

Masculinities and Management in Agricultural Organizations Worldwide

by Barbara Pini

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reviewed by Joan Daouli*

The aim of this book is to examine the interrelationships between masculinities and management in agricultural organizations and to determine the discourses by which farmers in managerial positions exercise their dominance and organizational power.

The author utilizes elements of the feminist poststructural theory of gender as well as the theory of hegemonic masculinity. The main contribution of the study is that it applies the available theoretical framework on masculinities in a rural/agricultural setting, i.e. management of agricultural organizations. Specifically, the book is based on a qualitative analysis of a three-year ethnographic study of Farmers' Union organizations in the Australian agricultural sector.

Chapters 1 and 2 contain an excellent review of the available literature on gender issues and on rural and agricultural masculinities, with emphasis on the hegemony of men in agriculture. Chapter 3 focuses on the methodological issues and problems that the author has confronted while interviewing fifteen male elected members of the Farmers' Union, an organization where "women are seldom seen and their invisibility even more rarely questioned". It also describes the context and the performance of masculinity during the interviewing process by agro-politics male leaders who occupy roles of power, importance and knowledge. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the qualitative analysis of the study which establishes the dominance of hegemonic masculinities. In Chapter 4 a typology of managerial masculinity is developed. The paternalistic managerial masculinity is the dominant form of managerial practice of the Union. The hegemony of paternalism is documented in many practices and areas, from the conduct of meetings and the electoral process to the gendered division of labor. Younger farmers seem to shift to more entrepreneurial and professional management practices. Chapter 5 examines the process by which elected men build their identities by differentiating from women (masculinity) and from other men (knowledge, expertise and training). Chapter 6 discusses the discourses of denigration by

* Department of Economics, University of Patras, Rio, Greece

which leaders in farmers' unions have reacted to the establishment of women's networks in rural areas (e.g., trivializing, masculinizing, pathologizing and sexualizing). Chapter 7 explores women's experiences as leaders in agricultural organizations. Twenty women agricultural leaders, who became board members mainly by appointment, were interviewed. The emphasis here is on gender performance. It is revealed that these women engage in practices and discourses that challenge or disrupt power relations and the system that reproduces them. The study concludes with Chapter 8 which summarizes the major findings.

The issue of masculinities in the management of agricultural organizations is very well addressed in this case study and thus the book contributes to bridging the existing gap in the relevant literature. The book is expected to be useful for academic researchers in rural social sciences, gender studies, discrimination, management, agricultural organizations and policy making.