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Men, Masculinities, Managements and Organisational Culture**

The social position of men, the critical study of management, and the theoretical and practical significance of organisational culture have all been the subject of extensive debates in recent years. In this article we review four main conceptual and theoretical ways of linking 'men' and 'masculinities' to debates on 'managerial and organisational culture'. These approaches are not mutually exclusive; rather they are ways of building up a more complex understanding of that relationship. Each is a commentary on both particular types of managerial and organisational cultures and particular analyses of managerial and organisational culture. The four approaches are as follows: taken-for-granted men's cultures; men's explicit domination of organisational cultures; men's domination of subtexts of organisational cultures; and the deconstruction of 'men and organisational culture'. The second of these approaches is focussed on in more detail drawing on empirical ethnographic research on personnel selection processes in UK private sector organisations. The article concludes with a brief discussion of the implications of this approach for future theory and practice.

Die soziale Position von Männern, die kritische Analyse von Managements und die theoretische und praktische Bedeutung von Organisationskultur - all dies war Gegenstand ausführlicher Debatten der letzten Jahre. In diesem Beitrag analysieren wir vier wichtige konzeptuelle und theoretische Möglichkeiten, „Männer“ und „Männlichkeiten“ mit Diskussionen über „Management- und Organisationskultur“ zu verbinden. Diese Ansätze schließen sich wechselseitig nicht aus; sie sind vielmehr Möglichkeiten, ein komplexeres Verständnis dieser Beziehung zu erzielen. Jeder Ansatz kommentiert sowohl spezifische Management- und Organisationstypen wie auch -analysestrategien. Die vier Ansätze sind: unhinterfragte männliche Kultur; die explizite männliche Herrschaft über Organisationskulturen; männliche Herrschaft über Subtexte von Organisationskulturen und die Dekonstruktion von „Mann und Organisationskultur“. Der zweite Punkt wird genauer betrachtet, indem empirische ethnographische Forschungsergebnisse über Personalauswahlprozesse in Unternehmen des privaten Sektors in Großbritannien herangezogen werden. Der Beitrag schließt mit einer kurzen Diskussion der Implikationen dieses Ansatzes für zukünftige Theorie und Praxis.

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Introduction

In recent years there have been extensive debates on the social position of men, the critical study of management, and the theoretical and practical significance of organisational culture. To connect men and organisational culture is both a very obvious thing to do and yet very unfamiliar. Its obviousness comes from the myriad ways that men dominate organisations, and thus managerial and organisational cultures; its unfamiliarity comes from the fact that this connection is rarely made, and may indeed actively be avoided. In this article we review a number of possible connections that can be recognised between men, masculinities, managements and organisational culture; and focus on one major approach, that of men's explicit domination of managerial and organisational cultures, drawing on ethnographic data on personnel selection and personnel managements.

This article is located in the context of previous feminist, pro-feminist and other critical scholarship on men, masculinities, organisations and management. A number of recent feminist studies have addressed the question of managerial men and the ways that managerial power is gendered and men's power is embedded in organisational hierarchies and control strategies. In some, the simultaneous deconstruction of 'men'/'masculinities' and management have been taken up in the context of the analysis of patriarchy and similar theoretical objects. Relevant studies include those by Rogers (1988) on men-only organisations and Cockburn (1983 1990 1991) on the mechanisms of the reproduction of power used by men, particularly men as managers (assertion of the 'main aim'; autonomous labour market policy; the evasiveness of power; leaving domestic ties to women; defining when difference is legitimate; organisation sexuality; and the shaping of women's consciousness). Related analyses have focused on men's domination of organisational thinking, as in the critique of Weber's (1968) theorising as a masculine and patriarchal view of the world (Bologh 1990; Morgan 1996).

There is now also an increasingly explicit critical focus on men as managers and managers as men (Collinson and Hearn 1996a). Among the issues that have recently received attention is the importance of analysing the relationship of men and managements in terms of historical change rather than an ahistorical function (Roper 1991 1994; Hearn 1992b; Hollway 1996); the close connections between masculinities and dominant models of leadership (Hearn 1989); the reconceptualisation of management-labour relations in terms of interrelations of masculinities (Collinson 1992); the links between particular managerial forms, specific discourses of masculinism and processes of masculine identity formation (Kerfoot and Knights 1993); the ways in which men managers can routinely discriminate against women in recruitment and promotion (Collinson et al. 1990) and mismanage cases of sexual harassment as well as engage in the sexual harassment of women colleagues and workers (Collinson and Collinson 1989 1992 1996); the need to attend to pluralities, not just masculinities and management, but also patriarchies and sexualities (Hearn 1992c); the often implicit constructions of men and managements in sociology (Morgan 1992); and the possible practical initiatives that can be made to change men in management (Hearn 1992a 1994). An important theme in such studies is the interaction between

unities and differences between and amongst men, masculinities and managements (Collinson and Hearn 1994 1995 1996a 1996b; Hearn and Collinson 1994).

Men and Organisational Culture: Alternative Conceptualisations and Theoretical Perspectives

Since the late 1970's there has been a very significant growth of interest in the concept of organisational culture in both academic and popular literatures. Sometimes there has been reference to 'corporate culture'; sometimes to the 'culture' of the workgroup or the organisation in a more localised way (for example, Pettigrew 1979; Deal and Kennedy 1982; Peters and Waterman 1982; Smircich 1983; Frost et al. 1985; Pheysey 1993). There have also been more critical, though not necessarily gendered, reviews of the organisational culture literature (for example, Smircich and Calás 1987; Martin 1992; Willmott 1993). While the main body of work on organisational cultures has not explicitly addressed questions of gender, there has in recent years been a growing concern to develop critical and explicitly gendered analyses of organisational culture (for example, Mills 1989; Hollway 1991; Alvesson and Due Billing 1992; Ramsay and Parker 1992; Gheradi 1995; Itzin and Newman 1995; Rantalaiho and Heiskanen 1996).

In this article we build on this critical, gendered scholarship on organisational culture, and on the critical literature on men and management noted in the introduction above. In particular we wish to consider the variety of conceptual and theoretical ways of linking men and masculinities to debates on managerial and organisational culture. For the sake of simplicity, we first present four main approaches to this connection; these are not mutually exclusive; rather they are ways of building up a more complex understanding of that relationship. Each of these four main approaches is a commentary on both particular types of organisational cultures and particular analyses of organisational culture. These four approaches are as follows:

First, there is the persistent *taken-for-grantedness* of managerial and organisational cultures being men's cultures. This is so much so that it is not usually even talked of. The apparent or presumed degendering of organisational culture remains a powerful form of men's power. Organisational cultures are routinely taken-for-granted as men's cultures, in both particular organisations and particular organisational analyses. Indeed, the majority of debates on organisational cultures, that is, the beliefs, symbols and patterns of behaviour reproduced by organisational participants, have taken their *ungenderedness* as given. A typical example is provided by Mats Alvesson and Per Olof Berg's (1992) book *Corporate Culture and Organisational Symbolism*. They distinguish national culture, regional and industrial culture, department culture and worker culture. They also identify within corporate culture the following cultural elements: physical and visual artefacts, collective mental frameworks and manifestations (sagas, epochs, legends, myths, stories) and collective action patterns (rites, rituals, ceremonies, celebrations). Yet throughout all this they hardly mention gender, even though all of these are clearly gendered.

Second, there is the increasing recognition of the explicit domination of particular managerial and organisational cultures by men. This may involve complex interactions between the way in which men are both unified and differentiated through managerial and organisational cultures. Examples include authoritarian, careerist, and paternalistic cultures, which persist through gender and sexual domination of various men. This approach is considered in more detail below.

Third, there is the significance of 'men' in the construction of less obvious, more subtle *subtexts* of managerial and organisational cultures. Here we are concerned with interpretations of organisational cultures that are not only about directly observable behaviour, for example, physical sexual harassment, but also about less obvious meanings that are less directly observable and may occur over time. The idea of subtext comes from cultural studies, psychoanalytic studies and textual analyses that postulate the text as having a less obvious, but structurally determining, meaning. The notion of subtext may also be useful in conceptualising the less obvious and more implicit aspects of gender relations (Smith 1987 1990) and thus gendered organisational cultures. This may include attention to those aspects of culture that are subject to social silencing (Harlow et al. 1995; Collinson and Hearn 1996a). An example of this is the way in which organisational cultures may be understood in terms of sexual subtexts, including the 'male (hetero)sexual narrative' and the 'homosexual' subtext of organisations (Dyer 1985; Wood 1987; Hearn and Parkin 1995).

Fourth, there are *deconstructive* approaches to the connection between the very ideas of 'men', and 'managerial' or 'organisational culture' (see Linstead and Grafton-Small 1992). This is, the least developed of the four approaches. It refers to the ways in which 'gender' is made more or less apparent through the use of the concept of organisational culture. In simple terms, the very notion of culture, and thus managerial or organisational culture, rests on gendered differentiations. Most obviously, this is the case with the use of 'culture' to summarise that which is marginal, *other*, and of which *one* is not a part. Culture acts in contrast to the one/centre of the dominant/structure. Accordingly, culture can be used to refer to that which is other, either *elsewhere* from or *within* a given situation. This has been particularly important in modernist uses of culture (Harlow and Hearn 1995). Organisational culture has often been encoded as 'feminine' and 'female'. Thus the concept of culture can easily obscure gender, and thus also obscure the naming of men as men (by reducing men's apparentness in organisations); the feminine/female encoding of culture thus carries significant analytical implications for the analysis of men's gendered power. This is particularly so when the use of culture is set within a modernist framework that reproduces dichotomous thinking about organisations that parallels dichotomous thinking about gender (Hearn 1996).

Men, Masculinities, and Managerial and Organisational Cultures: Ethnographic Data

In this section, we draw on ethnographic data to discuss possible connections between men, masculinities, and managerial and organisational cultures. Most of the material we present here can be understood as illustrative of the second approach

described above, that of men's explicit domination of managerial and organisational cultures. However, all three other approaches, and especially the taken-for-grantedness of organisational cultures as men's cultures, are also relevant to the analysis of this kind of ethnographic material. The data is drawn from a wider research project on personnel management and staff selection in over sixty private sector organisations. Its focus was on personnel selection processes and it was funded by the UK Equal Opportunities Commission (E.O.C.) (Collinson et al. 1990). This material is by no means exhaustive of the complex issues involved in the reproduction of managerial power across different industries, occupations and countries. Nevertheless, the following examples are particularly relevant in illustrating our argument that the social construction and reproduction of men and masculinities are a central and often neglected feature of personnel management and other managerial practices that cannot merely be treated by analysts as just 'another variable'. We contend that the examination of the reproduction of managerial power is incomplete if these issues are avoided.

One reason why men's power as managers and manager's power, and often quite explicit dominance, as men has tended to be neglected by many organisational scholars is because of its taken-for-granted, embedded and/or submerged nature in managerial and organisational cultures, discourses and practices that are often considered 'rational', normal and even inevitable. The following discussion seeks to highlight the taken-for-granted character of both these cultures and these masculinities by examining several of the unities and differences through which the explicit power and dominance of men as managers can be reproduced in organisational practices. The taken-for-grantedness of organisational cultures as men's cultures can go hand in hand with the explicit dominance of men/managers.

Two of the overall findings from the E.O.C. research illustrate the respective unities and divisions that may characterise the interrelations between men, masculinities and managements. First, men as managers frequently invested in masculine discourses that united them with other men (colleagues and candidates) and differentiated them from women. These investments reflected a diversity of masculinities ranging from paternalism through to a more commercially driven, competitive entrepreneurship. They were also often united through highly masculinised discourses on sexuality. Second, extensive tensions often characterises relations between personnel and line managers regarding recruitment practices and equal opportunities. These inter-functional tensions were usually reinforced by gendered assumptions of the line manager as 'producer', 'provider' and breadwinner for the organisation and the personnel manager as dependent, domestic and organisational 'welfare worker' (cf. Legge 1987).

These deepseated tensions revealed the heterogeneity and fragmentation of the management function, including personnel management. We will now discuss in turn the unities found in the managerial function that were reproduced through the cultures and discourses of entrepreneurialism, paternalism, and personalism and the divisions within management that were reinforced by excessive careerism.

Cultures of Entrepreneurialism

The research revealed that many managers articulated a 'hard nosed' entrepreneurial approach to business which prioritised profits, production and costs. Such men managers often believed that their entrepreneurial concerns were incompatible with the appointment or promotion of women. One manager in a food processing company, for example, argued that for a trainee manager position, women employees were problematic because they could get married, pregnant and/or leave to follow their husband's career. Each of these possibilities could increase costs and reduce production. It was therefore simply 'rational' for managers seeking efficient practices to select men candidates to key posts. These assumptions are crucial for personnel practices. They resulted in the manager and his assistant appointing two men candidates (whose specifications did not meet formal selection criteria) whilst rejecting better qualified and competent women (whose specifications did). The way in which these managers associated production with masculinity reinforced both their sense of difference from women and their unity or identification with each other and other men.

Many managers treated pregnancy in particular as a deepseated threat to everyday business practices. Pregnancy challenges the taken for granted masculine/managerial discourse that separates 'public' and 'private' life (Martin 1990). Several examples were found in the research where men managers were concerned about the potential effects of (possible) pregnancy on production and profits. Highly masculine assumptions were often shared between men managers, shaping their practices in quite crucial ways. One insurance branch manager went so far as to express a strong preference for the paperless office. He preferred machines to women employees because 'they don't answer back and they don't have periods'.

The research also uncovered many examples of men managers who prioritised entrepreneurial discourses and defined these in highly masculinised terms. These entrepreneurial discourses were not only self-justifying in the way that they tended to blame women themselves for the practices perpetrated against them, but also reinforcing of particular unities between men which in turn differentiated them from women. Hence they were a crucial source of masculine identity and power for men managers, including some personnel managers. These unities could also be reproduced through less overtly entrepreneurial practices, as outlined below.

Cultures of Paternalism

Paternalism was an equally prominent masculine culture and discursive practice of managerial control found in the research. It seeks to exercise power by emphasising the moral basis of cooperation; the importance of personal trust relations, and the need for employees to invest voluntarily in their work task and to identify with the company. Highlighting the independent nature of hierarchical relations, paternalism is also a specifically masculine discourse of control that draws on the familial metaphor of the 'rule of the father' who is authoritative, benevolent, self-disciplined and wise. A central self-justifying claim of paternalism is that power is exercised in ways which enhance

subordinates self-interest; such practices are usually represented as 'benefiting' and 'protecting' its victims.

Paternalism was particularly evident in the insurance industry, for example, one branch manager repeatedly refused to promote a highly skilled and competent woman pensions clerk into the salesforce. Using a personal, informal and paternal approach, he was able to persuade the clerk that becoming a salesperson was not in her best interests. Despite receiving strong encouragement from other salespeople, she was persuaded by the branch manager of the „severe pressures“ found in selling pensions, for example, the company's geographical mobility requirement, the performance-related pay system, the male dominated client market, and her own age and personality. The manager's paternal and personal approach involved him to exaggerating the mobility requirement and overemphasize the difficulties surrounding the job. The clerk began to internalize the manager's doubts believing that his primary concern was her own welfare.

This is one of many examples of cultures of paternalism found in the insurance industry where sex discrimination was often perpetrated and rationalised by men managers on the grounds that they were protecting women. For example, it was argued that „women would not be taken seriously“ by male clients if they invited clients out to lunch. The latter would „read more into it than that“ and there were also difficulties for women in making night calls to sell insurance that men did not experience. Managers argued that it was „unfair“ to subject women to the „dangers“ of selling insurance. Indeed one woman job interviewee was rejected by two men interviewers in part because, without a steady boyfriend „she has not had enough experience of men“.

Only by recognising the central importance of paternalism and its disguising as welfarism can these managerial processes be adequately understood. Paternalism not only often united managers and resulted in the exclusion of women in personnel processes, but it also facilitated a bond or identification between personnel selectors and men jobseekers. The research uncovered several examples of paternalistic men managers who „gave the benefit of the doubt“ to men candidates in a way that they would never have considered when assessing women jobseekers.

Cultures of paternalism and paternalistic discourses were partly a function of age as well as masculinity. Older men managers were particularly (but not exclusively) likely to engage in paternalistic discourses. The preference for informality which is a central feature of paternalism was also found in the masculine discursive practices that often characterised relations between men managers, as discussed in the next section.

Cultures of Personalism

The research found a strong preference for informality in the workplace interaction between managers including personnel managers. The cultures and discourses of men's sexuality, joking, and sport/entertainment were especially influential in uniting men managers. We have discussed elsewhere how men's sexuality is often pervasive and unchallenged in contemporary organisational practices (Burrell and Hearn 1989; Collinson and Collinson 1989). The following examples reveal how men's sexual cultures united men managers and excluded women jobseekers.

In an appointment evaluation one woman candidate for a trainee marketing manager vacancy in a food processing company, two managers engaged in the following dialogue:

‘lovely, lovely, lovely. She was right dolly bird wasn’t she?’

His colleague replied,

‘Well from the rear she looked very attractive.’

The manager added,

‘She weren’t bad from the front either. (laughs). I fully understand her domestic arrangements now. (She had a personal relationship with the manager of the advertizing agency). Very good choice, I mean for that particular function.

The managers’ shared sense of masculinity expressed in a discourse on sexuality crucially informed the negation and rejection of this woman candidate. This example illustrates how men as managers might invest in highly informal, personal cultures and discourses around sexuality (despite at the same time priding themselves on their professional and formal approach to human resources management). It also reveals how discourses of sexuality are often couched in humour and joking practices. Several examples were found where men line managers expected women personnel managers to conform with their explicit double entendres and joking.

A primary selection criterion for insurance sales vacancies was candidates’ social skills, an important part of which was their ability to display a sense of humour. Much insurance business is conducted through the informal channels of professional business people, and the ability to ‘build a rapport’ with clients was a crucially important selection criterion. Such informal client channels continue to be dominated by men and selectors often defined the requisite social skills in masculinised terms. Joking was interpreted as an indication of masculinity which in turn was perceived to convey ‘character’ and ‘trustworthiness’, a feature so important for salespeople and managers alike when engaged in the process of selling their products.

These shared masculine cultures and discourses were found to unite managers across as well as within particular organisations. Indeed many managers as well as salespeople spend a great deal of time in negotiations with other managers from separate firms who are buyers and sellers of supplies, components and products. These informal managerial relations can be as influential in securing good deals and service as price fixing. Where prices are standardised, managers’ social skills and the perks they can offer could crucially differentiate specific companies from their competitors. Indeed the provision of company perks is one area in which sport and entertainment can be particularly important in integrating commercial activity and dominant masculinities. The research found that some men managers expected to provide customers and to be provided with leisure activities as part of the sales process. This might include tickets to major sporting events, for example, football matches, ‘golf days’, or to theatres. It could include visits to expensive restaurants and stays in prestigious hotels. Some corporations make heavy financial commitments in supporting such practices as corporate golf club memberships. Many men managers seem to enjoy the sense of ‘prestige association’ conferred by these inter-organisational perks. These attempts to

integrate sport with business reflect and reinforce dominant masculinities often leading to the exclusion of women.

To summarise, men managers were found to invest in cultures and discourses of entrepreneurialism, paternalism and personalism. These masculinities are a medium and outcome of unities between men managers both within and across organisations. Yet the depth and extent of these unities between men should not be overstated. In many cases they were found to be precarious, shifting and highly instrumental. Hence such masculinities did not always establish the trust, cooperation and loyalty that was intended. One of the primary reasons for the fragility of these unities was the extent to which a more individualistic careerism also characterised managerial cultures and discourses.

Cultures of Careerism

Managers are frequently highly sensitised to career advancements and for men in particular, careerism is often compatible with the notion of the family breadwinner. This dominant orientation to paid work almost inevitably creates tensions for managers between their concerns to cooperate and to compete with one another (Offe 1976). Excessive personal ambition may reinforce: highly instrumental, calculative orientations to workplace relations that are thus distant and detached; tendencies to perform impression management; and preoccupations with competitive strategies intended to differentiate and elevate self whilst negating others.

Such competitive strategies reflect the way in which middle class men in managerial positions routinely define themselves and are defined as the privatised breadwinner whose primary purpose is to 'provide' for their families. Competition for career progress comes to be synonymous with conventional masculinity. Upward mobility is therefore a precondition for the stability of masculine identity in managerial hierarchies. Accordingly, a managerial career can be seen as an important medium through which conventional middle class masculine identities can be established. Such identities are reinforced by the remuneration, status, and perks of most management jobs. Salaries tend to be large, implicitly assuming a breadwinner responsibility, whilst perks, including company cars, personal secretary and entertainment allowance, tend to embellish the male ego. Moreover, (men) managers are often expected to work long hours, meet tight deadlines, travel extensively away from home and move house when required by the company. These work demands are likely to be incompatible with domestic responsibilities. Seeking to comply with the increasingly unrealistic expectations of corporate cultures, men managers frequently depend upon the support of wives to manage all domestic and familial matters. Whilst managers are employed to control the labour process, it seems that they are also controlled by it, particularly through their investment in cultures and identities that confirm them as upwardly mobile, successful men.

Indeed during the research, senior managers at one financial services company were told by their new American owners, „we don't expect any of our managers to want to go home in time to bath the babe“, This illustrates how the discourse of 'the organisation man' (Whyte 1956) remains dominant in many contemporary corporations. Inevitably, this pressure to conform to corporate demands, combined with individuals'

own concern with career progress creates deepseated divisions, not only between men managers, but also between their paid work and home life. Attempts to manage such demands can lead to increased stress and tension, which in societies such as Japan can literally have fatal consequences for managers.

Careerism also had important implications for the few women managers who participated in the research, most of whom were employed in the personnel function. The research found that these women tended to prioritise their career and organisational loyalty above any concern to resist dominant masculinities through either a professional commitment to equal opportunities or a specific attachment to alternative notions of gender identity. Women as personnel managers usually invested in discourses more readily associated with men and dominant masculinities. Concerned primarily to protect and enhance their career, women personnel managers often sought to avoid the difficulties which resistance can produce and to comply with selection practices that excluded or subordinated women jobseekers. This consistent finding of women's compliance with dominant masculinities raises important questions in the context of the increasing presence of women in managerial positions within various Western societies. Accordingly, the presence of women managers in itself may not overcome and may even help to legitimise the deeply entrenched middle class masculinities that so often seem to characterise managerial discourse and practices. In particular personnel management is itself subject to the gendered dynamics and discourses of management more generally.

Discussion and Conclusion

This article has focussed on the links between men, masculinities, and managerial and organisational cultures, but it also raises more general issues. It challenges both conventional and more critical perspectives on management in general and personnel management in particular, by drawing upon and extending contributions from feminism and recent critical studies on men. Theorists of management need to explicitly turn their attention to the genderedness of management, including personnel management. This applies both to the *content* of managements (how many men are present, with what power and authority, on what conditions, and so on) and to their *form* (for example, how are these distributions relate to the style, process, hierarchy, culture, traditions and practices of managements).

In pursuing this analysis of personnel management, we have highlighted some of the unities and differences, and their interrelations, through which the dual sources of power of men as managers and managers as men can be reproduced. We contend that the hierarchical and gendered power of management is neither homogeneous nor monolithic. Although men's power as managers should not be underestimated, it is also more contradictory, precarious and heterogeneous than often it at first appears. Power relations are fragmented, shifting, partial, incomplete and characterised by disjunctures and multiple subjectivities (Kondo 1990). In order to address the partial, multiple, ambiguous and indeed fluctuating character of subjectivities as they are reproduced through particular power relations, the paper has highlighted the unities and differences, not only of men and masculinities, but also between and within managerial functions. In complex ways, these unities and differences operate simultaneously in organisational practices, with necessary wider effects, throughout organisations and managements.

These observations on managements and organisational culture are to a considerable extent paralleled by practical challenges facing managers and those doing management. There are indeed a number of common themes that recur across theory and practice in and around men, managements and organisational cultures. These include the persistence of issues of power and control; the unities and differences in interests across men/managements; the diversity of men/managements that arise from functional and other differentiations; and the continuing links between organisational change, job insecurity and identity formation.

There are also clear practical questions around men, masculinities and management that require 'attention' in both academia and corporations alike, such as:

- can men's management be less oppressive through a greater awareness of their social construction as men?
- can men be involved in managing or even leading processes of change against gender inequality?
- can men be anti-oppressive managers?
- can the growing encroachments of organisational and managerial business into personal and domestic time be resisted and restrained?
- can women's presence in management challenge the dominant practices of men/managers and so transform organisations?

Finally, paralleling the managerial function in modern corporations, management theory and personnel management theory themselves have until recently remained very much the domain of men. Transforming management theory and personnel management theory to take into account the power of men, masculinities and gender relations is a very necessary, though not sufficient, condition for transforming both management and men.

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