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Women’s Jobs, Men’s Jobs: Sex Segregation and Emotional Labor

Job segregation—the tendency for men and women to work in different occupations—is often cited as the reason that women’s wages lag men’s. But this begs the question: What is it about women’s jobs that causes them to pay less? We argue that emotional labor offers the missing link in the explanation. Tasks that require the emotive work thought natural for women, such as caring, negotiating, empathizing, smoothing troubled relationships, and working behind the scenes to enable cooperation, are required components of many women’s jobs. Excluded from job descriptions and performance evaluations, the work is invisible and uncompensated. Public service relies heavily on such skills, yet civil service systems, which are designed on the assumptions of a bygone era, fail to acknowledge and compensate emotional labor.

Twenty years ago, sociologist Arlie Hochschild introduced the term *emotional labor*.¹ More recently, Daniel Goleman (1995) popularized the term *emotional intelligence*. In this postindustrial economy, both writers are cuing on skills, traits, and performance that do not fit the mold prescribed by Frederick Taylor’s scientific management, Max Weber’s “ideal” bureaucracy, or behaviorist requirements that traits and skills be measurable if they are to matter.

Many, if not most, public-service jobs require interpersonal contact, usually face to face or voice to voice. Those who staff the counter at the driver’s license examining station are expected to greet the one-hundredth applicant of the day with the same sincerity as the first. Those who staff the telephone lines for the Internal Revenue Service are expected to be “nicer than nice.” Case workers must care about strangers; administrative assistants must “read” their directors’ moods and respond accordingly. This work is relational in nature and called *emotional labor*.

Emotional labor applies to both men’s and women’s work, but it is the “softer” emotions, those required in relational tasks such as caring and nurturing, that disappear most often from job descriptions, performance evaluations, and salary calculations. These are the emotions that are a mainstay of health and human service professions, public

education, paraprofessional jobs, and most support positions, such as administrative assistants, receptionists, clerical staff, and secretaries. Simply stated, acts that grease the wheels so that people cooperate, stay on task, and work well together are essential for job completion, but they are rewarded more with a pat on the back than with money. Writing about the gender-related dynamics that drive this disappearing process, Joyce Fletcher (1999) says,

... there is a masculine logic of effectiveness operating in organizations that is accepted as so natural and right that it may seem odd to call it masculine. This logic of effectiveness suppresses or “disap-

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pears” behavior that is inconsistent with its basic premises, even when that behavior is in line with organizational goals. The result is that organizations adopt the rhetoric of change—moving, for example, to self-managed teams—but end up disappearing the very behavior that would make the change work, such as recognizing the effort involved in helping a team work together effectively. (3)

To acknowledge the *caritas* function is to violate the norms of management science. It does not fit into the paradigm of how bureaucracies behave, nor does it comport with the standard listing of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Yet, as hierarchical systems of prediction and control transform into collaborative networks, task forces, and teams, these behaviors are important now more than ever. Interpersonal links, rather than office walls, define the boundaries of our new organizational sizes and shapes.

Defined by the Industrial Age

The ideology of work is buttressed by four institutional forces. First, the civil service is built on a foundation of formal descriptions that specify tangible elements of each job. Though reforms have been introduced over the years, the basic understanding of what does and does not constitute a skill remains mired in tradition.

Second, the structural elements of organizing, articulated by scientific management and reinforced by top-down, command-and-control structures, have taught us to treat workers as interchangeable parts whose contributions reside in the performance of duties that are clearly enumerated. A rational division of labor, hierarchical control, performance standards, selection and advancement based on technical competence, formal record keeping, and communication are ingrained in the way we think about job classification. Relational work is absent from the list of knowledge, skills, and abilities except in the obligatory requirement to establish and maintain good working relationships.

The third institutional force is so-called market value, which is shorthand for cultural understandings of worth. Market value blinds us to a panoply of culturally based assumptions. For example, before the mid-1800s, it was unthinkable that a woman would hold a government post. Over time, it became grudgingly acceptable for women to work as clerks, so long as they did not take income away from men. To ensure this, federal legislation was passed in 1864 that set women’s pay at half that paid to men, an amount that would not deprive men of their role as breadwinners but would ensure women a “fair” wage (Van Riper 1976). Women stenographers were described as especially capable because of their ability to radiate sympathetic interest, agreeableness, and courtesy in the office (Kanter

1977), but these attributes were considered icing on the cake—that is, unnecessary for the barebones performance of the job. A century later, it became acceptable to pay women as much as men, but the die had been cast long before.

Fourth, urbanization and industrialization meant that a dichotomy emerged between home and work, with each domain evoking different behaviors. Home became a refuge and haven from the dehumanization of the workplace. The work of nurturing and sustaining while simultaneously performing manual labor, as had occurred on the family farm, disappeared from the definition of work. In its place came a paradigm of rational, objective job duties. Relational work was defined away, not germane to the task at hand. Work and its accompanying job descriptions focused on the tangible production of marketable goods and services. Behavior that mediated the process and produced positive interpersonal relations, fostered a sense of community, and resolved conflict and tension did not fit easily into quantifiable elements, and so was treated as nice but extraneous.

The confluence of these institutional factors cemented notions about what is and is not real work, resulting in emotional labor being “disappeared.” Defined as a natural behavior—behavior that occurs because it is inherent to the individual—it is thought unworthy of financial compensation. (Heavy lifting, however, to which the same argument for could be applied, does qualify.) As a consequence, support staff see their contributions diminished and poorly rewarded. Work is paid, while “natural labor” is compensated by words of thanks.

Backstage Performances

When performed at its best, like fine background music, emotional labor goes unnoticed. Unbeknownst to the client, it facilitates interaction and elicits a desired response, contributing to productivity from the agency’s point of view and achieving the goal of the exchange from the client’s point of view. This is most notable in jobs that require positive interactions, such as case workers, receptionists, public health nurses, counter clerks, and public school teachers. To do their jobs well, they employ skills similar to those of method actors: They invoke and display emotions, just as actors do when playing roles.

Suppressing or managing their own feelings requires higher levels of *emotional intelligence*, which is the ability to manage one’s own emotions and to sense those of others, using that knowledge to govern one’s actions. Related competencies include self-awareness, self-control, empathy, active listening, conflict resolution, and cooperation with others. As with intellectual intelligence, ability levels vary with the individual (Ashkanasy and Daus 2002).

Emotional labor, along with its prerequisite emotional intelligence, moves us a step closer to understanding persistent pay inequity. Yet, we have no track record for how to price it nor words to elaborate on the tasks involved. To this end, we describe the dynamics of emotional labor, demonstrate how it pertains to public-service jobs, and encourage further inquiry by those interested in human resource management, job analyses, classification and compensation, pay equity, and gender issues.

Sex-Typed Work

Across all sectors of the economy, women earn about 76 percent of what men earn (U.S. Department of Labor 2000). Wages of government workers fare better: National data that compares salaries for full-time managers in public administration show the pay gap to be 83 cents—7 cents better than when business and nonprofit workers are included in the analysis (GAO 2002, 8).

Job segregation—the tendency for men and women to work in different occupations—is the easy answer to why women’s wages lag men’s. Though sex-typed work has decreased since 1970, the rate of decline has slowed and job integration is now proceeding slower than it has in the past 30 years (Anker 1998). Over half of all employed women would still have to change jobs to equalize occupational distribution by gender (Jacobs 1989). This is despite the fact that more than half of all college students are women, almost 30 percent of legal professionals are women, 31 percent of physicians are women, and, in overall numbers, the public workforce has moved steadily toward representativeness that is roughly proportionate to the population in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity (Guy and Thatcher forthcoming; Naff 2001; U.S. Department of Labor 2001).

On average, jobs for which men are thought to be more capable pay about 24 percent more than jobs for which women are thought to be more capable (Guy and Killingsworth forthcoming). Little is heard about comparable worth, though, because its opponents claim that work performed by women is not comparable to work performed by men. In fact, on its face this argument is correct:

Women’s jobs are different from men’s. Why? We maintain that emotional labor offers the explanation. Close to three-fourths of all paraprofessionals are women and almost 90 percent of support jobs are held by women. Although these jobs require skills comparable to those required of craft workers (95 percent of whom are male), they are compensated at lower rates (EEOC 1997).

Two Degrees of Separation

Job segregation occurs both horizontally and vertically. Horizontal segregation—nicknamed *glass walls*—refers to the distribution of men and women across occupations, such that women are case workers and men are highway patrol officers; women hold staff posts and men hold line posts. Vertical segregation—nicknamed *glass ceilings*—refers to the distribution of men and women in the job hierarchy in terms of status within an occupation, such that women work as assistants and men as directors. Tables 1 and 2 exemplify sex-typed work in both dimensions.

Table 1 provides an example of vertical segregation, using current data from Florida, one of the largest states in the nation and a state that is rapidly replacing California as the petri dish for emerging issues. Data for state employees across all job levels in Florida show the pay gap to be 85 cents, 2 cents better than the national average for public workers (State of Florida 2002).

Though table 1 presents data from only one state, the pattern is familiar, and data from most any jurisdiction reflect a similar pattern. The majority of public workers at the lowest rungs of the career ladder are women (56.5 percent). Moving upward, women still represent over half of all workers in the middle tier. At the top level, which represents policy makers, the pattern turns upside down. Almost two-thirds of these workers are male.² Moreover, at this level the wage gap is smaller, largely because the women who hold senior management posts are working not in sex-typed posts but in “unisex” positions. It is in these jobs that the Equal Pay Act of 1963 has had the greatest impact. When women work in “men’s” jobs, they come close to earning equal pay, though Fletcher (1999) argues that emotional labor is still expected of them there, over

Table 1 State Workers in Florida, 2001

	Career ^a		Selected exempt ^b		Senior management ^c		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Number	39,367	51,152	8,925	10,529	329	170	48,621	61,851
Gender proportion (percent)	43.5	56.5	45.9	54.1	65.9	34.1	44	56
Average salary	\$32,422	\$28,350	\$50,261	\$40,272	\$94,529	\$91,071	\$36,117	\$30,552
Women’s salary per \$1.00 earned by men	\$0.87		\$0.80		\$0.96		\$0.85	

Source: Florida Department of Management Services (2002).

^aCareer service employees represent the largest category of state workers and the lowest skill levels.

^bSelected exempt employees are all managers, supervisors, confidential employees, and certain professional positions, such as doctors and lawyers.

^cPolicy-making positions and others in upper management are in the senior management service. This category contains department heads.

and above what is expected of men. To the point of our argument, it is sex-typed jobs that penalize women the most because these jobs require more “natural” (that is, unpaid) tasks that are missing from the job description’s list of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

The bottom figure in each column represents the amount of money that women earn for each dollar earned by men in the same category. Among senior management, women come within 4 cents of parity. Because there are only 170 women in that category out of a total of 110,472 state workers, however, the small difference does little to change the overall pay ratio.

Now we turn to horizontal segregation. Table 2 illustrates jobs that are found in one form or another in civil service rosters and that Hochschild (1983, 237–41) identifies as requiring emotional labor.³ These jobs possess three characteristics: They require voice or facial contact with the public; workers are required to evoke an emotional state in the client; and the employer exerts control over the emotional activities of employees. We add that some jobs, especially those of confidential aides and secretaries, require emotional labor not so much for contact with external constituencies but for internal customers. Although the worker is not required to meet the public, she is required to engage in emotional labor to meet the demands of her superior and constituencies within the agency.

As the table shows, among these jobs, it is the rare occupation that employs equal numbers of women and men. In a number of these occupations, there are fewer than 50,000 men across the nation who hold these jobs. Given the range of jobs and interests of workers, the concentration of women and scarcity of men calls attention to the difference that gender makes. Postal workers who staff counters in post offices demonstrate the exception; in this case, wages are still 9 percent less for women.

Within each occupational category, women earn less than their male counterparts, regardless of women’s representation. While women account for 31 percent of all physicians, they earn 58 cents for every one dollar earned by their male counterparts. Even when women appear to have an advantage—that is, working in a traditionally female job with mostly other women—they still do not fare as well as men. More than 90 percent of registered nurses are women, but female nurses earn 12 percent less than male nurses. We attribute this disparity to the different role expectations of men and women and the different exchange value between the performance of women’s “natural” skills and men’s.

Table 2 also demonstrates that women’s wages are clustered toward the lower end of the wage

spectrum, while men’s cluster higher. The highest-paid occupation for men is physician (\$1,553 per week, or \$654 more per week than female physicians). The earnings gap between women and men is relatively narrow for social workers (92.4 percent), but even here, wages vary by gender. Whichever way we slice the data, women performing emotional labor are paid less than men performing emotional labor. This suggests that all emotional labor is not created equal—emotional labor is recognized, valued, and rewarded when it is performed by men (even in female-dominated occupations) and devalued when it is performed by women. It gets disappeared because it is considered natural.

The Penalty for Caring

It is true that women are overrepresented in relational jobs and underrepresented in scientific and technical jobs. There is a monetary penalty not only for being female, but also for holding a job that involves caring and nurturing. Occupations that involve *caritas* pay lower wages for both women and men, but men in these jobs still earn more than their female counterparts. Labor that generates perceptions of rapport, supportiveness, congeniality, nurturance, and empathy—in other words, “mom” behaviors—does not

Table 2 Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers by Selected Occupations Requiring Emotional Labor, 2000

Occupation	Number of workers (thousands)	Percent of total female	Median weekly earnings (\$)		Percent wage gap
			Men	Women	
Human resource specialists	572	66.4	864	678	78.4
Public relations specialists	166	59.6	923	670	72.5
Social workers	734	71.2	637	589	92.4
Welfare service aides	71	84.5	(c)	358	—
Child care workers	130	98.4	(c)	264	—
Teachers, K–12	4,255	74.4	827	673	81.3
Teachers aides	402	90.5	(c)	338	—
Counselors, educational and vocational	231	67.9	914	759	83.0
Health service occupations	1,833	87.6	377	339	89.9
Registered nurses	1,518	91.2	890	782	87.8
Therapists	326	68.4	831	727	87.4
Physicians	461	31.2	1,553	899	57.8
Recreation workers	88	65.9	(c)	398	—
Insurance adjustors, examiners, and investigators	424	73.3	677	503	74.2
Postal clerks, except mail carriers	279	51.6	728	663	91.0
Cashiers	1,368	76.4	313	276	88.1
Clerical supervisors	658	60.3	703	545	77.5
Receptionists	709	97.0	(c)	388	—
Secretaries, stenographers, and typists	2,523	98.4	(c)	455	—
Telephone operators	119	83.1	(c)	384	—

Source: Department of Labor, 2001. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Employment and Unemployment Statistics, Annual Average Tables from the January 2001 Issue of Employment and Earnings, Household Data Annual Averages, Table 39.

(c) Data not shown where number of job occupants is less than 50,000.

register on the wage meter.⁴ The discounted wage attached to women's emotional labor reflects an assumption that care is a natural activity that neither deserves nor requires remuneration (England and Folbre 1999).

Women and men hold one another to different standards in regard to the type of emotional expression that is considered normal. Mary Hale (1999) uses focus groups to discuss the role that gender plays in communication. While men expressed comfort with men's angry outbursts on the job, they thought it inappropriate for women to have such outbursts. Similarly, participants expected women to be more attentive to emotional expression. Women who come up short in their emotional labor skills fare poorly. Who wants to be treated by a cold nurse, taught by a confrontational teacher, assisted by a gruff clerk? Unlike traditional men's professions, where expressions of anger are tolerated and autonomy is expected, women's work is rooted in interpersonal exchanges that require supportive behaviors.

Paralegals

Take the case of one group of paraprofessionals, paralegals. Employed throughout the legal system, most paralegals are women. Emotional labor is a crucial feature of paralegal work and is mostly invisible—it is neither formally acknowledged in job descriptions nor remunerated. Notwithstanding, the work of paralegals involves two specific components of emotional labor—deference and caretaking. The first component reflects the structure of the relationship between the lawyer and the paralegal; the lawyer is the authority and the paralegal, the subordinate. Accordingly, paralegals are expected to be deferential. The second component is the asymmetric caretaking role in relation to lawyers and, to some extent, witnesses and clients. The lawyer is the recipient of care, and the paralegal is the caregiver (Pierce 1999).

The work roles of paralegals are shaped by different normative expectations for male and female workers. According to a study by Pierce (1995), female paralegals were characterized as the lawyer's emotional punching bag and therapist, and were expected to support (male) trial lawyers through both deference and caretaking. Male paralegals, by contrast, engaged in a less personal, seemingly rational mode of conduct. Male paralegals were not relied on as therapists but as political advisers; they were not expected to be nurturing, but were treated by trial attorneys as if they were preparing for law school; and, unlike their female counterparts, they were often included in the lawyers' social gatherings (Steinberg and Figart 1999). Here a paralegal compares her experience to that of a male paralegal who works with her:

There is a definite difference in emotional labor between men and women in my law firm. Females are expected to be nice and use facial displays such as

smiling. They also have to nurture and pay special attention to the attorneys more so than the male. The male can get away with being neutral or seemingly emotionless. The differences paralegals face in expectations correspond to the actual differences in emotional labor. Women in our firm are very aware of the gender division of labor and how it affects them mentally and emotionally.

Emotional labor is a critical job function of a female paralegal but it is not formally recognized in job descriptions or position announcements. Employers advertise for workers who have competence in litigation practice, but they do not call for the emotional skills that we are required to perform. Women paralegals who do not perform emotional labor face sanctions in terms of lower pay, types of work assignments they receive, or termination for their attitude problems. However, the male paralegal does not face these problems. In my opinion emotional labor is treated as if it were invisible. (Laura P. Hosay, personal communication, April 26, 2001)

Female paralegals find themselves sanctioned if they fail to perform emotional labor. A woman who does not play mom, who is not friendly, pleasant, and nurturing, is regarded as uncooperative, may not receive raises, or may be terminated for "attitude problems." Male paralegals are not similarly judged. They are not required to fulfill the same emotional requirements as their female counterparts. Indeed, they are able to bow out of the feminized aspects of emotional labor without cost. In this way, women face a double bind: Institutional norms require them to play mom but do not reward them for it—nurturing is simultaneously required and devalued (Kearney and Sellers 1996; Pierce 1999).

The Conflation of Gender and Emotional Labor

The paralegal example shows how gender and emotional labor interact to produce the pay gap. Arlie Hochschild (1983) explains that the world turns to women for mothering, and this fact silently attaches itself to job descriptions. Because men often find it easier to express emotions to a woman than to another man, they frequently cast women in the role of "nurturant mother" or confidante (Martin 1999). In the same way, many of the skills that nurses possess derive not from the qualities of being a nurse, but from the qualities of being a woman—a statement that renders nurses' skills invisible by naturalizing and essentializing them (Steinberg and Figart 1999). We can see how this dynamic plays out for paralegals—female paralegals were expected to be supportive of the lawyer's emotional venting; by contrast, there was no similar expectation for male paralegals, who were treated as lawyers in training.

Caring work is exceptional or optional for men, while it is obligatory for women. Another example can be found among college professors. Bellas (1999) finds that students expected female professors to be warmer and more supportive than male professors and judged them more harshly when they were not. Hochschild (1983) explains, "The more she seems natural at it, the more her labor does not show as labor, the more successfully it is disguised as the *absence* of other, more prized qualities" (169).

Emotional labor has been defined as a covert resource (Hochschild 1993); an invisible, yet expected, component of job performance (Steinberg and Figart 1999; Karabanow 2000); the act of complying with organizationally mandated display rules (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993; Humphrey 2000); and the effort, planning, and control needed to express organizationally desired emotion during interpersonal transactions (Morris and Feldman 1997; Domagalski 1999).⁵ It has also been characterized as an oxymoron by linking emotion, a negatively valued experience, to labor, a positively valued means of production (Putnam and Mumby 1993). This view reflects the bias that imbues our civil service job descriptions. While the requirement is for emotional performance, it is worth little. The jobs described in figure 1, current listings in the Career Service Class for the State of Florida, provide a comparison.

The amount of emotional labor expected of job incumbents varies dramatically from the little that is expected of the fruit and vegetable inspector, to the amount required of the driver's license examiner, to the maximum amount expected of the family services counselor. We have italicized specific mention of tasks and knowledge, skills, and abilities that require relational work. While the fruit and vegetable inspector earns almost as much as the family services counselor, there are fewer qualifications for the job and fewer demands on those who have the job. Other than the standard tagline to "communicate effectively and to establish and maintain effective working relationships with others," there is no requirement to engage in emotional labor. As table 3 shows, there are 10 jobs in this category, and all are held by men. Conversely, both the driver's license examiner and the family services counselor require significantly more emotional labor; almost two-thirds of all driver's license examiners are women, and almost 80 percent of family services counselors are

Figure 1 Comparison of Three Jobs

<p>Job: Driver's License Examiner I Pay: \$1,799–\$2,709 <i>Qualifications:</i> High school diploma or equiv. + 1 year experience in related work; 1 year of college may substitute for experience <i>Examples of Work Performed:</i> Grades exams and informs applicants of results. Inspects vehicles for proper operation; performs clerical duties in preparing, processing, and filing license applications, exams, fees, and related forms; answers inquiries by phone or in person concerning laws, regulations, requirements and procedures/collects and processes fees; operates camera that produces photograph simultaneously with driver's license application/operates a die cutter, bonder, and timer to finalize issuance of the driver's license; operates online computer terminal to query eligibility for driver's licenses <i>Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:</i> Knowledge of basic arithmetic/office procedures/principles and techniques of effective communication/skill in driving an automobile/ability to deal with the public in a tactful and courteous manner/to answer phone calls in a fast, courteous and effective manner/to follow office procedures/to organize and file materials/to perform arithmetical calculations/to understand and apply rules, regulations, policies, and procedures/to work independently/to plan, organize and coordinate work assignments/to communicate effectively/to establish and maintain effective working relationships with others</p>
<p>Job: Fruit and Vegetable Terminal Market Inspector Pay: \$2,248–\$3,555 <i>Qualifications:</i> Completion of fruit and vegetable terminal market inspection school and 6 months experience. Performing terminal market inspections/no formal educational requirement <i>Examples of Work Performed:</i> Inspects fruits, vegetables, melons and nuts; approves corrective action for violations of laws and regulations; participates in preparation of certificates for car-lot and truckload shipments received at terminal markets; prepares and submits reports; interprets laws relating to regulation and inspection procedures <i>Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:</i> Knowledge of techniques used in inspecting fruit, vegetables, and nuts. Ability to inspect fruit, vegetables, and nuts; to pay attention to details and note discrepancies; to plan, organize, and coordinate work assignments; to prepare reports; to communicate effectively; to establish and maintain effective working relationships with others</p>
<p>Job: Family Services Counselor Pay: \$2,374–\$3,794 <i>Qualifications:</i> bachelor's degree + passing score on Introduction to Child Protection Written Assessment <i>Examples of Work Performed:</i> Conducts child safety assessments; provides counseling for children and families with allegations of abuse or neglect; performs ongoing assessments/provides or refers families to services, understands and uses information from service providers, psychological reports and psychosocial evaluations. Conducts searches for parents or relatives/facilitates family visits for children in out-of-home placements. Maintains files. Develops, assesses and implements case plans with families. Provides documents to file petitions. Develops and presents status reports to court authorities. Assesses family for federal funding eligibility. Provides transportation to clients. Schedules, gathers information for, and participates in case staffings. Provides input into vouchersing systems. Explains child protection and other programs to children and families. Explains rights and responsibilities to children and family members; provides support to foster homes and relative placements. Provides post placement planning and services/assists child in developing a life book, and making sure it stays with the child if his or her placement changes/performs on-call duties. Recommends adoptive placements and negotiates subsidy payments. Reports abuse, neglect and/or abandonment. Completes adoptive home and foster home licensing studies. Conducts training for shelter/foster homes. <i>Source:</i> State of Florida's Career Service Class Specification and Pay Plan, 2002.</p>

Table 3 Breakdown of Job Occupants

Job title	Women	Men	Percent women
Driver's license examiner I	438	239	64.7
Fruit and vegetable terminal market inspector	0	10	0
Family services counselor	1220	316	79.4

Source: Florida Department of Management Services (2002).

women. This comparison between job qualifications, job description, salary, and gender provides an example of how emotional labor is discounted, or “disappeared,” to use Fletcher’s terminology.

To be successful, workers who engage in emotional labor must be aware of their own emotions and manage them, motivate themselves, recognize emotions in others, and respond to them in such a way that the relationship achieves the intended goal. The family services counselor who is assessing a family’s capacity to care for a child must engage in emotional labor to develop the rapport necessary to gain needed information and cooperation. The driver’s license examiner must exercise emotional labor to get through the day and deal with the queue of applicants who grow testy as they endure exams and long waits. The act of managing emotion at work is central to success in these jobs—managing client emotions as well as the worker’s own. The fruit and vegetable inspector who is examining oranges and tomatoes has far less variability on the job than the family services counselor endures, and minimal amounts of relational work compared to the other two listings, yet is compensated handsomely in comparison. While the driver’s license examiner earns less than the other two positions, the examiner is required to meet and greet the public and interact with them as they apply and are examined for driver’s licenses, receive them, or are denied. The family services counselor has an extraordinary amount of relational work yet earns only slightly more than the inspector who is checking truckloads of melons.

By naturalizing and essentializing the work required of the family services counselor—work that affects families’ and children’s lives for years—the job is compensated at about the same level as the fruit and vegetable inspector. Though this may reflect market value, it leads us to ponder the wisdom of the market. In a related vein, Lotte Bailyn (1993) focuses on professional women and how workplace structures must be made more flexible to accommodate family lifestyles. She argues for dramatic restructuring rather than tinkering at the margins. As citizens’ expectations for public services become more demanding, government agencies need to staff operations with the best workers—and the best workers expect to be compensated for their work.

Research Directions

Sex segregation and salary inequities cannot be corrected in reality when they are only understood in concept. While gender becomes a catchall for explaining why things are the way they are, as a construct it stops short of providing a full understanding. We believe that emotional labor advances our understanding of the difference that gender makes in the workplace. We have argued that this concept

provides a lever for closer examination of the types of work behaviors expected of women. For human resource specialists, we encourage scrutiny of job descriptions, performance evaluations, and pay scales—scrutiny that will identify the disconnect between skills that are required, recognized, and remunerated. If a decade of reinventing government and performance management has taught us anything, surely we have learned that industrial-era norms fail to accommodate the service economy. We suggest several avenues for further research.

Citizen Satisfaction

Douglas Pugh (2001) confirms there is a positive relationship between cheery employees and clients who evaluate a service positively. Why should this matter to public administrators? In an environment where understaffed public services must meet the same customer expectations as business establishments, positive exchanges have become a benchmark for performance. When citizens meet friendly street-level bureaucrats, they are more likely to have a positive assessment of services rendered and of government services in general. We hypothesize that employees who are sensitive and skilled at the relational work of face-to-face public service produce higher satisfaction levels among citizens. When higher performance is the goal of the nation’s agencies, the skills required to improve satisfaction should be recognized and built into job descriptions and reward systems.

Rational versus Emotive Work

There is a rich and emerging body of work on the subject of emotional labor in sociological and organizational literatures. Much of it addresses the dichotomy between the rational and emotive aspects of work (Shuler and Sypher 2000; Domagalski 1999; Fineman 1993).⁶ For instance, there are arguments that rationality is the norm, while emotion is no more than a disruptive influence on efficiency and effectiveness (Tracy and Tracy 1998). To accommodate emotion in the workplace, Putnam and Mumby (1993) advance an ideal they call “bounded emotionality,” which parallels bounded rationality (Simon 1976). They contend that bureaucracy privileges rationality and marginalizes emotional experience. That is, “emotion is normally juxtaposed against rationality as a marginal mode of experience to be minimized in routine organizational life” (41). Research that probes and advances the utility of emotive work in public service will contribute to this literature.

Describing Relational Work

Emotional expressions are often characterized in gendered terms and become regarded as either appropriate (meaning masculine) or inappropriate (meaning feminine)

(Ollilainen 2000). In terms of examples from this article, compensation levels make relational work seem equivalent to inspecting grapefruit, a task that is observable and quantifiable. Tasks are delineated as if equivalent because we have not developed a means for appreciating or expressing the nature and type of work involved in emotional labor. Developing language that captures relational work and emotional labor expectations will diminish the rigidity of traditional job descriptions and contribute to more accurate job analyses.

Identifying, Labeling, and Pricing Emotional Work

It is conceivable that emotional labor is required more in pink-collar jobs than in professional jobs, though this distinction is speculative. Even in traditionally male jobs, such as engineering, Fletcher (1999) contends that women who hold those jobs are expected to demonstrate these invisible competencies. Job analyses that identify and label, rather than ignore, emotional labor will contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon and to overhauls of the job description–compensation connection.

A treasure trove of fascinating questions arise from these avenues. Human resource management is dynamic, mirroring changes in labor force supply and demand, calls for reform, and reinvention (Hays and Kearney 2001). Research that will reveal the corners, curves, and twists of emotional labor in public-service jobs will make a significant contribution to government workers, the civil service, and the citizens who access public services.

Summary

Antidiscrimination and equal employment opportunity legislation over the past four decades has made headway toward leveling the playing field for women at work. Nonetheless, occupational sex segregation and the pay gap have proven impervious to these laws. We contend that emotional labor is a missing link in the chain of events that produces lower wages for jobs held primarily by women. The conflation of gender with the requirements of emotional labor, predominantly emotional labor that involves *caritas*, results in work skills and abilities that are taken for granted, not listed as bona fide requirements of the job, and not compensated.

Once one sees emotional labor as compensable, one also sees the shortcomings of traditional job descriptions and pay scales. As we move farther and farther away from organizations that are designed to operate assembly lines, we must devise new structures that capture today's work and skill requirements.

There is no better time than now to look again at that which worked in the past but has outlived its usefulness. Seeing the largely invisible emotional components of job classification and compensation systems enables us to more fully comprehend the tenacity of sex segregation and pay inequity in the workplace and to fashion remedies. Making emotional labor visible is the first step; making it compensable is the next.

Notes

1. This term is more commonly found in the literature than the term "emotion labor." An exception is Kruml and Geddes (2000), who prefer the latter term to distinguish between *emotional* labor (which they define as any labor performed in an emotional way) and *emotion* labor, which "more specifically defines the construct as labor that involves the manipulation and expression of emotions" (188).
2. This pattern is also reported in a national survey of state administrators (Ricucci and Saidel 1997).
3. Hochschild (1983) notes the occupational categories are imprecise. Hence, the fit of emotional labor criteria to occupation is necessarily loose. We provide a sketch, not a photograph.
4. For a parallel construction on the difference that gender makes in public administration's history, see Stivers (1995).
5. The consequences of emotional labor are examined in terms of both positive and negative outcomes. The early emphasis on the negative repercussions of emotional labor has been qualified and refined (even challenged) by more recent stud-

ies. Building on the work of Hochschild (1983), research has addressed the unfavorable consequences of emotional labor (Rafaeli and Sutton 1987; Wouters 1989; Ashforth and Humphrey 1993; Kahn 1993; Conrad and Witte 1994; Waldron 1994; Morris and Feldman 1996). The most often cited negative outcome associated with emotional labor is burnout (Tolich 1993; Wharton 1993). Other indicators of psychological health are also examined, including stress (Sharrad 1992), poor self-esteem, depression, cynicism, role alienation, self-alienation (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993; Fineman 1993; Seeman 1991) and emotional deviance (Fineman 1993; Tolich 1993). These outcomes are generally associated with the concept of emotional dissonance, defined as the separation of felt emotion from feigned emotion expressed to meet organizational expectations.

A few scholars, however, confirm Hochschild's assertion that emotional labor can also produce favorable results, including increased satisfaction, security, and self-esteem (Strickland 1992; Tolich 1993; Wharton 1993); increased psychological well-being (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993;

Conrad and Witte 1994); decreased stress (Conrad and Witte 1994); increased task effectiveness (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993; Connellan and Zemke 1993); and an increased sense of community (Shuler and Sypher 2000).

6. A second stream of research focuses on the rules governing the expression of positive emotions, generally in service-based occupations such as convenience store clerks (Sutton and Rafaeli 1988), flight attendants (Hochschild 1983), waitresses (Paules 1991), those in the fast food and insurance industries (Leidner 1993), banking and health (Wharton 1993), litigators

and paralegals (Pierce 1995), and professors (Bellas 1999). Negative emotions receive specific attention from Sutton (1991) in his study of bill collectors. Taken together, these studies highlight how emotions are commodified by organizations. The expression of emotions is formally controlled and regulated in order to satisfy organizational goals. According to this body of research, the display of organizationally desired emotions assumes an exchange value because it is construed as a form of labor that is performed in return for a wage (Domagalski 1999).

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