FORUM

BREAKING HEGEMONIES OVER BODIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

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For a long time, the Cartesian tradition reinforced the dualism between the psychological and the material, reason and passion, mind and body, aspects considered distinct and excluding. Descartes' "I think, therefore I am" confined modern thought to ordered and hierarchical frameworks, with the superimposition of "thinking" on "existing." For Styhre (2004, p. 103), "the mind-body distinction proved to be viable, and the notion of the body was opposed to the mind as the carrier of all inferior, excluded, or marginalized qualities and needs", which resulted in dichotomous, hierarchical thinking of polarized elements. This is how the mind became potentially rational and more significant than the body, a mere material apparatus that imprisons it, hindering the operations of reason (Grosz, 1994). Here, the body is the biological body, "an object in the world about which there can be objective knowledge of a universal kind" (Dale, 2001, p. 9). As a definite article – "the body" – a realistic ontology is assumed: the body is a natural object determined by biological mechanisms on which explanations and predictions can be made, given that it is universal and standardized. As a result, this body – a passive, biological receptacle harboring a voluntary subjectivity – must be controlled and trained.

This dualistic Cartesian conception in which the mind controls and subordinates the body, a mere commodity to be used for the production function, was absorbed by organization theory from its inception, adopting a disembodied approach (Shilling, 2012). The complicity of the area with a rational-modernist project in the Weberian version (Hassard, Holliday, & Wilmott, 2000) prevented any reference to factors other than a "simulacrum body" (Tyler & Hancock, 2001), "artificial man" (Gatens, 1996), something neutral and universal that perfectly reflected

the standard of a worker. Taylor's Schmidt's active body, Ford's spatial control of bodies, and Toyota's "just-in-time" worker are examples of the incessant search for molding workers' bodies by organizational practices that are part of the history of administration (Hancock & Tyler, 2000). As stated by Küpers (2015, p. 94), "because organizations and their members, structures and research exclude, classify, separate, tidy and dislike impurity, heterogeneity, disorder and confusion, they are traditionally reluctant to consider the body and embodiment".

Foucault (2014) stated that a political anatomy of the body emerged in the seventeenth century, allowing the body's management, improvement, and transformation into something docile and useful. In this context, bodies are power devices for controlling population masses through subtle practices that constitute the subject themselves. The body, therefore, is not a merely biological component but mainly a political element in the process of the embodiment of identities (Sasson-Levy, 2008). Embodiment declares that our thoughts, actions, intelligibility, emotions, desires, and everyday strategies are manifested through the body and can be recognized in speech, evidencing how bodies are specifically used, disciplined, and understood in each organizational space (Csordas, 1990; Styhre, 2004). Each organizational context materializes a specific way to perceive and understand the meanings related to the body (Simpson & Pullen, 2018), making it an active element in the constitution of the subject. Embodiment breaks with the Cartesian mind/body dualism because it considers that the body is not a passive product of discourse "reduced to an object wholly consumed and shaped by discourse, but reiterated as a medium of identity expression and resistance" (Thanem, 2015, p. 279).

Sexual bodies, gendered and racialized, were likewise ignored as representing "chaos and disorder and therefore clearly opposed [to] Weberian notions of rationality" (Witz, Halford, & Savage, 1996, p. 173). Any variation on the body somehow affected the social order and, thus, productive rationality, which justified the construction of a true, legitimizing apparatus of order over bodies. While the male body has been considered complete and suitable for the public sphere, establishing itself as the norm, the female body is seen as inferior, unstable, and limited and should be confined to the private sphere (Shilling, 2012). Discursive norms establish when a particular body is considered suitable or not for a particular job and these norms circulate through organizational socialization (Godfrey, Lilley, & Brewis, 2012), with bodies that do not follow the exclusionary and invisible heteronormative binary logic. In this sense, individuals are "trapped in bodily performances by broader relations of power and discourse [and] represented in gender regimes (appropriately male and female performances) […]" (Sinclair, 2005, p. 388).

Therefore, the body is not denied but treated as an "absent presence", seen as both a machine-organism, "a target of control," and a biological element outside its knowledge domains, in the same way that Shilling (2012) considers the body in sociology. For Thanem (2015), the way we engage with the body in organization studies forged our view of human nature and organizations. According to Dale (2001, p. 21), in organizations, "the division of body and mind was institutionalised through the division of labor, of 'execution' and 'conception'", anchored in the definition of organizations as "organs without bodies" (Dale & Burrel, 2000), as a reified species of concrete entity, a regular and natural organism, which exists independently of the

will of human beings (Chia, 2003). Since scientific management, the big problem related to the body in most organization studies research has been how to standardize, control, and make it more productive, disregarding that it "is a powerful symbolic form, a surface on which the central rules, hierarchies and even metaphysical commitments of a culture are inscribed and thus reinforced through the concrete language of the body" (Bordo, 1992, p. 13).

However, despite the hegemonic emphasis on control, standardization, and productivity of bodies, the topic has not had much space in organizational research. It is treated in an implicit, secondary, and peripheral way, with "considerable activities incorporated by organizations that are excluded, marginalized or neglected" (Styhre, 2004, p. 101), including studies related to identities, considered disembodied for neglecting the body in their analyses (Bardon, Clegg, & Josserand, 2012; Knights & Clarke, 2017; Pullen & Vaccani, 2013). Despite this neglect and prevailing orthodoxy, the field of organization studies is fortunately not monolithic (Reed, 2006; Westwood & Clegg, 2003). In the 1980s, movements with constructionist, critical, and poststructuralist orientations of epistemological and ontological questioning occurred, putting Cartesian rationalism in check (e.g., Clegg, 1987; Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980; Cooper & Burrell, 1988; Reed, 1985). This provided a closer look at the body in organization studies (e.g., Acker, 1990; Barry & Hazen, 1996; Bell & King, 2010; Flores-Pereira, 2010; Flores-Pereira, Davel, & Cavedon, 2008; Harding, Gilmore, & Ford, 2021; Küpers, 2017; Souza, Brewis, & Rumens, 2016; Souza, Costa, & Pereira, 2015; Thanem, 2015; Thanem & Knights, 2012; Trethewey, 1999; Witz, Halford, & Savage, 1996).

The understanding of "the body" as an entity is replaced by the idea of "bodies," a field that encompasses differences (Grosz, 1994): "in theoretical terms, […] some parts of organisation studies have become open to a more fundamental questioning of its common sense-terms and processes" (Dale, 2001, p. 18), including the conception of an organization that comes to be seen as a social and historical construction in becoming and not as a concrete, natural entity external to subjects (Chia, 2003). Thus, reflection in organization studies includes the idea of the embodied body, an experience that is physical and mental, subject and object, nature and culture, characteristic of our existence in society, rejecting the binary conceptions of distinct substances (Cregan, 2006; Dale, 2001; Grosz, 1994). Based on this idea, two aspects are developed in this field: 1) the historical body and 2) the lived body (Dale, 2001).

The historical body is recognized as an object of control, a "built body" (Dale, 2001), "shaped in accordance with external rules and regimes" (Cregan, 2006, p. 7), characterizing the functioning of a constituent process in which the expression of the body is constrained and regulated by the social while simultaneously transforming the subject body into a symbol and a model. The studies developed by Acker (1990, 2006), which laid bare the organizational logic of disembodied work, played a highly relevant role, argue Nkomo and Rodriguez (2018), as they made it possible to think about the regime of inequalities in organizations and the concept of the ideal worker from the perspective of corporeality. Meriläinen, Tienari, and Valtonen (2015) show this when explaining how executive selection practices favor certain types of bodies – white, male, and heterosexual – and Dar and Ibrahim (2019) discuss the production of shame

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in the blackened body in academia. In this vein, we see the emergence of studies that reveal organizational processes of bodies' manipulation and control through disciplinary techniques that imprint certain normalizing codes on "colonized bodies" (e.g., Almeida & Flores-Pereira, 2013; Bell & King, 2010; Cutcher, 2021); Hancock & Tyler, 2000; Hyde et al., 2014; Just, Kirkegaard, & Muhr, 2019; Kenny & Bell, 2011; Rosa & Brito, 2010; Sinclair, 2005; Trethewey, 1999; Tyler & Hancock, 2001) leading to the concept that "the body is thus the medium through which socialization into a culture is achieved through a pedagogic process of teaching and learning" (Bell & King, 2010, p. 434). These studies emphasize technologies of power (Foucault, 2014) and control systems that act on bodies, regulating them through a subtle pedagogy (Louro, 2000).

Despite the importance of these studies, most of them are still focused on the mechanisms of bodies' control and manipulation. Thanem and Knights (2012, p. 93) criticize that even to expose this objectification rather than how people experience their incorporation into this machinery "risks construing it as a passive entity to be moulded and managed by the rationalistic acts of the mind, whether through managerial control or self-discipline." For Foucault (2018, 2019), power and resistance coexist in a constant battle over bodies, forming subjects and determining the very condition of their existence. The subject's experience in the world is linked to how their body, as biological material, is perceived in the social, cultural and historical environment which the subject inhabits, which Harding, Gilmore e Ford (2022) call body/flesh. An example is how the discourse of motherhood is inscribed on to every woman's body, making them willing to take care of others (Cutcher, 2021), an association between the biological and social and cultural expectations. Not conforming to this model means being rejected as an abject body (Butler, 2019b). It is not possible to ignore the power that shapes, manipulates, designates, and excludes (Bourabain, 2020; Gatrell, 2014; Mik-Meyer; 2008; Oliveira, 2018; O'Shea, 2019), even knowing that this power is the same that puts it into action since it is the "condition of the subject's becoming" (Butler, 2019a, p. 16). Power is not external to the subject; it is in itself constraining but also brings it into existence, for it does not always produce what it intends. This allows for a glimpse of confrontation and transformation.

The second strand of studies on the body, the lived body, responds to this challenge by including Merleau-Ponty's (1999, p. 122) idea that "the body is the being's vehicle in the world" through which we experience life. For Flores-Pereira (2010, p. 422), "reviewing the incorporating dimension of the socio-cultural environment means presenting a deeper level of importance of the body in the socio-historical-cultural process. It is about a personify body engaged in practical life that, simultaneously, experiences and produces culture and history". This is what Méndez and Mora (2013) highlighted in the case of neo-Pentecostal pastors in Venezuela, who build and rebuild their bodies based on the tension between religious dogmas and the exercise of leadership. In this case, the body is built (inscribed) and builds (active) the culture and history of its environment in constant social negotiation. Thus, when working with this apparent division between the historical body and the lived body, we do not intend to separate the study of the body in a binary way, placing studies that deal with the body in different categories. The idea is to make this field more intelligible based on the contours it took with the emergence of

new perspectives. However, it is important to keep in mind that the different ways of studying the body are not separated from one another:

> The way in which we experience our bodies is influenced by the societal norms around us, so that, for example, the lived experience of being a young white woman is shaped significantly by cultural expectations and ideals of a female body, in relation to the acceptable size and shape of the body, its comportment, adornment and so on. How we experience our bodies is also influenced by what we 'know' about anatomy and physiology, so that we identify particular feelings and changes of our bodies in relation to medical constructs of what is 'normal' or 'abnormal' (Dale, 2001, p. 12).

For Thanem (2015), these aspects of the body manifest in organization studies in six thematic categories of research: (1) the body as an object of discursive construction, seeking to understand oppressions, discriminations, disciplines and identity expressions, using as post-structuralism and feminist philosophy as analytical approaches; (2) the body as a form of desire and resistance to disciplinary and oppressive discursive constructions, based on post-structuralism and materialist feminism; (3) the body as a target of capitalist exploitation at work, using Marxist philosophy ; (4) the body as object and subject of social, labor, and managerial interactions of lived experiences and a way of generating knowledge, using feminist and phenomenological philosophy; (5) the body used by feminist and phenomenological philosophy as a theme to establish qualitative research methods; and (6) the body as an ethical subject in readings of Levinas and Spinoza. Although such typologies are a form of synthesis of the possibilities that present themselves to the eyes of researchers, they can function as limits that restrictand challenge new reflections and investigations toward an increasingly broader and deeper understanding of the phenomenon, as in the case presented below.

Discussing and facing hegemonies

In this special issue, we count on a privileged portrait of Brazilian production on the subject of bodies and how they relate to the perspective of hegemony in organizations. We received 18 high-level manuscripts dealing with different aspects of the problem. After passing the scrutiny of the special editors and resourceful reviewers, five contributions were selected, addressing diverse perspectives on the phenomena studied, briefly presented below.

To bring the psychoanalytic notion of the body to organization studies, Marcelo Galletti Ferretti and Luiz Eduardo de Vasconcelos Moreira in their article "A defense of the erogenous body in Organizational Studies," propose to examine how the notion of the erogenous body – which is so important for psychoanalysis – can serve as a refinement of corporeality in the scope of organization studies, breaking with the hegemonic view of the body originating from

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anatomopathological medicine. The erogenous body became something eroticizable, beyond biology, organic, and somatic. Lacan systematized his ideas about the body, taking it as a real body – referring to sensations, desire, and jouissance – an imaginary body – a human silhouette or shadow, the image of the body reflected in the mirror – and a symbolic body – the named body, named by the "I" of that body and by others, therefore significant as it engenders, replaces, and modifies reality.

The contributions of psychoanalysis provide rich elements for organization studies, particularly by challenging the passive notion of the human body as part of Cartesian architecture with predictable, tameable movements and at the service of exclusively economic logic. The authors discuss data from an extensive ethnography carried out in two investment banks. They conclude that, although it is still organic, the body lends itself to other nuances and is the loci of incidence of several properly organizational aspects, such as control and corporate management policies.

Francielli Borges Ladeira Martins and William Antonio Borges, in "Body colonization and women's despersonification in the obstetric system," discuss the submission of women to medical-hospital authority during pregnancy and childbirth, a process that takes place on multiple levels. This reifies a science that is hegemonically produced by men and assumes pregnancy and childbirth to be more pathological than physiological processes, which justifies medicalization for the return to "normality" and, thus, obstetric violence. Deterritorialization occurs in the body's subjection, which submits the vital process of female bodies to medical events under the control of institutions, resulting in dehumanization, lack of control over the body itself, and the inherent phenomena. It also takes place in the subjection of the individual to social norms that make the pregnant woman's body docile as she submits to the system as a whole.

Women's depersonification during childbirth converts the singularities of the experiences of pregnancy and childbirth into records of bureaucratic incidence, violating the "I" of these women. This is verified, among other issues, in aspects such as constant surveillance, technical knowledge authority, the social distance between the women going through the processes and those who supervise them, the standardization of procedures and meeting their demands, and the subjection to the institution's routines. Together, both deterritorialization and depersonification are reflections of an apparatus of gender oppression disguised as scientific knowledge – allegedly technical and neutral – and which, precisely for this reason, need to be questioned toward the humanization of organizational practices. In the essay "Self-stylization and resistance in the context of LGBTQ+," Marcus Vinicius Soares Siqueira and Bárbara Novaes Medeiros examine the process of stylization of the self of bodies of people who are part of this population as a form of resistance. The authors analyze the bodily normatization inspired by Nietzsche and his understanding of bodies in their multiplicity and the will to power, and by Foucault regarding the care of the self and sexuality as a device and its effects on bodies. The body aesthetic dimension considers that a body – as it incorporates so-called dissident experiences – manifests aesthetic aspects as an inseparable part of who a person is.

The many possibilities of existence imply many possibilities of bodies, imbued with the capacity to be everything they can and want to be. Such subjects also present ethics associated with their own existence and how they take care and need to take care of themselves, based on who they are and not on parameters of normality that classify them as "different." The authors conclude that "freedom exists in a process; it is something to be continuously conquered," especially by bodies that dare to disobey the overwhelming heteronormative matrix of differences. To the same extent that there is a whole process in progress that seeks to submit corporeality to defined patterns of what is considered "normal," there is an immanent resistance in all bodies that dare to present themselves reconfigured, dissident, undisciplined, free on account of an aestheticization that reveals there is more than biology and that aestheticizing is a way of resisting and relating to the world with affection and alterity.

In "Gender-body-sexuality in spatializing: producing bodies-in-the-field in research," Romulo Gomes and Leticia Fantinel considered the challenges of an ethnographic-based theoretical-empirical study to conceptually develop the notion of "bodies-in-field" to deal with the production of knowledge "not about, but with people." The proposal starts from a rejection of hegemonic organizational practices that hierarchize bodies based on a specific notion of social order. It simultaneously allows the researchers' bodies to be reflected on since there is a collective process to investigate the production of materiality and spatiality. The authors question the dominant perspective of not discussing the body of the researcher, which ends up translating not only an ideal hierarchy of neutrality but the silencing of racial, sexual, and gender dynamics, for example, which are part of what is inherent in research.

Based on data from an ongoing study of a civil society organization focused on the population of transvestites and trans women in the Brazilian state of Espírito Santo, the text brings relevant contributions by highlighting the need to think about space as a daily practice permeated by bodies, which makes it a 'bodily space.' Analyzing space, therefore, implies assuming that it is a dynamic process in which hierarchies of existences are observed, materialized in bodies that are assumed to be expected, to the direct detriment of others. The research allows us to glimpse not only dimensions linked to the humanization of research practices but also the recognition of ethical challenges linked to the production of knowledge in organization studies. In the text "BDSM: bodies and power games," Andressa Carolina do Nascimento Nunes and Rafael Diogo Pereira focus on sexuality and explore the dynamics between bodies and spaces in the context of erotic BDSM, defined as the "combination of varied erotic practices gathered around the expression 'Bondage, Domination, Sadism, and Masochism'" (Ferreira, 2014, p. 375, our translation). They start from a simple assumption: sexuality, fetish, and power are elements that can go together and constitute a particular dynamic and are relatively under-examined from the point of view of organization studies, which tends to privilege the relationship between sexuality and organizations under more conventional optics. Based on an investigation based on interviews, participant observation, and a field diary in a BDSM community in Belo Horizonte, the authors verify many crossings that put into perspective different hegemonies present in sexual practices. The text explores aspects such as the enactment of power in the group's practices and the issue

of bodies and their limits, influenced by an economy that supports community practices. The article was based on Foucauldian discussions.

The implications of this proposal occur at several levels, as the study suggested. On the one hand, an explicit break with a certain 'vanilla' way of expressing sexuality, which has different implications, directly related to sex. On the other hand, sexual practices place the issue of corporeality in a central position, mainly because of the intended use of the body, overcoming biological or moral definitions. If this use diverges from what is acceptable, there is a whole series of exclusions linked to what is considered manifestations of sexuality outside the standards, for example. There is still a rich debate among feminists about the extent to which the dynamics of submission do not act by reinforcing aspects of an already known subalternation of female bodies in this context, a debate particularly enriched with the figures of the dominatrix and the performances of female protagonism – even if authors such as Saraiva and Silva (2021, p. 19, our translation) question the extent to which apparently autonomous female performances fit into scripts conceived by men: "it is not about minimizing the agency of women at all, but it should be noted that there are structural factors that place the feminine in a peripheral place and subject to the masculine." The authors problematize that, in an erotic dynamic with consensual relationships around a power dynamic, concepts, roles, stereotypes, and judgments tend to diverge as mismatches between social prescription and real-life in society become present, with their peculiarities.

Completing this issue are two texts written by Jo Brewis and Saoirse O'Shea in the section 'Perspectives.' The first of these, "Menopause in the Brazilian workplace: A research agenda for scholars of management and organization studies," by Jo Brewis, addresses an inevitable process: biological aging manifested for women in a stage of their life as menopause. The author points out a series of physical and/or psychological aspects associated with the phenomenon, almost always felt by women as debilitating. The article focuses on problematizing the lack of studies on this topic, which affects the lives of women over 45 years of age, and presents an agenda for researchers in the area of management and organization studies to incorporate a concern with this topic, especially regarding the work environment.

In the second text, "Academic unfreedom," Saoirse O'Shea explores the complexity of the elements associated with freedom in academia, strongly conditioned by the "need to find funding for empirical research and to comply with the requirements of the funding agency, our institutions, and peers and colleagues." This is an increasingly acute situation in which universities are pressured to train employable professionals and subject themselves more and more clearly to the pressures of public opinion. More than mere freedom of expression, academic freedom supposes that academic authority based on advanced knowledge of a subject, judged by peers, defines what can be practiced and, consequently, spoken. When opinions – often explicitly conservative and discriminatory, such as those directed at transgender people in the UK by transphobic people – are conveyed by a conservative press, this does not and should not carry the same weight as positions built up over the years by people who are dedicated to studying the phenomena in depth. Academics cannot, therefore, be intimidated.

We hope our readers enjoy reading as much as we did working on the guest editorship of this issue. We hope these texts can sow multiple renewed ways of recognizing, facing, and breaking different hegemonies over bodies and organizations toward free and emancipated bodies to exist as they see fit. We wish you a pleasant read.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

Adriana Vinholi Rampazo, Luiz Alex Silva Saraiva, and Eloísio Moulin de Souza worked on the conceptualization and theoretical approach. The theoretical review was conducted by Adriana Vinholi Rampazo and Eloísio Moulin de Souza. Adriana Vinholi Rampazo, Luiz Alex Silva Saraiva, Eloísio Moulin de Souza, Jo Brewis, and Saoirse O'Shea participated in the writing and final review of the manuscript.