



Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930 (Gender Relations in the American Experience)

Professor Angel Kwolek-Folland

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"Drawing on a range of primary sources including the archives of major companies, personal papers, trade magazines, photographs, and recorded anecdotes of turn-of-century life and using the extensive secondary literature on women, sex roles, women's work, manhood, business history and material culture, Angel Kwolek-Folland has built up an intricate picture of office life... [that] is both challenging and innovative. Engendering Business adds new dimensions to the growing historical literature on corporate cultures and offers an explanation of how such culture evolves." -- Business History

In Engendering Business, Angel Kwolek-Folland challenges the notion that neutral market forces shaped American business, arguing instead for the central importance of gender in the rise of the modern corporation. She presents a detailed view of the gendered development of management and male-female job segmentation, while also examining the role of gender in such areas as architectural space, office clothing, and office workers' leisure activities.

"Whether tracing the emergence of the 'office wife' and secretary, the concept of the corporation as mother, or the architectural and spatial character of corporate headquarters, the author brings a clever twist to well-known developments in business history... the book stands as an intriguing and suggestive exploration of the role of gender in cultural transformations." -- Journal of American History

"Angel Kwolek-Folland argues that the work culture created by the rise of the corporation and reformation of class and gender categories that accompanied it resulted from diverse actors -- male and female, progressive and traditional, white and black--who brought a complex mix of identities and cultural ideals to the corporation. Engendering Business provides a not-so-reverent revision of Chandler's corporate managerial revolution... She stresses the diversity and agency of not only the managerial middle class, but also white-collar workers, and points out whenever possible the irrational, non-professional practices of corporations both within the managerial middle class and in that class's dealings with its white collar, mostly female, labor force." -- American Studies International

"This superb study persuasively argues that debates about and meanings of womanhood and manhood shaped corporate America... Kwolek-Folland's approach is unique because she spotlights the corporation itself in all of its manifestations and activities. Her fresh look yields rich results: we'll never be able to think about stages of US corporate development in the same way again."-- Women's Review of Books

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