Embodied prejudices: a study on diversity and practices

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to analyze organizational diversity with a focus on the concept of socially sustained practices, grounding the analyses in a practice-based approach.

Design/methodology/approach – Based on data from ethnographic research, the author seeks to explain how the body and embodied marks that indicate an unequal distribution of power in society interfere with access to knowledge and in the organization of work.

Findings – Data analyses suggest that embodied prejudices affect the division of labor and access to knowledge in organizational settings, contributing to perpetuating cultural and historical structures of domination that spark conscious attempts to manage race and gender diversity.

Originality/value – Little research has investigated diversity from a practice-based standpoint. The originality of this paper is in its adoption of a phenomenological perspective to explain the experience of diversity as an ongoing bodily and embodied process.

Keywords Diversity, Prejudice, Ethnography, Brazilian culture, Embodied prejudices, Practices

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Since the 1990s, the rhetoric of organizational diversity that emphasizes the positive and functional character of differences between workers (Thomas and Ely, 1996) has been challenged by critical studies that seek to reveal inequalities and power relations. Alternative understandings of diversity have expanded by drawing on a broad variety of critical theories, such as post-structuralism, discourse analysis, cultural and postcolonial studies, institutional theory, and work processes theory. At their core, all of these theories share the idea that differences between people are socially (re) produced in the ongoing course of social processes in specific contexts (Zanoni *et al.*, 2010). Although the issue of practice may be implicit, the engagement of many critical studies on diversity with the work of language and discourse in the construction of organizational identities eventually reduces the importance of material context and everyday practices and disregards embodied reflexivity and individual agency (Metcalfe and Woodhams, 2012). Whereas discourse analysis has deconstructed the rhetorical mechanisms through which the meaning of identity is elaborated in contemporary discourses of diversity, it can be said that little research to date has investigated how such discourses are implicated in everyday practice in social work settings (Zanoni *et al.*, 2010).

Practices are an interesting starting point in understanding organizational diversity issues because analyzing practices involves discovering the structural and structuring principles of people's actions (Bourdieu, 2013). Thinking of diversity in the context of social practices could encompass both how current cultural practices constitute diversity and also how the act of practicing diversity itself is involved routinely and automatically in interactions (Zanoni *et al.*, 2010). In this regard, it is worth noting first that although studies of practice in organization studies demonstrate fundamental concern with interactions – as in studies of communities of practice (Brown and Duguid, 1991), for example – it still necessary to investigate how power issues

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determine relations from an embodied perspective. However, it is also appropriate to discuss the level of "tension between conflict and consensus" and "contradictions" (Lave and Wangler, 1991) between old and new practitioners in the reproduction of a community of practice as a result of embodied intentionality, which could justify prejudiced and non-inclusive behaviors. This tension, which reasonably reproduces processes of knowledge transmission whenever part of a community fears losing the power that knowledge affords, is also guided by a cultural embodied logic, which needs to be unveiled.

Embodied intentionality can be understood not only as a willingness to grasp the meaning of the world but as a constantly vigilant way of being in the world, oriented by the dispositions of a habitus or by perceptual capabilities modulated by culture and history (Bourdieu, 2000). It can be thought of as an embodied way of classifying the world, a classification that turns people and social classes into objects that become guiding principles for embodied practices. What happens in regard to embodied intentionality is that the reflexivity necessary to distinguish the meaning of objects and actions happens in the body via embodied dispositions for understanding. The knowing body is the locus of the reproduction of practices and, at the same time, the principle of meaning of the world. The embodied intentionality that can be thought of as a predisposition of the body to grasp meaning through practice in the form of proficiency in action (O'Connor, 2005) can also be more clearly perceived as a form of active participation in the reproduction of the body or even in the change or maintenance of the social order.

Contradiction between old and new practitioners needs to be regarded beyond a functional logic that seeks to eliminate inconsistencies between the guiding rationale of practice and its expected outcome. This shift could occur if the issue of organizational knowledge transmission included a critical perspective on organizational diversity more often in its scope that followed the trend of some studies that have taken a similar direction (Jørgensen and Keller, 2008; Gherardi, 2009). The social organization of knowledge engendered in practice is a singular state of the social division of assets that indicates differences between people. Thus, the homogeneity of dispositions related to certain communities of practitioners (or the position of certain practitioners within these communities) are produced by the mechanisms that guide certain individuals who identify with certain practices, as if they had been made by them and also for them. Admittedly, this organization is a result of the thoughtless process practices' embodiment.

Influenced by the "turn to practice" in gender studies (Martin, 2001, 2003, 2006; Poggio, 2006), this paper set out to analyze how body and embodied marks that indicate the unequal distribution of power in society affect the division of labor and access to knowledge. Specifically, I aimed to study a cultural practice that ensures its own continuity through time, resting on certain embodied assumptions of its practitioners: the traditional confectionery of the city of Pelotas in Southern Brazil. Through an ethnographic research study conducted in a candy factory, I identified that the process of knowledge transmission is conditional on the spatial separation of workers according to cultural and historical structures that perpetuate racial prejudice and gender domination.

Coming to the candy factory

The object under my scrutiny was the embodied knowledge of a traditional confectionery in the city of Pelotas in Southern Brazil. This confectionery is characterized by a set of practices that, for decades, has been transmitted between generations, in the context of

female sociability of aristocratic families. My research entailed investigating the dynamics of the maintenance of this practice by understanding the feelings and embodied characteristics raised by this specific type of knowledge. I was also interested in the reproduction of symbolic schemes inherent to the habitus (Bourdieu, 2000, 2013), where this tradition originated, and where it found social conditions to be perpetuated.

The empirical field was a candy factory where a white woman locally known as a master in confectionery is the head of artisanal production of typical sweets, and she relies on the help of a relatively large and diverse team of employees (two black men, three black women, and ten white women). Even though I usually regard myself as a white woman, I was identified by the group partly as white and partly as black. On the one hand, I was considered black by the white female workers and the master in the confectionery because the majority of the white woman in the factory had a clear European ancestry, which I could not assure for myself. On the other hand, I was also regarded as white because of my educational level. In Brazil as a whole, there is a strict association between high educational levels and whiteness, as the country's national education system is to a large extent restricted to the higher socioeconomic groups (i.e. the white elite). This trend assured me some protection against the hard and degrading work of black people – especially black women – even though it did not release me entirely from the prejudice of also being considered a black person.

The fieldwork lasted 22 weeks between February and July 2011. During this period, I conducted a participant observation at the factory on a daily basis, working shifts of five-eight hours and playing the role of a regular employee. My impressions of the experiences in the factory were recorded in field diaries, written after each day of work in the candy factory. The act of physically placing myself into the search field allowed me to be immersed in the range of social, cultural, and even moral relations that underlie the confectionery knowledge, but only up to the level where my personal constituent characteristics reinforce the habitus of this practice. In the following section, I seek to show how the experiences gained during the research help in understanding what is embodied intentionality regarding the prejudices concerning race and gender.

The embodied dynamic of practical knowledge transmission

Although confectionery knowledge is the result of practice and seemingly simple skills, we should not assume that all people involved with production at the candy factory knew what they were doing. This lack of cognitive domain over the activity – though not specifically representative of a lack of practical mastery – brought direct consequences for the autonomy of individuals and the productivity of the group in general. Thus, the integral transmission of knowledge was restricted only in some specific contexts of relationships between certain individuals. From these contexts, I shall now analyze the embodied reasons for the restrictions on access to knowledge for some people in the candy factory.

Practitioners of the candy factory could achieve skill or technical expertise, depending on how their position conditions produced different body experiences. The distinction between these two forms of practical mastery was related to how people would incorporate the practice: as an embodiment (Csordas, 1990) or as a body technique (Mauss, 1973). To give a more concrete idea, the embodiment process of the practice was characterized by the complete bodily domain of the work activities that were achieved only by the master in the confectionery and the two male workers. These workers carried out their jobs in an apparently carefree way, showing perfection of movements allied to cognitive control over the activities they performed in the making of confectionaries. In contrast, the female

workers – black or white, including me – were trained only in a cursory, mechanical way. Therefore, while they also performed their work moves with perfection, they could not deal with any reflexive aspect of this performance. They literally did not understand what they were doing, even though they could perform the certain activity with a high level of accuracy. The two forms of practical domains relate to two distinct organizational roles: the role of an employee and the role of an apprentice.

It was with regard to the transmission of the confectioner's expertise that the issue of embodied intentionality manifested itself. In the candy factory, confectionery practices customarily associated with the genealogic inheritance of a particular social group (white and aristocratic women) became part of a larger domain and thus lost the direct link to their putative heirs. Historical contextualization and observation of everyday routines in the candy factory indicated that confectionery practice is involved in interests that go in the direction of their privatization by certain people. In the research field, it was the owner of the factory, the master in confectionery. Initially, my investigation revolved around the issue of training of workers for the candy factory, since the lack of skills was a problem in the master confectioner's opinion. Although training should be a priority, during the research period, I noticed that among all the employees of the factory, only two – the black men – received special attention from her. According to her perception, they were "dedicated and hardworking" and therefore more able to learn the confectionery knowledge than the others. Personal affinities seemed to unite these three people, and the contact established between her and each man showed a relationship of camaraderie and affection that extended beyond the workplace.

The transmission process of the master confectioner's knowledge appeared to be entirely different from what I have experienced during the process of acceptance in the research field, and it was also different from what I could notice among the other female employees. Throughout the period of work in the factory, the master confectioner assisted me often, but I noticed that the stages of production that were obstacles to the complete assimilation of a recipe were exposed to me in an oblique and elusive way using demonstrations that were too fast to be fully understood or descriptions that were too laconic. During the period of the research, the work in the candy factory was organized around the divergent criteria of productive specialization and loss of control of the production process characteristic of the Taylorist model and also reflected the hierarchy distribution of knowledge in the context of professional cooking (Trubek, 2000).

The two black male workers did not seem to have been trained to acquire technical expertise in the performance of fractional parts of confectionery practice; instead, they received a special kind of instruction. They were learning to master the entirety of the production process of most sweets made in the factory, and they seemed to be able to understand the cultural value of that production and the significance of traditional methods in the life of the master confectioner. This situation leads to an interpretation that endorses Dall'Alba and Sandberg's (2010) findings about two differential conditions of being that derive from learning a practice or achieving mastery in its performance. While practice-based approaches on learning are rich and varied, they often assume that learning to engage in practice is synonymous of achieving mastery of this whole. These authors state that "it is possible to "learn" a practice with a limited, or even inappropriate, understanding of what the practice in question entails" (Dall'Alba and Sandberg's, 2010, p. 105), and that is precisely what can be said about the female workers who were able to perform their work practices with dexterity without learning them in an embodied way.

The exemplified situation also shows that learning through practice is something different from learning about practice, and it also drives us to go in depth in recognizing "the inherent social, procedural, and historical nature of the knowledge process" (Nicolini *et al.*, 2003, p. 25). The fact that black male workers had been considered more apt to learn about confectionery practices, according to the master confectioner's opinion, is not something entirely logical or rational if we analyze it through a functionalist perspective. After all, if she could train all workers to perform the same, she would assure an increasingly standardized quality for candy shop production. However, the important issue in regards to this situation is that differences between people – especially gender and race – would change the master confectioners' evaluation about their competences and potential in such a way that would mitigate her efforts at teaching them how to perform in order to achieve mastery.

The idea that learning involves a deepening process of participation in a community of practice is challenged by the property over knowledge that some practitioners may claim for themselves (Lave and Wangler, 1991) as a result of embodied cultural assets that support and give meaning to the practice. Thus, the master confectioner, being the most legitimate practitioner among the candy factory group, could decide who would learn about the practice in order to achieve mastery and who would perish trying to learn the practice through itself. As I can tell from my own efforts to learn alone, following the "watch and learn" method, it was impossible to go beyond the borders of a careless repetition of movements that could make no sense at all. In the candy factory's division of labor, I was in charge of shaping a kind of sweet called camafeu; during my experience at work, I realized I was an expert in doing that, even though I was never able to understand how the dough that I manipulated all day long was made. I never became familiar with its receipt or cooking process, although this knowledge was virtually accessible to me. At a certain point in my trajectory at the candy factory, the mechanical repetition of the same activity – one that would not require intellectual effort after the first week of training – made me lose motivation to work in such a way that I suddenly recognized in myself the same lack of interests and effort that the master confectioners used to point out in my female coworkers.

The master confectioner established a causal relationship between the quality of the work and the personal characteristics of her employees. Without questioning the structural causes for differences in observable behavior, she submitted the group's work to a hierarchy of individuals, and the two black male workers who were engaged "with effort and interest" were distanced from the other, less committed employees in order to rule them. That was how I interpreted the establishment of the superiority of the preferred employees, a domination based on the power that they accumulated in the form of knowledge about confectionery practice. The criteria of quality in work performance, which divided the team between the two differentially treated black male workers and the rest of the group, led to a process of demotivation and social disintegration that functioned not only to isolate people into two separate and even antagonistic groups but also to institute a supposed hierarchy between them.

Occasionally, a female worker wanted to learn something more about her work activities, which frequently happened with beginners who were still motivated about the job, as I was during the first two months in the research field. In this instance, I tried to be closer to my male coworkers in order to learn with them in the same way I used to see them learning with the master confectioner. As she was always too busy to spend time with a beginner, I thought it was a good initiative to get along with the men to achieve mastery in confectionery practice. While I tried to follow the steps of the male workers, I

felt they were brusque and hostile. Each of them, individually, refused to talk to me and frequently ignored me under the pretext that they were "taking care of their own jobs and that I should do the same." However, when I heckled both of them together, they always resorted to the tactic of ignoring my professional status but not my identity as woman. In these moments, they collectively mobilized their masculinities (Martin, 2001) to shape these situations of gender exclusion. When I was among my two male coworkers, they would make fun of the way I performed my work practices and harass me in order to make me feel embarrassed and disgusted. The male workers were already benefitting from the fact that they were the only two people who completely understood the production process of all the candy receipts, and they reinforced this power because of their embodied status of being men and their potential to play their masculinities against other employees.

Besides gender issues, this analysis touches on Bourdieu's (1984) idea of distinction having a social and historical background, such that the training of highly specialized workers relates to a culture formed around working practices. In this regard, one cannot ignore or downplay the social history of confectionery skill to examine how issues of power and authority are organized in the candy factory. The closeness that developed between the master confectioner and the two preferred employees allows us to understand how the relationship of each man with the master confectioner is therefore the relationship with culture as the mechanism capable of instilling the practical knowledge in these people and not in any others. This is because, apart from pure affection, links, and personal affinities end up being objectified as assumptions of a relationship that is necessary for the transmission of knowledge. I understood that the transmission process of embodied confectionery knowledge only occurs when it contributes to the perpetuation of the cultural habitus related to it.

In other words, the preference of the master confectioner for just two people is not in any way a result of rational logic but rather the contrary. Among the 15 employees, it was against logical reason to choose only two to teach the intricacies and secrets of the practice while only mediocre performance were offered by the rest of the group. Within "a story made body" (Bourdieu, 2013), that which characterizes the confectionery practice and its modes of transmission, it is expected that the relationship with statements and ends cannot be learned and then put into operation as a result of the work of planning and strategy. In contrast, these purposes may eclipse practical logic that describes a type of body that has been appropriated by history and that appropriates itself, in an immediate and absolute way, of things that inhabit the historical and cultural context of this practice. I shall now deliver analyzed field data to explain possible reasons for embodied prejudices that hamper or even entirely prevent practical knowledge from being transmitted. In the next section, the micro analytical dimension of everyday work that had been presented previously may be understood under the light of a macro-social analysis of diversity issues of gender and race in Brazilian culture, in regards to the research data that show discrimination practices.

Socio-historical background of embodied prejudices

Since ancient times, confectionery expertise has been kept secret by women whose ancestry goes back to the Brazilian patriarchal family, as described by Freyre (1986). The dispositions of the habitus engendered in this practice remotely relate to the lifestyle of a rural and slavery-based aristocracy. Confectionery expertise has always been a symbol of social capital for aristocratic white women. The seal of secrecy maintained around confectionery expertise over decades is evidence of this relationship

of the concentration of capital (Bourdieu, 1984). As the candy store has now been transformed into a public enterprise, this private knowledge can also be converted into economic capital.

I observed that the master in the confectionary was not fully aware of her interest in preserving such secrecy and thereby hindering the process of confectionery expertise transference among most candy factory employees. For example, she did not understand why most of her attempts to transfer confectionery knowledge were ill-fated. During the time I worked in the candy factory, one new young, white female worker was hired, and it caused great expectations on the master confectioner, who continuously complained about the need to find someone who could replace her in command of the factory. It appeared that her ideal for a perfect substitute was someone who would embody these physical characteristics, probably because it resembled herself or the representation of the kind of person that should be ahead of candy factory production. However, the master confectioner's efforts to teach the newcomer clashed with the reality that the woman was as effortless and disinterested as all the former trainees, which led to the newcomer being personally blamed for the failure of the knowledge transmission process. Even if the master confectioner had eventually recognized this failure as her own shortcoming, she would nevertheless indirectly lay the blame on the newcomer, as she did when she informed me she was incapable of choosing new employees in the selection processes for new candy factory staff because she always was "deceived by appearances."

Among the employees, I observed that there was a greater tendency for knowledge transfer for black men, as I have already mentioned; however, white women seemed to be the original intended target. Black women were almost entirely excluded from this learning process. As a consequence, black women practically ignored the confectionery expertise because they were not allowed to learn the entire production process of sweet making. As my own experience illustrates, I spent most of my workdays in the candy factory performing a poor and limited task that I repeated mechanically and that was not fundamental for the production process of the candy factory. In the beginning of my ethnographic experience, I used to think that such an outcome was likely due to the fact that I was not completely considered a staff member; for this reason, my work could not entail much responsibility. After being assured of my full acceptance in the research field – which means that I had adequate evidence of being treated and recognized as part of the group – I realized that my work did not change and that my black female coworkers were also performing smaller and less important activities in the order of the candy factory's production process. Black women's work activities, including my own, were limited to the endless repetition of the same simple tasks. This vicious cycle was reinforced when the master in confectionery consciously underestimated the capacity of most of the employees, considering them "effortless and disinterested" (especially the black women), making them lose motivation for the work itself. This attitude was permeated by prejudices that were not openly expressed or admitted by the master in confectionery and could be inscribed in the circuits of a much more complex logic than a rational one. According to my understanding, this was the result of an embodied prejudice against specific groups (women and blacks) and especially against the overlapping characteristics of these groups (black women). After all, it was not the confectionary secrets themselves that mattered but the maintenance of power relations that were inscribed upon them.

In the candy factory, the issue of race was logically articulated in a speech that positioned black women as supporting characters in the traditional confectionery story.

Communing Brazilian racial myth (Freyre, 1986), the mythologized story of traditional confectionery refers to a mixed ethnic origin for this social practice. The master confectioner used to say on different occasions that she probably had black ancestors, justifying her proximity with the racial myth tied to the story of Pelotas' candy shop tradition. In the candy factory's organizational culture, the imagery of a black ancestry for sweets was rationally articulate in a determinist discourse when the master in confectionery and some black employees (men and women) emphasized that the strength of black people was critical to the successful completion of some activities of the candy factory, such as stirring dense dough.

The emphasis on the black body as the best in the making of sweets consciously reinforced the myth of the origin of the candy store, but it also helped to unconsciously justify the obligation of blacks to engage in heavier and less sophisticated functions. This racial division of labor in the factory was tied up with the division of workspaces, which were delimited into areas where the black people were concentrated and separate areas for white people. Not coincidentally, the space where the black employees worked was called, in the emic perspective, "the backyard." It was a large kitchen in the back of the factory's building, diametrically opposed to the administration's office at the front of the building, where the intellectual work was performed. The "backyard" was also a place that was associated with dirt because it was where the dirty kitchen utensils were taken.

Despite the fact that male workers performed a wider range of activities, they always had to undertake the heavy tasks. Being men obviously obliged them to justify the naturalized preconception that they were stronger, but being black seemed to be the decisive issue that cemented their role of performing the rude and burdensome activities that the master confectioner did not perform at all. The peculiar working conditions of blacks in comparison with whites indicated how blacks remain enclosed in spaces of low social visibility associated with dirt and contamination in Brazilian society. Contamination refers not so much to sanitary conditions but in particular to moral conditions because the black body always posed a perceived threat to the forcibly Eurocentric and patriarchal Brazilian society (Souza, 2006).

While all black people were housed in dirty places and made to perform physically demanding labor, black women had even less freedom of movement in the factory space and performed more alienating activities. All black women remained related to the traditional women's housework, even compared to white women employees, on behalf of their enclosure in the "backyard," the place most identified with the domestic kitchen environment, according to the emic perspective. Over these black women, the agreements and social consensus articulated in the interrelationships between race and gender regressed, mobilizing the majority of white women to segregate their black colleagues, although they were consciously engaging in an anti-racist discourse. From this behavior emerges objectively constructed evidence that the white woman's living conditions are different from the black woman's, although both play equivalent roles in the social setting of the candy factory. This fact can also be interpreted as an intersection between race and gender, as well as class (Holvino, 2010), once the black women employees were those at a greater disadvantage in social scale compared to the other candy factory employees.

The male employees, who were not exclusively black, experienced the status of preferred learners of the confectionery expertise, which was not taught to any woman, black or white. Having analyzed this fact, I believe that there is an overlap of the body and embodied features that drive the subjection of black women to the servile condition

(still below the white women), a more obvious and inescapable reality than the subjection of the black man. In the case of the employees of the candy factory, gender and color combined to reproduce the structures of power and domination in the patriarchal system in an order that seems to favor the established difference between men and women more than the difference between blacks and whites. The combination of color and gender became another index of the social relationships established within the candy factory since black men experienced the most positive aspects of the link between blackness and the traditional confectionery story, while the black women experienced the most negative side of it.

The relationship between ethnicity and gender occurs in a different ways than could be observed in traditional systems of transmission of skill, as once in the traditional sexual division of labor, take responsibility for cooking-related activities. In the original context of confectionery practice, men were not welcome in the kitchen space, but gender issues where the student takes on a new shade when social class also becomes a differing factor between people. Employees were also distinguished due to social class differences. Although the master confectioner and the female workers share the identity criteria of gender and ethnicity (as the majority of female workers was white), social class rises as a barrier to closer relations between them. In the case of male workers, although the class difference also existed, the fact that they were men seemed to give them higher status, the unique result of the asymmetry of power between men and women in society as a whole. In the context of the candy factory, the combination of embodied features of gender and class affects the accessibility of knowledge according to the social hierarchy of power that may place gender issues before class issues (Pyke, 1996). With regard to the transmission of this knowledge as a result of embodied intentionality, the restrictions that the master confectioner unconsciously imposed to the assimilation of knowledge by female workers relates to the maintenance of class power structures that differentiate gender experience. This fact shows that power and sexuality are intertwined (Calás and Smircich, 1996) and power relations emanating from social class differences are also reproduced among women (Holvino, 2010).

Discussion

The idea of embodied intentionality may lead us to consider the question of the motivations for action: the agency guided by some form of intentionality in relation to the issues of diversity. If the stream of diversity management involves the productive use of differences between people, it is understood that diversity is a conscious thing – if not for everybody, at least for the group responsible for planning and implementing these management actions. What the identity stream emphasizes, however, is that diversity evokes idiosyncratic aspects of people and social groups (Tyler *et al.*, 1999). The substrate of the actions that denote acceptance or prejudice toward such things as ethnic, sexual, and religious identities; body shape and bodily capacities; and physical and mental disorders may be unaware of and therefore unable to escape from any management possibility.

The embodied intentionality that guides the knowledge transmission in the candy factory may justify prejudiced behavior against new practitioners to ensure the exclusivity of its original beholders. This analysis fits the explanation of Lave and Wangler (1991) in regards to how the relationship between newcomers and old practitioners entails tensions that ultimately express the interest and/or desire of the former ones in keeping their status, mitigating access to newcomers in order to exclude them from the community of practice. It follows that the process of becoming a full participant in a community of practices may

not be depicted as if someone could actively take a place in the social-cultural context of practice. What the research data show is that newcomers have to fit the complexions of practice, as they are structuring (Bourdieu, 1984) principles of socio-cultural context where it originates. These complexions are embodied marks of gender, race, and also social class that require the full understanding of a diversity approach.

Recognizing embodied intentionality means acknowledging that the process of confectionery knowledge transmission is ordered by motivations and strategies that are linked to social systems of power (Bourdieu, 1984) that have been internalized by the master confectioner during the course of her life through the performance of confectionery practice. Analyzing these research data in the light of diversity theories is, however, especially compelling because it enables us to investigate the real object of the practice, who are the ones who perpetuate it, under which socio-structural conditions does it happen, and what ethical values does it entangle? For the traditional candy shop that I have closely studied, the main object of the practice is not candies; instead, it is social power relationship that candy production represents. Through an embodied intentionality perspective, expressions of prejudice cannot be taken strictly through a personalist point of view, as these expressions indicate the existence of embodied and infra-conscious devices that maintain inequalities under the appearance of neutrality. While I was working in the candy factory, I never noticed the master confectioner openly manifesting prejudice against women or black persons through speech, but the judgments she made about the willingness to work of women or the differential working conditions that she imposed upon black people, both men and women, were practical evidences of discrimination.

Although the practice-based studies stress the need to consider the contradictions in organizational processes (Gherardi, 2009), it is worth noting that in one's daily work, sometimes this dynamic is concealed. Thus, studies on diversity can contribute to studies on practices by providing a displacement in the way of conceiving organizational practices' reproduction mechanisms of racial and gender discrimination, as well as analyzing social resistance mechanisms of social actors. Schatzki (2006) points out that practice-based studies in organizational studies should reconnect structure/agency for an understanding of organizational processes. This is why organizational practices must be thought of from a diversity standpoint (Gherardi and Poggio, 2001; Martin, 2003; Mathieu, 2009) enabling a focus not only on prejudice mechanisms but also the understanding of the materiality of the effects in the dynamic of an organizational routine that delimitates spaces in an organization symbolically spaces in organizations, such as the "kitchen" and the "backyard," in the studied context. Thus, as practices reconnect the relationship between structure and agency in organizational analysis, they highlight how the macro-social dynamics of Brazilian society formation (big house and slave quarters) is resettled and updated to conserve itself through time and space, playing a veiled, but no less perverse micro dynamics of racial prejudices in the workplace, as a consequence of embodied features that overlap in the professional habitus (Bourdieu, 2013) and in social structures of the division of work and also the division of workspaces.

Martin (2006) urges attention to gender that is non-reflexively practiced by collectivities. Regarding this, I argue that the need to study "the interactional and situational contexts in which people interpret each other as practicing gender" (Martin, 2006, p. 269) can also be extended to other diversity issues. Practices are an interesting starting point to understanding the issue of organizational diversity because analyzing practices involves finding the structural and structuring principle (Bourdieu, 2013) of people's actions. Dealing with diversity from the perspective of practice allows us to

observe diversity as it arises in relations between people from situational and dynamic aspects, but it also allows one to understand how it is anchored in culture and, consequently, in the peaceful or conflictual history of these relations. On the other hand, explaining that diversity is part of processes that are fluid, situated, and informed by tacit knowledge also has implications for the study of practice. Just as studies on gendered practices/practicing gender are a two-sided dynamic (Martin, 2003), thinking about diversity as a social practice could comprise both how current practices build cultural diversity and how the very act of practicing diversity is constituted routinely and unreflexively in social interactions (Zanoni *et al.*, 2010).

Conclusion

In this paper, I argued that practices originate a certain habitus related to corporeality and the lived condition of its practitioners. Furthermore, I understand that this habitus reflects the unequal distribution of power in society and is a bodily and embodied index for the inclusion of certain practitioners and the exclusion of others in the context of a community of practice. I sought to identify how the domain of the expertise behind the practice is a form of power and how the imposition of restrictions on a certain group within the dispositions of a habitus ensures the unreflective reproduction of inequalities related to body marks, such as race and gender. Thus, I believe that the direct identification of certain practitioners with certain practices in an organizational context contributes to the perpetuation of embodied prejudices addressed mainly to the bodily and embodied characteristics of others.

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