Blog Post

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**Engendering Change: Organizational Dynamics and Workplace**

**Gender Desegregation, 1975-2005**

This article analyzes the mechanisms that facilitated the gender desegregation process in the workplace during the period of 1975 to 2010. During this time there was persistent growth in the integration of women into managerial positions. The results of Huffman, Cohen and Pearlman (2010) research showed “trends toward gender integration” are mostly due to larger establishments, changes are happening within existing workplaces and the effects of gender integration “has sharply diminished over time” (p.255).

The article begins to put the gender integration process in historical context. They touch on how women’s lower wages and slow upward mobility may be a due to they’re life choices: child bearing and “worker’s choice” (Huffman, Cohen and Pearlman 2010, p.255). But, they ultimately come to the conclusion that the “segregation of jobs… [is] the proximate cause of many forms of gender inequality” (Huffman, Cohen and Pearlman 2010, p. 255). The authors, then, tackle three different characteristics of women’s access to managerial positions this includes organizational size, growth and time (Huffman, Cohen and Pearlman 2010, p. 257). Huffman, Cohen and Pearlman (2010) used “longitudinal data on private-sector workplace composition collected by the US federal government since the 1960s”; the authors collected their data from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (p.261).

Previous research has shown that large organizations can both hinder and promote gender integration. On one hand, large organization may be slow to integrate because of bureaucratization and “entrenchment of existing patterns of gender segregation (Huffman, Cohen and Pearlman 2010, p. 258). But, research has also shown that large organizations have more pressure from external forces (example government) that push for gender integration. The research conducted in this article support this claim, workplace size is positively related to gender integration.

Previous research has also found that there is a positive correlation with growth and access to what Huffman, Cohen and Pearlman (2010) call organizational power structure (p.259). Increases the visibility of female managers and allows female managers to move women into lower level occupations. Growth can increase the chances for women, who would be less likely to advance into higher positions (Huffman, Cohen and Pearlman 2010, p. 259). Through their research this article found growth, also had a positive effect on gender integration where “female managers have greater potential for influence when opportunities for upward mobility are created through job growth” (Huffman, Cohen and Pearlman 2010, p. 273).

Lastly, time has been found to diminish the effects of gender desegregation where women’s advancement has become less pronounced since the 1990’s, leading the authors to decide that gender desegregation is “time dependent” (Huffman, Cohen and Pearlman 2010, p. 260).

Overall, their findings show it is important to have females in high positions to effect the most change when it comes to gender desegregation. Huffman, Cohen and Pearlman conclude that female managers create a diverse and integrated workplace. The authors reference the ‘strength in numbers view’ to support this assertion (p. 272). The benefit of having female managers is that it increases the presence and representation of all workers.

**Citation:**

Huffman, Matt, Cohen, Philip, and Pearlman, Jessica. 2010. “Engendering Change: Organizational Dynamics and Workplace Gender Desegregation, 1975-2010.” *Administrative Science Quarterly.* 55(2): 255-277.