In this pattern, both partners are both insertive and receptive, and thus both are members of the same sexual category.

Dennis Altman (1996) makes the important observation that such cases do not involve the simple substitution of a 'Western' sexuality for a 'traditional' sexuality. Globalization involves an enormously complex interaction between sexual customs and gender regimes that are in any case diverse and divided. The result is a spectrum of sexual practices and categories, formed in contexts of cultural disruption and economic inequality.

This is strikingly shown in Thailand. According to Peter Jackson (1997), the traditional Thai sex/gender categories for males were 'phu-chai' (man, mainly heterosexual) and 'kathoey' (effeminate or cross-gender, receptive homosexual). Under the impact of international gay culture, these categories have not disappeared. Rather, they have been elaborated with a series of additions: 'bai' (bisexual), 'gay-king' (homosexual, preferring to be insertor), 'gay-queen' (usually effeminate, preferring to be receptive), and 'gay-quing' (masculine or effeminate, and sexually versatile). In this inter-cultural context, same-sex practices of sexuality, like the heterosexual sexuality discussed by Segal (see previous section), seem to undermine gender polarities.

6

Gender on the Large Scale

Most discussions of gender concern the local: personal relations, identities, motherhood and child-rearing, family life, sexuality – and their pathologies, such as prejudice, domestic violence and rape. We have already seen reasons to go beyond this. It is impossible to understand personal relations without taking into account institutions, economies, mass communications and governments. Chapter 4 outlined an approach to the structure of gender relations. This chapter applies the same approach to gender relations on the very large scale: in corporations, governments and global society.

Gender in the corporation

The corporation (also known as the 'firm' or 'company') is the dominant form of economic organization in contemporary society, the key institution of developed capitalism. Accordingly, if we are to understand the economic dimension of gender, the structure of production relations (chapter 4), we must examine the corporation.

Corporations are gendered institutions, with a gendered history. 'Companies' of merchants in early modern Europe were entirely composed of men. When ownership began to be divided up and became itself a kind of commodity, with the creation of joint-stock companies and the first stock exchanges in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these too were socially defined as men's institutions. The creation of the modern form of capital was part of the historical process that created a

masculinized public realm, which also included the emerging liberal state, and organs of public opinion such as the press.

This went for a long time unquestioned. When in the nineteenth century middle-class women in the rich countries challenged their exclusion from universities and the professions, there was no comparable demand for entry to business management. A discussion of middle-class gender patterns related to corporate life got under way in the United States in the 1950s. It centred on the 'man in the grey flannel suit', the conformist corporate man, and his perfectly groomed wife going crazy with boredom in a brand-new house in an affluent suburb. This gender image became a symbol of the cultural malaise of consumer capitalism, but it did not involve a critique of the corporation itself. *Managers and their Wives* (1971), a British sociological study by J. M. and R. E. Pahl, also focused on the family and career issues, not on the organizations – and simply took it for granted that managers were men.

The corporation itself only came into focus in the 1970s, when liberal and academic feminism challenged organization theory. The change is marked by the work of Rosabeth Kanter, whose *Men and Women of the Corporation* appeared in 1977. Kanter criticized the absence of gender awareness in organization research, and showed how gender issues mattered, even for the minority of women who did make it into the corporate hierarchy. Over the next two decades a series of close-focus studies of corporate life have appeared, which have vastly expanded our understanding of corporate gender regimes. Some have already been mentioned: Hochschild's (1983) study of 'emotion work' in airlines and debt agencies, and Pringle's (1989) study of secretaries.

Some of the best research has focused on the lowest rungs of the ladder, the world of manual workers in large-scale industries. The sociologist Miriam Glucksmann wrote a wonderful account of British factory life in *Women on the Line* (1982). This was based on seven months' participant observation in a motor vehicle component assembly plant, and gives a vivid picture of the corporate hierarchy, daily life on the shop floor, and the connections with home life. There was a rigid gender division of labour in this plant. Women were employed in the low-paid routine jobs only, promotion was blocked, men could get twice the wage for doing easier jobs. 'It was obvious that the only qualification you needed for a better job was to be a man.' The women were disillusioned about men, and supported each other in daily conflicts with male supervisors. But their poverty, fatigue, household demands, and the gender segregation of working-class life made effective organizing almost impossible.

An equally impressive study by a Canadian team, *Recasting Steel Labour* (Corman et al. 1993), shows entrenched gender divisions beginning to change. In this case a progressive union had supported a campaign to end the exclusion of women from the shop floor. Interviews with a sample of steelworkers and their spouses found widespread support for the equal opportunity principle, though rather less support for specific applications of it. There was less support among the men than among the women. It was clear that the totally masculine shop floor culture traditional in the steel industry was eroding. But the idea that working men were the 'breadwinners' remained strong, and undermined class solidarity between the men and the newly hired women. As it happened, the steel corporation began 'downsizing' – management jargon for laying off workers permanently – at the time of the study. The last hired were the first to go, and so most of the gains of the campaign for women's employment were lost.

The gender hierarchies are not just 'tradition'; they are in many cases deliberately introduced and actively defended. That was shown in Cynthia Cockburn's classic study of printing workers, *Brothers* (1983). David Collinson, David Knights and Margaret Collinson in *Managing to Discriminate* (1990) investigated the same issue in white-collar work. Their study in a British insurance firm similarly found job segregation and gender hierarchy sustained by the action of the men. They lay emphasis on the collective character of workplace masculinity and the interlocking of prejudices. For instance, a manager opposed to promoting women justified his hostility by the idea (possibly correct!) that the customers, also men, would not like it. The women, in worse-paid jobs with promotion blocked, became defensive and indifferent – which was of course attributed to their sex and used to justify gender segregation.

In the United States more women have reached middle management. There is now a debate about the supposed 'glass ceiling' which prevents their getting into top management. In 1991 the US Congress set up a twenty-one-person Glass Ceiling Commission to investigate the problem and recommend solutions. This is one of the few public inquiries into discrimination in business, and is interesting in many ways as a contemporary attempt at gender reform. In a set of glossy reports published in 1995, the Glass Ceiling Commission documented startling levels of exclusion of women and ethnic minority men from top management. Among the biggest corporations in the USA (the 'Fortune 1,000' and 'Fortune 500'), 97 per cent of senior managers turned out to be white, and 95 to 97 per cent were men. Of the Fortune 1,000 companies, two had women CEOs (Chief Executive Officers). (That is, one-fifth of

1 per cent of big corporations had a woman in the top job. This was cited as a sign of progress.)

The Glass Ceiling Commission (1995a, 1995b) attributed this situation to a set of 'barriers' which prevent access to 'high places'. They include: unsuitable or inadequate educational background; prejudice and bias on the part of men in power; career paths that divert women from the main promotion pipeline; poor anti-discrimination enforcement by government; inadequate information about the problem; inadequate publicity; and fear of loss among white men in middle management.

These are credible observations, though 'barriers' seems an inadequate metaphor for most of them. Evidently the reasons for the absence of women (and minority men) from top management have to do with broad features of business organizations, and deeply entrenched patterns of division in the workplace – just as the sociologists had been saying. Commenting on the prevailing culture of US business, the Commission (1995b: 34) quotes the CEO of a retail firm:

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

It may be irrelevant, the Commission remarks wryly, but it thrives. And it may not be as 'irrelevant' to the way business really works as this golden-hearted CEO would like to think.

As the remedy for all this, the Glass Ceiling Commission proposes – a change of attitude. They seek to persuade the controllers of corporations that a more 'diverse' management team would be *Good for Business* (the title of their main report) and would make US corporations more competitive. That is, they rely on the profit motive to drive a massive voluntary reconstruction of business management – somehow failing to notice that the profit motive has been operating full blast since the dawn of capitalism, so far resulting in a management group 97 per cent white and 95 per cent to 97 per cent men. There is no reason to think the picture in other industrialized countries is very different.

At the top levels of corporate management, then, there is an overwhelming majority of men, and a management culture that reflects this fact. Not any kind of man will do. Most senior managers in big business come from a restricted social background: middle- and upper-class

parents, members of the dominant ethnic group, and often educated in elite private schools and elite universities.

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

There is every reason to think similar changes have happened elsewhere. The management textbooks and business magazines themselves say so. James Gee, Glynda Hull and Colin Lankshear (1996) explore this in their study of 'fast capitalism'. The new-model executive, according to the textbooks, is a person with few permanent commitments but a driving interest in profit opportunities for his firm and himself. He is master of general techniques of financial and organizational control, and is willing for career reasons to jump between firms – and in an age of global business, willing to jump between continents.

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

What difference does managerial masculinity (whether borne by men or by women) make to the course of events? This question is difficult to answer, because most of the research is cross-sectional, looking at a sample of people or workplaces rather than looking at events. But there is a particularly interesting study by James Messerschmidt (1997), an American criminologist and masculinity researcher who became interested in corporate crime. He was able, as a result of evidence given in public inquiries, to reconstruct the corporate decision-making that led to the fatal crash of the space shuttle *Challenger* in January 1986.

Messerschmidt found that the key move – a decision to ignore weather conditions which increased the chance of failure in the 'O-rings' that sealed the shuttle's fuel system – was a conscious risk-taking, which had been debated at the time within the engineering company. The decision pitted two styles of corporate masculinity against each other. One was a technically oriented masculinity, and from this quarter the doubts had been raised. The other was a tough profit-oriented managerial masculinity which was unwilling to appear weak. The disastrous decision to go ahead with the launch reflected the organizational dominance of the tough managerial masculinity in a situation where other values, or other reasoning, could have prevailed.

From the point of view of gender justice, even from the narrower point of view of equal opportunity, the picture in top management looks bleak. A masculine culture emphasizing toughness and competitiveness prevails, and the few women who make it into top management are unlikely to change this. Among men too, only those who conform, who can 'stand the heat', are likely to be recruited. The rise of finance capital and the process of globalization (which I will discuss below) have certainly changed styles of management. They have not necessarily produced more equal or more tolerant gender regimes in business.

The state and gender

When the Democratic Party candidate won the United States presidential election of 1992, he announced that he intended to appoint an administration that 'looked like America'. Surveying the results a little later, a woman commentator remarked that Clinton's administration did look like America – men on top. Clinton in fact appointed two women cabinet members, Janet Reno as Attorney-General and Madeleine Albright as Secretary of State. But no revolution followed. All four major-party candidates in the year 2000 US presidential election

were men. As mentioned in chapter 1, this is still the usual situation in politics around the world.

There are obvious reasons, then, why feminists have seen the state as a patriarchal institution, a vehicle of men's power. During the 1980s a number of attempts were made to develop a theory of the state along these lines. Its main themes can be summed up in six points:

- The state is the core of the whole structure of power relations in gender (as defined in chapter 4). Traditional theories of the state in philosophy and political science said nothing about gender because they could not see gender where only men were present, where no 'difference' was visible. But where only men are present, we are looking at a powerful gender effect – that is, the total exclusion of women!
- The state has a well-marked internal gender regime (as defined in chapter 4). There is a strong gender division of labour, with men concentrated in departments such as the military, police, infrastructure and economic agencies, women concentrated in social welfare, health and education. It is typical of modern states that the centres of state power, the top decision-making units, are heavily masculine. Though women are not excluded from policymaking, as the Canadian sociologists Judith Grant and Peta Tancred (1992) point out, women's interests tend to be represented in more peripheral agencies than men's interests.
- The state has the capacity to 'do' gender. Put more conventionally, the state generates policies concerned with gender issues. As these policies are put into effect, the state regulates gender relations in the wider society. This is not a minor aspect of what the state does. It involves many policy areas, from housing through education to criminal justice and the military, a point strongly made by the Australian sociologists Suzanne Franzway and Dianne Court (Franzway, Court and Connell 1989). A familiar example is the state's intervention in sexuality through population policies – policies which are sometimes in favour of birth control (China) and sometimes against (Singapore).
- This activity not only regulates existing gender relations. The state's activity also helps to *constitute* gender relations and form gender identities. An important example is the role of repressive laws and state-backed medicine in creating the category of 'the homosexual' in the late nineteenth century (see chapter 5). The categories of 'husband' and 'wife' are also partly constituted by state action, through mechanisms ranging from marriage laws to tax policy.

- Because of these activities and capacities, the state is the key target in gender politics. It is the focus of most political mobilization on gender issues (see chapter 8 below), as pressure groups and popular movements try to reach their goals via the state. Indeed, the rise of the liberal state was the focus of a historic change in the form of gender politics, which became mass politics for the first time in the nineteenth century. The demand for suffrage, 'votes for women', was precisely a demand to participate in decision-making within the state.
- Since gender relations are marked by crisis tendencies and structural change (chapter 4), the state as the heart of gendered power is itself liable to crisis and change. Current crisis tendencies which impinge on the state include problems of legitimation to do with men's violence, and tensions arising from the gender division of labour ('equal opportunity' and the 'glass ceiling' for women).

These conclusions were drawn from the first wave of feminist research on the state. This analysis had a certain solidity and realism. I think the points listed make a good first approximation to an understanding of the state and gender. But they also have limitations, which are easier to see now than they were ten years ago. Further issues have been emerging, especially to do with power, masculinity and globalization.

Theories of the state tend to forget that the state is only one of society's centres of power. A traditional definition of the state is the institution that holds a monopoly of the legitimate use of force in a given territory. But this is unrealistic. For instance, it ignores the domestic violence of husbands towards wives, a widespread social pattern which used to be wholly legitimate and whose legitimacy is only now being widely contested (Dobash and Dobash 1992).

Can we regard husbands as a 'power'? It flies in the face of conventional political analysis, but it makes sense. In a patriarchal gender order, husbands' interests in their wives' sexual and domestic services are institutionalized on a society-wide basis. This is a power to which state agencies have repeatedly accommodated. Wendy Hollway (1994) documents this point in a study of civil service employment practice in Tanzania. At the time, Tanzania had an official policy of equal conditions for men and women in public employment, as most countries now do. But this policy was subverted when it clashed with husbands' interests. For instance, women civil servants were sent on training programmes only if their husbands had given approval. 'Applications without a husband's permission were treated as if [official] permission had been withheld.' In other ways too, the claims of the state on its employees were modified when the employee was a wife.

Another kind of power is emerging in the form of 'security' agencies. There are said to be more private security employees in the United States now than there are publicly employed police. Corporations run surveillance programmes to control their own employees, and a significant branch of information technology helps them do this. Increasing numbers of the affluent live in 'gated communities', that is, housing complexes with fences patrolled by security employees, designed to keep out the poor, the black and the card-less.

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

The gendered state, then, is operating in a complex field of forces. Recognizing this helps explain the possibility of disintegration in state structures, as seen in the case of the Soviet Union discussed by Novikova (chapter 2). Seeing the gender side of this process may also help explain what many people have found baffling, the re-emergence of *ethnicity* as a basis of states – for instance, in the successor states to Yugoslavia in the Balkans.

Ethnicity is created, to a significant degree, through gender relations. The notion of extended kinship is central to the rhetoric of ethnic membership and boundaries: 'our kith and kin', as the British used to say; 'brothers born of warrior stock', in the language of Zulu nationalism in South Africa (Waetjen and Maré 2001). As Jill Vickers (1994) notes, ethnic politics lays heavy emphasis on women's reproductive powers. Gender relations thus provide a vehicle for both new claims to authority (all the leaders of warring ethnic successor states are men) and definitions of the boundaries of the group to which one feels loyal.

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

This relationship is a two-way street. State power is a resource for the struggle for hegemony in gender, and hegemonic masculinity is a resource in the struggle for state power. This is why political parties often run

military heroes or prominent generals as candidates. Notable examples include President Dwight Eisenhower, the senior American general of the Second World War; his successor, President John Kennedy, a decorated front-line naval officer of the Second World War; and his opponent, Chancellor Adolf Hitler, a decorated front-line infantryman of the First World War.

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

Differences among women are often important in gender policies beyond the welfare sector. Pro-natalist policies which encourage women to be mothers have often been race- and class-specific. The same state may attempt to prevent ethnic minority women from having babies, or regard them as pathological ('welfare queens') when they do. State agencies may discriminate against lesbians (e.g. in employment) in favour of heterosexual women, thus in broad terms helping sustain women's sexual availability to men. But they also provide pensions for women with dependent children under conditions that deny their sexual availability to men.

O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver's study shows clearly for gender issues that what is true of one state is not necessarily true of another, nor of the same state at another point of time. We need to speak of 'states', not just 'the state'. In the contemporary world some of the most important differences reflect the legacy of empire and the global inequalities of wealth.

The struggle to end the colonial empires necessarily challenged the gender arrangements of colonial societies. Some nationalist, revolutionary and anti-colonial movements mobilized women's support and contested traditional forms of patriarchy. The Chinese communist movement is the best-known case. The Maoist slogan 'women hold up half the sky' was part of a sustained attack on feudal attitudes and laws which had

enforced the subordination of women (Stacey 1983). In many other places too, breaking down patriarchy and bringing women into the labour force was seen as vital for development.

But establishing a post-colonial or post-revolutionary regime has often meant installing a new version of patriarchy. Women have been brought into the labour force, but not equally into the political leadership. Maria Mies (1986) sardonically observes how post-colonial regimes symbolized the new patriarchy with cults of revolutionary Founding Fathers – including Mao. In some cases the exclusion of women is explicit: the intimidation of women by Islamic-revival movements in Afghanistan, Iran and some Arab countries is a current example. Nayereh Tohidi's (1991) narrative of feminist politics in Iran shows how assertive attitudes among women were seen as evidence of the corruption of religion and culture by Western influences. Most post-colonial states have been dependent on multinational corporations for their trade, investment and development, so – given the gendered character of large corporations, discussed in the last section – have been operating in an economic environment dominated by men. Singapore, one of the striking success stories of dependent capitalist development, has also created one of the most monolithic patriarchies in post-colonial government.

Yet the current is not all one way. There is also a history of women's activism in Islamic societies, and in certain cases – Pakistan and Indonesia – women have become prominent political leaders. The post-colonial state in India has provided a political environment in which a strong feminist movement could develop. And it is striking that of the five successor states to the British Indian Empire, three have had women Prime Ministers and a fourth nearly did. One of these was the first elected woman head of government in the world: Sirimavo Bandaranaike, elected Prime Minister of Sri Lanka in 1960.

In the countries which were once the imperial centres and are now the financial centres of the global economy, the massive accumulation of wealth has changed the conditions of gender politics. It allows, for instance, the rising lifespan and the 'demographic revolution' (drastic drop in birthrate) that has transformed the lives of married women in rich countries. The politics of reproduction take a specific shape in such circumstances: in these countries, the women's movement has struggled in courts and parliaments for rights to contraception and abortion. The famous court case 'Roe *v.* Wade', which established abortion rights in the USA, is regarded there as a key feminist victory.

The feminist movements which have been active in these countries since the nineteenth century have had a series of legal and constitutional

victories, establishing broadly equal formal rights between women and men: the right to vote, the right to own property, the right to take legal action, fair employment practices, and so on. The old form of state patriarchy, with masculine authority embedded in bureaucratic hierarchies, was vulnerable to feminist challenge.

But the state has been changing. New agendas of 'reform' by right-wing governments have privatized many state services, and in other ways have made public services operate more like corporations. As the Australian sociologist Anna Yeatman (1990) points out, there has been a reorganization of state power in forms less open to feminist challenge. Indeed, women's increased presence in the public realm is counter-balanced by a decline of the public realm itself. Neo-liberal economic strategies, deregulating markets, reducing taxes and government services, and transferring resources to private businesses have meant a major relocation of power into corporations and market mechanisms dominated by men.

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

These agencies, too, are gendered, and have gender effects. For the most part their gender regimes copy those of the states that gave rise to them. The international agencies have, however, a specific importance in gender politics: they are an important vehicle for the globalization of gender relations. As inter-governmental organizations, their explicit gender politics is usually cautious and diplomatic. Yet their shape as organizations, and the rules they operate by, convey gender meanings. Inter-governmental forums tend to emphasize a formal equality between participants.

This became significant in the United Nations Decade for Women, 1975–85, the most sustained effort on gender issues by international organizations. The major conferences marking the Decade became an arena for conflict over the global significance of Western feminism. As Chilla Bulbeck shows in *One World Women's Movement* (1988), there was fierce debate about whether the American model, an autonomous women's movement, was relevant to the needs of third-world women. Some saw this as a new form of cultural imperialism, which by

creating antagonisms between women and men and emphasizing issues that divided them would undermine popular struggles against Western domination.

Gender in world society

Though most discussions of gender are 'local', as mentioned at the start of this chapter, there has always been a counter-current in gender theory. Women's Liberation produced a theory of patriarchy which, in its more sophisticated forms, had historical depth and worldwide reach (Reiter 1977). Socialist feminism turned the focus onto the history of imperialism, and the contemporary world economy, as sources of gender inequality (Mies 1986). The rise of Black feminism in the United States, and post-colonial feminism in other parts of the world, called attention to the global diversity in women's situations and outlooks (Mohanty 1991).

This current of theory was strongly reinforced by a practical development: the creation of international forums for discussing gender inequalities and the interests of women. International women's organizations have existed for most of the twentieth century, such as the pacifist Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. What we now call 'gender' issues have been debated in international forums since before the First World War (Lenz, Szypulski and Molsich 1996: 10–12). Nevertheless the United Nations Decade for Women made a remarkable change. In the Decade for Women, and in follow-ups since, a series of high-profile conferences created a global forum for feminist ideas and pressed issues about the situation of women onto the attention of member governments. More than that, the UNDW crystallized a policy agenda around women's interests that has been pursued in a range of international agencies. This has now been made permanent (so far as such things ever are) by the creation of a United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women.

I believe that these developments reflect an important reality in gender relations today. There are significant features of the gender order which cannot be understood locally, which *require* analysis on a global scale. This applies to all the structures of gender relations described in chapter 4:

- The economic relations between women and men, in a time where large percentages of national economies are owned by foreigners,

large sections of industry are dependent on foreign trade, and major investment decisions are made by transnational corporations;
- The politics of gender, in a time when global competitiveness is pursued via state restructuring, neo-liberalism and privatization of public services, and when masculinized military, paramilitary and police institutions are coordinated internationally;
- Changing emotional relations and sexuality associated with population control, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and international travel;
- The symbolism of gender, in a time when particular images of masculinity and femininity circulate on a vast scale in global media (e.g. fashion, 'celebrities', professional sports), while gender ideologies from different cultures are interwoven as a result of large-scale migration, intermarriage and interaction of cultures.

If we can think at all of world society, of social organization at a planetary level, then we must be capable of thinking about gender as a structure of world society. To take this view we need not assume that gender is everywhere the same, as early theories of patriarchy did assume. Indeed it seems much more likely, at present, that the links are often loose and the correspondences uneven. All we need to assume is that significant linkages do exist.

The links that constitute a global gender order seem to be of two basic types: interaction between gender orders, and new arenas.

Interaction between gender orders

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

This has often been a violent and disruptive process. Imperialism included an assault on those local gender arrangements which did not fit the colonizers' templates: missionaries, for instance, tried to stamp out the third-gender 'berdache' tradition in North America, and what they saw as women's promiscuity in Polynesia. Local gender arrangements have been disrupted or reshaped by slavery, indentured labour, migration and resettlement (well illustrated by Moodie's study of South African mining, in chapter 2). In the contemporary world, the institutions of masculine violence in different parts of the world are linked by an arms trade that amounted to at least $US 24 billion in 1997 (United Nations Development Programme 1999).

The gender practices reshaped by such means form new patterns which are, so to speak, the first level of a global gender order. They are local, but carry the impress of the forces that make a global society. They can, in themselves, be the focus of social struggle. An important example is the controversy in some Islamic countries around the influence of Western models of femininity, symbolized by the debate about women not wearing the veil.

New arenas

Imperialism and globalization have created institutions that operate on a world scale. These institutions all have internal gender regimes, and each gender regime has its gender dynamic – interests, gender politics, processes of change. World-spanning institutions thus create new arenas for gender formation and gender dynamics. The most important of these institutions seem to be:

Transnational and multinational corporations Corporations operating in global markets are now the largest business organizations on the planet. The biggest ones, in industries like oil, car manufacturing, computers and telecommunications, have resources amounting to hundreds of billions of dollars and employ hundreds of thousands of people. They typically have a strong gender division of labour, and (as discussed above) a strongly masculinized management culture.

The international state United Nations agencies, the European Union and a range of other international agencies and agreements now exist. They regulate gender issues globally (e.g. through development aid, education, human rights and labour conventions). They are also important because they themselves have multicultural gender regimes, probably more complex than those of transnational corporations. This is because, as Dorota Gierycz (1999) observes, they often have staffing rules that guarantee geographical diversity.

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

Global markets It is important to distinguish markets themselves from the individual corporations that operate in them. International markets – capital, commodity, service and labour markets – have an increasing 'reach' into local economies. They are often strongly gender-structured

and are now (with the political triumph of neo-liberalism) very weakly regulated.

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

It is clear that the world gender order is the scene of significant injustice and other toxic effects. Though data on a world scale are very imperfect, we can map some significant differences in the situations of women and men:

Material inequalities and exploitation Perhaps the most basic inequality, the inequality of wealth, is exceptionally difficult to map on a world scale. Journalistic reports on the world's largest private fortunes indicate that the great majority are controlled by men. For instance, the list of 'World's Richest' for 2000 published by the business magazine *Forbes* identified 306 billionaires on the international scene, just twelve of whom are women. There is more information about income. Women's earned incomes average 59 per cent of men's in industrialized countries, 63 per cent of men's in Eastern Europe and the CIS, and 48 per cent of men's in developing countries (1997 data) – an average of 56 per cent world-wide. Time-budget studies show women's contribution to total social labour is no less than, and may be greater than, that of men, in both developing and industrialized countries (United Nations Development Programme 1999).

Education and cultural access One measure of social investment in education is the adult literacy rate. Total world figures are not available, but in groups of countries women's adult literacy rates range from 65 per cent of men's (least developed countries) to about 100 per cent of men's (1997). The situation in basic education has markedly improved, with female primary school enrolment now running at 95 per cent of the male rate world-wide. In advanced levels of education, larger gender gaps persist in some parts of the world (United Nations Development Programme 1999).

Institutional power Men held 87 per cent of seats in national parliaments, world-wide, in 1999 (down from 89 per cent in 1991). In terms of executive power, women held 7 per cent of ministerial posts, world-wide, in 1996 (up from 3 per cent in 1987). In no country in the world do women hold a majority of the ministerial posts. In a significant number of countries women hold no ministerial posts at all. Men hold almost all senior military commands, most appellate judicial positions, and almost all senior police commands (Inter-Parliamentary Union 1999, Gierycz 1999). Practically every one of the world's largest corporations operating in global markets is headed by men. Women are also scarce in the leadership of business associations. As Valdés and Gomáriz (1995: 176) remark for Latin America, 'Women's presence in those organizations is modest, and nonexistent at the highest levels of leadership in many cases.'

Recognition Men hold a large majority of positions of intellectual authority, as professors, and are heads of most international scientific bodies. Men hold most religious authority, as bishops, patriarchs, imams, head monks. In several of the world's major religions women are formally excluded from authority. In international mass media, women are generally constituted as objects of desire rather than as subjects of significant action, recognized for beauty or fashion more than for accomplishments, wisdom or knowledge. Pornographic representations of women are increasingly common in international media including the Internet.

These patterns are far from uniform. The statistics show diversity among countries and regions of the world which reflects their different histories, different background cultures, and different levels of social wealth. For instance, women were 39 per cent of members of national parliaments in the Nordic countries in 1999, 9 per cent in the Pacific countries and 4 per cent in Arab states. In recent decades the countries of Scandinavia have stood out as world leaders on such measures, reflecting the strength of the women's movement, a well established local welfare state and an egalitarian culture.

An important current development in gender studies is the attempt to map the international patterns of inequality. A notable example is the 'Mujeres Latinoamericanas en Cifras' project coordinated by the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (Valdés and Gomáriz 1995), a tremendous data compilation comparing the position of women and men in nineteen countries of Latin America. Among other things this project traced the feminization of poverty, the changing occupational structure, demographic change, education, etc.

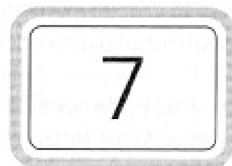
Broadly, the evidence shows that men are the beneficiaries where gender inequalities exist. But not all men benefit to the same degree, indeed some men do not benefit at all. Many men pay some cost, and some pay a heavy cost, for the general supremacy of men in a patriarchal gender order.

Men are the vast majority of the world's 20 million military personnel. Not surprisingly, men are the majority of those killed and injured in

combat (though the picture is different for the civilian victims of war). Men are also the majority of victims in reported homicide and assault. In industrialized countries, and in Eastern Europe and the CIS, men's suicides outnumber women's suicides by 3 to 1 and 5 to 1 respectively.

Because of the combination of higher labour force participation and the gender division of labour, men suffer higher rates of injury, including road transport injury. Across Latin America, for instance, men's rate of death by accident is three times higher than the rate for women (Valdés and Gomáriz 1995: 124). Men in most parts of the world have higher rates of smoking, alcohol use and narcotics use than women. For these among other reasons, men (except in certain very poor countries) have a lower average life expectancy than women. Certain groups of men, notably homosexual men and men of minority ethnic or religious groups, are targeted for abuse and sometimes violence.

Gender inequalities and toxicity are thus features of the global gender order, as well as national societies. Political struggles inevitably result. The patterns of world gender politics will be examined in chapter 8.



Gender and the Intellectuals

A century and a half ago there was no theory of gender in the modern sense. When in 1848 the women and men of the suffrage movement gathered at Seneca Falls in upstate New York for the now-famous convention that launched feminism as a political movement, they looked back to the moralists of the eighteenth century, rather than to the new social sciences around them, for their inspiration.

Then, the underlying problem in understanding gender was to create a framework. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, not only do we have a theory of gender, we have a library of them. Now, a major problem in understanding gender is to make sense of the multiple frameworks on offer.

In this chapter I will try to do this historically. To speak of 'theories of gender' abstractly is to imply that all the theories are about the same thing, that they have the same object of knowledge. This is, at best, only approximately correct. Theories do not appear out of thin air. They are created in varying historical circumstances, by people who have different backgrounds, different places in the social order, different training and different tools. History throws different problems at them. It is not surprising that they formulate their intellectual projects, and understand their object of knowledge, in differing ways.

This point is basic to the sociology of knowledge. It was first applied to gender by a student of the sociology of knowledge, Viola Klein, in her forgotten classic *The Feminine Character: History of an Ideology* (1946). In a later generation it was re-emphasized by feminist 'standpoint epistemology', such as Sandra Harding's *The Science Question in Feminism*