's (2022) emphasis on intersectionality is something to return to, but it's worth reiterating here that thinking about misogyny as an 'entrenched, networked system of control' (p. 12) rather than individually rooted hatred, enables understanding of why certain kinds of people more

than others, often women but not *all* women, are belittled, policed or violated, usually by men but not *all* men. As Loewen Walker (2022) further notes, '[t]hrough such a shift, we are better able to see misogyny's widespread collusion with colonialism, racism, transphobia and homophobia' (p. 12).

This conceptualization of misogyny, as an aspect of socially structured systems of power at a collective level, has not been welcomed by everyone. Wrisley (2023) argues that misogyny should continue to be understood as an affective interior phenomenon attaching to the individual, and that Manne's work undermines the importance of this recognition. We would echo Loewen Walker (2022) in arguing against such a reading of recent framings of misogyny: by understanding misogyny as an enforcement mechanism, emotions, feelings and affect are not removed from understandings of it. Quite the opposite: misogyny is always, demonstrably, affective. It is present in an uncomfortable feeling experienced when walking into an all-male room and feeling eyes travel up and down your body; it's in the quickened, panicked breathing when walking home to your hotel room late at night after the conference dinner; it's in the extra dose of stress and anxiety experienced when standing up in front of a group of students that expects a male voice and masculine teaching; and it is present when being spoken over, ignored, or told to be quiet in professional spaces. Often, misogyny polices behaviour out of the fear that something *might* happen. Manne's contribution is to put the onus on women's (and others') affective experiences of misogyny as part of everyday social and organizational life, rather than seeking to understand men's supposed emotional drivers for behaving misogynistically.

Organizationally, misogyny supports a system of difference that coerces us into accepting sexist discrimination as legitimate, and polices those who step beyond the established boundaries of patriarchal expectation. It is worth reiterating this, because if organizational scholars leave misogyny unanalysed or under-theorized, we play into upholding the same patriarchal status quo that we inherit. As Hearn and Parkin (2001, p. 9) argued more than two decades ago, 'silence may mean the absence of noise and be part of the plight of the oppressed but can also be part of domination'. To frame this purpose, and extend our definitional work, the next part of the essay presents three urgent research agendas to explore 'organized misogyny' and 'organizational misogyny' in such a way as to show their relevance for organization studies. Voicing and theorizing misogyny in this way is an essential means of understanding and analysing all forms of organized sexist discrimination and institutionalized gender norm reproduction.

Organized and Organizational Misogynies: An urgent research agenda

How then should we integrate a contemporary conceptualization of misogyny into organization studies? We propose three urgent research agendas and accompanying terms: the study of formally 'organized misogyny', investigations into formal and informal 'organizational misogyny', and a globally relevant intersectional, networked approach to both of these core topics. Under each we return to the illustrations that our essay begins with, to demonstrate the value and meaning of looking at events or experiences through the lens of misogyny.

Agenda 1: Organized misogyny is a phenomenon that needs a name and needs researching

Some organizations purposefully, and collectively, engage in misogynistic practice to enable the promotion of misogyny or its outcomes. Our term *organized misogyny* designates the collective, purposefully organized expression of hostility towards or hatred of women at work or in

organizations, with the purpose of policing and controlling women's behaviours. Empirically and conceptually, this implies an organization-level analysis to research, for example, membership organizations (virtual or otherwise) founded and maintained to promote or encourage misogyny. This could focus on how organizations are designed to encourage or enact misogyny (Bates, 2020; Dignam & Rohlinger, 2019; Eddington et al., 2023). Professions and professional associations could also be analysed in this way, as organizational means through which misogyny is organized, if there is an observable hostility towards women, an experienced hatred in belonging to the profession, or differential gendered experiences.

Maria Ressa's sadly emblematic experience of online abuse shows us the interconnected, coordinated attacks on certain women in professions such as journalism (Bulut & Can, 2023; Posetti et al., 2021) and politics (Palmer, 2020; Sakki & Martikainen, 2022). We live in an era of digital connectivity that has changed, and is changing, organizations in fundamental ways. How work happens, interactions with colleagues, customers, citizens and other stakeholders have all been affected; 'networked misogyny' proliferates as a 'basic anti-female violent expression that circulates to wide audiences on popular media platforms' (Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2015, p. 172). Such expressions are misogynistic in their attempted suppression, silencing of and intimidation of women (Jane, 2016). Gendered and racialized experiences of the online world are well-covered in disciplines outside our own (e.g. Ging & Siapera, 2018; Zuckerberg, 2018), reinforcing the pressing need to centre such experiences of organized misogyny within organizational theory (for examples see Eddington et al., 2023; Just, 2019; Maaranen & Tienari, 2020), and to elucidate the organi*zing* behind organized misogyny.

This research would challenge the online/offline dichotomy which sometimes serves to either minimize the violence of online misogyny, or underplay its influence (Suguira, 2021; Vickery & Everbach, 2018). Chillingly, and evident through Maria Ressa's experience, social media provide the perfect mode through which deadly relationships between misinformation, misogyny, racism and populist politics develop and encourage proliferation of hate. Social science disciplines such as international relations, politics, education and criminology all show a growing recognition of the material impact of online messaging (Phelan, White, Wallner, & Paterson, 2023). In the practice and policy world, the head of counter-terrorism in the UK recently made links between violent misogyny online and terrorist threat (Dearden, 2023). Misogyny is deliberate and core to such politics:

> Extreme-right movements use misogyny as a core logic to their politics and their misinformation campaigns; it is not merely a strategy or tactic, but rather, these movements are frequently based on misogyny as a set of discourses and practices that aim to 'reset' the gender balance back to its 'natural' patriarchal relation. (Banet-Weiser, 2021, p. 231)

This shows three important elements of organized misogyny that very much need attention in our field. First, to draw out the synergies between certain professions and organized misogyny, such as media or politics. Second, to demonstrate empirically particular tactics, strategies and positioning of organized misogyny. And third, to theorize more effectively as to the role and responsibilities of internet platforms, particularly social media, which are in themselves organizations which have enable organized misogyny to proliferate in organized ways (Banet-Weiser, 2021).

Agenda 2: Organizational misogyny is widespread and requires new approaches to uncover affective practices associated with it

Second, our term 'organizational misogyny' denotes the presence, tolerance or reproduction of individual, cultural or structural hostility towards women in experiences or outcomes of work and

organizations. This term allows for empirical investigation of misogyny in two ways: as individual feelings of hatred towards women as per traditional understandings of misogyny; and as collectivistic, affective experiences of misogyny in organizational settings. Misogyny, defined as both hatred and hostility towards individual women or the socially constructed category of women, manifest in conduct likely to cause fear, humiliation or distress to women,[2] is both individual and social, agentic and organizational. It operationalizes Manne's positioning of misogyny as 'the hostility that women face' by centring experiences, both material and affective, of women in understanding organizations. Feminist organization studies has embraced the study of affect and the power of affect to collectivize (e.g. Bell & Sinclair, 2014; Vachhani, 2015). There is clearly utility in framing organizational misogyny in a similar manner.

Returning to policing, we suggest that what is at play is less 'organized misogyny', and more 'organizational misogyny' (though both may be present and overlap is often noted). As Casey showed in her review of the London Metropolitan Police, there are rarely concerted, collective and planned efforts within a single organization to be hostile to women, but rather a cumulative atmosphere of male superiority and women's subordination, created through normalized behaviours that undermine, devalue or degrade women, that in their everyday-ness obfuscate the fact that these are misogynistic practices. The belittling, isolation and humiliation meted out to female-identifying police force members and those reporting crime are clearly suggestive of misogyny, and we can study those affective practices as perpetrated by and on individuals. This approach means that the ways in which misogynistic practices, attitudes and behaviours are enmeshed with organizations, institutions and wider societal norms is equally as significant as organized misogyny. Organizational misogyny as conceived in this way is another option in the feminist toolbox for understanding patriarchy and gendered organizations, with implications for a range of theoretical areas.

Organization studies is already rich in concepts that can be mobilized to support this approach to misogyny. The notion of 'affective atmospheres' (Michels & Steyaert, 2017), for example, provides a bridge that enables analysis of misogyny-as-individual-emotion to misogyny-as-organizational-phenomenon. Atmosphere is defined as human and non-human components that provoke (trans)personal feelings and encounters, and positions affect as non-representational, post-materialist or post-human ontologically. Epistemologically, the experience of affective atmosphere is rooted in open-ended and emergent processes. Studying affective atmospheres thus involves thinking about embodiment and affect as they are embedded in spaces in and around organizational life. Michels and Steyaert (2017, p. 83) list a number of studies that have explored 'atmospheres', such as football matches, trading floors and nighttime workers such as street cleaners or taxi drivers. It's notable that these phenomena and workspaces are also commonly locations for critical studies of men and masculinities (e.g. Kerfoot & Knights, 1993; Slutskaya, Simpson, Hughes, Simpson, & Uygur, 2016). One outcome of including misogyny in our organizational analysis, as we are arguing here, would be a better understanding of how those atmospheres are experienced in a much wider range of organizations, rather than clustered in specific sectors or professions.

Research on organizational misogyny therefore demands some methodological innovation. Understanding affective atmospheres, in particular, involves a commitment to capturing something 'fleeting' (Michels & Steyaert, 2017, p. 85) around 'how I feel here' (Böhme, 1993, p. 120 in Michels & Steyaert, 2017, p. 84). Innovation might happen through the use of drawing (Diaz-Fernandez & Evans, 2020), vignettes, evocative embodied writing, or blurring conventional social science boundaries between reality and fiction in 'ficto-critical' accounts (Michels & Steyaert, 2017). Many examples already exist of a gendered analysis of organizations and organizing in film and TV (e.g. Nilsson, 2013; Panayiotou, 2010) or fiction (e.g. Sayers & Martin, 2021). It would be useful to attempt to illustrate ephemeral and difficult-to-capture organized and organizational

misogynies in these and other ways, or indeed to demonstrate alternative forms of leadership contra organizational misogyny (Bell & Sinclair, 2016).

Further, research could explore examples of workplaces or organizations which *don't* play host to misogynistic practice, or that are designed to challenge or be hostile to its practice. What do they feel like to work in, and what is different about their governance, day-to-day interactions, structures, demographics or other factors? This approach, combined with better knowledge of organizations that promote or tolerate misogyny, would lead directly to a specifically *organizational* theory of misogyny, shedding light on the unique social structures that organized or organizational misogyny manifest, and ways in which misogyny can be excluded from workplaces. We believe this work will be underpinned by affect, which brings with it the potential to engage affirmatively with organizational discrimination and organized violence (Pullen, Rhodes, & Thanem, 2017), but there are other ways of understanding that can be developed.

These seeds of a different approach may grow when we consider methods of pushing back against the dominance of gendered organization and associated social structures of power. Alison Pullen et al. (2017), for example, argue strongly for the transformation of individual shame and hurt, such as that created by misogynistic acts and behaviours, into strength, joy and change, through collective resistance founded on socializing an 'affective trajectory' of embodied social interaction that is both 'corporeal and political' (p. 118). The examples of misogyny and resistance provided here suggest that formal resistance through legal means is the primary route at the moment, yet even that is organizationally unsatisfactory and agentically challenging (Pagan, 2023). However, there is perhaps potential, again as Emma Bell and Amanda Sinclair (2014) suggest, in the 'intimacy of collaborative relationships' (p. 269) that create meaningful working spaces that exist outside, or alongside, masculine gendered organizations and misogynistic affective atmospheres. This can, as in Bell and Sinclair's account, happen in small-scale partnerships, including within male dominated or masculinized organizations; it can also be seen in feminist organizations (see Karen Lee Ashcraft's 2001 work), which provide space for ways of working that indirectly challenge the organizational norms that enable misogyny. However we do it, research into these ways of working which resist or circumvent organizational misogyny is clearly sorely needed.

Agenda 3: Organized and organizational misogyny dovetail with other forms of oppression

Black feminist scholars have explored 'misogynoir' (Bailey, 2010, 2021) within academia (Bailey & Trudy, 2018), politics (Palmer, 2020) and the media. Drawing on this and developing Manne's definitions, Loewen Walker (2022) explains how misogyny 'works with' other forms of oppression. She argues convincingly that in positioning misogyny as a collective, social phenomenon, rather than linked to individual emotions, we can better understand why certain kinds of women and certain kinds of behaviours or activities are so heavily targeted and policed. If misogyny is partly a means of maintaining a gendered status quo that favours men, then it obviously figures that trans, two-spirit, non-binary and (some) homosexual people can also be subject to misogyny (Loewen Walker, 2022). It also helps explain why some women can engage in misogyny (cf. Mavin, 2006).

At a global level, misogyny in supply chains exemplifies how intersectional discriminatory behaviours uphold not just gendered systems of oppression, but many others simultaneously – sometimes in parallel, sometimes in aggregation. The effects of this misogyny+ look different in different contexts, depending on who is granted legitimate power, organizational purpose and local political attitudes, among other dynamics. For example, in some supply chains migrant workers

face more hostility; in others local caste systems play a key role (Soundararajan, Sharma, & Bapuji, 2023); in yet others, socio-economic class or age will be central (Zanoni & Miszczynski, 2023). The occupational segregation and marginalization of women of colour in global supply chains in the lowest paid, most vulnerable roles, and the misogynistic practices they endure, suggest that misogyny serves not only patriarchy, but what has been termed 'racial capitalism' (Robinson, 1983). As organization studies scholars, these relationships, responsibilities and practices can and should be attended to, empirically and conceptually. This may require interorganizational analyses, tracing different systems and agents of oppression across organizations, supply chains and organizational forms. It may include interrogating a range of actors, because as the examples from Chinese feminist activism, Indian protests and British policing in our introduction show, governments themselves are organizational bodies, often working alongside business in upholding misogynistic practice.

Intersections of race, gender, able-bodiedness, age and other identities need further teasing out within studies of organized and organizational misogyny. Framing the 'micro-aggressions' that many women experience at work as organizational misogyny/misogynoir enables us to see them more clearly for what they are: an attempt to keep women, particularly women of colour, 'in their place'. It enables us to call out that behaviour in terms that are suitably enraging. It moves experiences of misogyny/misogynoir away from analysis of the individual, to centre it as part and parcel of the way in which organizations are sites of continued symbolic and physical violence which uphold patriarchal systems of power and oppression. It is only by seeing a phenomenon for what it is, and naming it, that we can begin to work towards change.

In Conclusion: The power of naming, and what we do with the names

As we wrote an early draft of this essay, newspapers were reporting the dismissal of a legal case for prosecution of intimate partner violence in France. An Olympic-winning judo champion related how her coach, also her partner, attacked her in her flat, punched her repeatedly, verbally abused her, and tried to strangle her. Her neighbours provided physical sanctuary; she called the police and made the assault public; he called a press conference to deny the story, saying that she was lying and had 'behavioural problems', presenting himself as a victim of her physical and emotional violence. He was released without charge by the police when the examining judge decided that the legal system could not adjudicate between truth and lies at an individual level when accounts of events contradict each other. As we revise the final manuscript for publication, the Spanish Football Association president has resigned from his post, after multiple calls for consequences after the world watched aghast as he planted a non-consensual kiss onto the lips of footballer Jenni Hermoso at the Women's World Cup final. Alongside these widely reported examples, we can listen to self-reported experiences of misogyny experienced every day by women, in conversation and on social media.

It is possible *not* to see misogyny in all of this. The terms sexism, discrimination, harassment and bias are all more comfortable, paradoxically, given that they 'only' describe systematic exclusion and disadvantage based on membership of a social category. All of these terms are also, not coincidentally, applicable to actions and behaviours of any gender identification more or less equally in terms of experiential potential (even though we tend to research them as directed towards women). Misogyny, as we know all too well from presenting this work in progress to colleagues, creates affective and intellectual discomforts that are much more difficult to resolve or even look at directly, especially for men. Even the possibility that misogyny can exist, focused on half of the

population in an essentialist way, provokes a turning away towards other interpretations, other concepts, other explanations and, in our experience, a straightforward hostility. We have repeatedly been asked to consider other terms and concepts to understand events such as those we describe here, or to 'prove' women are affected by misogyny, or accused of offending men in using the term.

As feminist and pro-feminist, as a woman and as a man, we react to these challenges with stubborn determination, convinced more and more of the importance and utility of misogyny as a way of designating an everyday experience and theorizing its organizational significance. We both find Manne's conceptualization of misogyny powerful, particularly in terms of research and in relation to our everyday lives, including in our own profession. In common parlance, despite the extension of the term in recent usage, 'misogyny' is still used largely to describe horrific acts of violence. This makes misogynistic violence appear atypical and unique to unstable individuals, as opposed to endemic and baked into organizations (Costas & Grey, 2019). At work, faced with yet another put-down, yet another patronizing deflection of women colleagues' contributions, yet another judgement of a woman colleague's unsatisfactory approach to the challenges of intensified extreme academic work, we too often hear 'oh, he's just bit sexist, you know', said as half-joke, half-lament and complete explanation. Again, this individualizes the problem and, as many of us who have had or witnessed these and other gendered experiences know, it is never just once and rarely just one person. If we step away from 'misogyny-as-hatred-locked-up-in-individual-emotions' and towards 'misogyny-as-affective-social-practice, organizational-and-organized', we are convinced we can better understand how its practice protects the powerful and seeks to police women into being and working in specific ways.

In a theoretical sense, misogyny brings clarity as a philosophically developed label to *analyse* what goes in within and across organizations every day around the world. It's a name, as Loewen Walker (2022) argues, that still packs a punch, as it should, given its empirical referent. Organizations are sites of sexism, yes, but it almost sounds quaint to say that now. That organizations, as parts of society, reflect patriarchy, is also well established enough that it seems to be said mostly with a sigh, especially in feminist settings. But to argue that organized and organizational misogyny are rampant is to be met with raised eyebrows and a renewed, often sceptical, interest from critics, agnostics and those who have spent many years working with feminist theories of organization. The analysis of misogyny, in workplaces, occupations and professions, and misogyny's analytical potential are at root feminist projects, intended to address gendered oppression and inequality *and challenge its practice or outcomes*. As with many feminist projects, all stand to benefit – patriarchal power relations create suffering for women first and foremost, but challenging them points to better organizations and better work for all (see Prothero, 2023, for more on this). This essay is our contribution to help develop that project further, naming an experience and setting a theoretically led research agenda, in the hope that change accompanies research. If this is possible, the counter-intuitive approach of centring men in feminism and acknowledging women's experiences of misogyny permits hope to be found, as we tell its story to develop 'wild possibilities' (Solnit, 2016) for change that show better futures.

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Notes

1. Very briefly on essentialism – we follow much contemporary feminist thinking in writing here about men and women as social categories populated by people identifying or being identified as belonging to each category.
2. With this language we draw on the Scottish government's recently published definition of misogyny (Kennedy, 2022). This report, which is currently the basis of a public consultation to formulate new criminal law, places considerable emphasis on misogyny in workplaces. It is especially clear as to the ambiguous position of HR departments that most often protect employer rather than employee, and encourages those subject to misogynistic harassment to report directly as a criminal act.

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