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**Luce Irigaray, Entrustment, and Rethinking Strategic Organizing**

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Gender, Management and Organization Stream

**Abstract**

Why are women and women's needs persistently marginalized, even in projects designed to alleviate that? Why has there been such difficulty in translating the rhetoric of women's right to shape society into reality? Feminist theorists have pointed to hierarchical organizing strategies as one key explanation of women's marginalization, stressing that if organizations do not learn to include everyone inside the organization, they will not have learned the political adeptness necessary to include everyone outside the organization. These feminist organizational theorists go on to argue that non-hierarchical organizing strategies aimed at including everyone are key to ending this marginalization: that by teaching, learning and sharing all the skills of organizing, including political strategizing, women's marginalization both within and without the organization can be combated.

How exactly, however, are all the skills of organizing to be shared by people who by definition are not the same, without recreating hierarchical relations? It is this link between two different people involved in the process of sharing organizing skills that I wish to explore further, by using the Irigarayan notion of entrustment. It is a way of thinking about how to construct contiguous rather than hierarchical relations between and among the different as together they organize to pursue a goal that could not be achieved individually. At both the theoretical and practical, organizational, level entrustment is fundamental: theoretically it recreates the relations between terms within the symbolic structure as contiguous rather than hierarchical, practically it provides us with ways of working contiguously as we organize together to shape the world in ways that suit all of us rather than just the privileged few.

## **Luce Irigaray, Entrustment, and Rethinking Strategic Organizing**

Over the last twenty years a number of feminist organizational and development theorists have made various arguments that have focused on the incompatibility of hierarchical organizing structures with both how we get something done, or internal effectiveness, and how well we are able to transform society, or successful political activism (cf. Newman, 1980; Ferguson, 1984, Brown, 1992, Lewis and Barnsley, 1992, Young, 1993, 1997; Desai, 1995, Osirim, 1995; Ferree, 1995, Rose, 1996; Oseen, 1997a,b, 1999; Miller and Razavi, 1998, Briskin, 1999). Along these same lines, they have argued that focusing on representation, or ensuring a few women as leaders or decision makers exist at the top of the organizational pyramid, doesn't solve women's problems of marginalization and exclusion<sup>i</sup>. In this analysis some means must be found<sup>ii</sup> to construct non-hierarchical relations among and between workers if there is to be long term change rather than just short term advantage accruing to a few, if women are going to be able to construct a world that suits all of us.

In the most explicit analysis of non-hierarchical organizing, Helen Brown (1992), now of the Office of Public Management in London, points out that activism cannot succeed in the presence of hierarchical structures, which by their very nature embed relations of domination and subordination into how people come together to get work done. Second, and as a result, we must learn within our organizing structures how to get things done in contiguous or side-by-side ways rather than hierarchically. Through teaching, learning and sharing all the organizing activities or skills we can create a non-hierarchical workplace in which individual capabilities are recognized, but where no particular organizing activity—including those of leading and political strategizing—is privileged above another. Third, if we can do so, then we can apply these learned strategies for combating internal marginalization externally, to the outside world, as we work together to transform the larger society. Brown considers that these strategies are particularly important for women to learn, as most of women's workplace experiences have been in hierarchical organizations where being different from men has been interpreted as being lesser, and where hierarchical structures consign most women to the bottom or the edges of the organization.

In her analysis of how exactly we are to create a non-hierarchical workplace, Brown is guided by three assumptions.

- First, Brown stresses that we must analyse what we do together to get work done differently. We need to concentrate not on the organization and the individual as two separate entities, but on organizing as a dynamic, political, process—actions done by people, all embedded in relations of power. If we look at what we do in organizing as activities, we can learn the skills needed for these activities, and we can share them.
- Second, Brown recommends that we think about power relations, difference and the construction of contiguous relationships among and between workers in non-hierarchical workplaces in reference to their actual importance in the world of work. Although this focus has not been popular in the general organizational literature, Brown points out that when you consider that most of the world's work is done cooperatively and collectively, the non-hierarchical approach warrants much greater consideration than it is now given. Most

organizational literature is devoted to examining hierarchical structures as if they are the only way to organize, technological rationality the only means, and efficiency the only outcome

- Third, Brown sees much of organizational theory as being a theory of and for managers, of erasing or eliding who has power and who doesn't, and what that means, although Gareth Morgan, for example, argues that vertical or top down management structures encourages passivity, dependence, competitiveness and deference to authority (1996, p. 109), and suggests that changing these behaviours may require a personality change on the part of the organizations.

As Brown's analysis hinges on seeing organizations not as fixed entities, but as a series of activities to which we give structure retrospectively, she focuses on the activities themselves, without dividing them into an implicit hierarchy, with an analysis of leadership at the top. Hence, she is able to ask how individual differences (e.g., in experience, or knowledge, or time) lead to the hierarchical construction of organizing activities, and how those differences might be minimized. She stresses, for example, that in the process of organizing in non-hierarchical ways, we must "find a way of managing . . . differences between individuals" (Brown, 1992, p. 17), and that the process "of minimising skill and task differentials" (p. 19) is crucial, and must involve everyone. She recommends that we focus on how tasks are accomplished, on "task allocation, coordination and integration" (p. 34), on the process, not the individual. Furthermore, she points out, if the process is not to be administered hierarchically, it must be "decentralised, segmentary and reticulate [weblike]" (p. 33), and that non-hierarchical forms of organizing depend on "the skills, abilities and motivation of participants and on them devising a way of exercising these skills in a way that does not reproduce hierarchy" (p. 38).<sup>iii</sup>

Brown points out that "skillful" is an important word because not everyone is as skillful, and therefore as effective, as everyone else. When applied to leadership, "skillful" is also a political concept, because leading "is an essentially political process, involving complex decision making and competence in the manipulation of cultural values, symbols and meaning" (p. 69). In a non-hierarchical organization, these skills involve networking—constructing political allegiances—or strategizing, as Elizabeth Grosz (1993) would say. The goal is "collaboration relationships" (Brown, 1992, p. 70), in which the participants are roughly equal. Networking, in Brown's sense, is only possible then when people are able to form "peer relationships with interdependent others" (p. 70). To Brown, the process of networking is crucial as a means of handling the core problems of organizing as it is defined here—working out what is going on and why, deciding what to do about it and translating those understandings into action (pp. 70–71)<sup>iv</sup>.

What Brown wants is not utopia, but the minimization of difference to increase political effectiveness; not positional or individualized leadership as a cult of management, but leading as a shared organizing skill within a flexible social order which consciously seeks to create and recreate contiguous relations between and among the different. She emphasizes that constructing relations of difference next to difference is an effective political strategy for building alliances, both within the organization and outside it. Abandoning hierarchical relationships does not mean abandoning effective organizing; it means recognizing that controlling others and moving forward organizationally are antithetical. If we want to be politically effective, we must learn how to do it together.

However, as interesting as Helen Brown's analysis is--the creation of the non-hierarchical workplace through the sharing of all the skills of organizing--what is left unclear is exactly how those skills are to be taught to, learned from, and shared among and between people who are different without recreating hierarchical relations among or between them: The dilemma of difference appears once again to confound the strategies set up to eliminate hierarchical relations among people.

We are different; it is one of the conditions of being human. In the Western symbolic structures of language, myths, religion, philosophies, the stories we tell ourselves to make sense of the world, differentness has been interpreted in only two ways: if we are different from the norm or the same, we are either lesser than the norm or the same, or we are erased. We have no way of understanding difference in any other than hierarchical terms. In terms of the dilemma of difference which confronts us in our organizing strategies, then, what do we do? In our focus on skill sharing and on the relationship between the one who wants and the one who knows (cf. Milan Women's Bookstore Collective, 1991) who by definition are different, how is difference resolved other than bowing to hierarchy?

If we are going to rethink our organizing relations non-hierarchically, we have to have a way of rethinking how the skill-sharing of Brown can actually take place between and among people who are always different from each other. How can we share skills without recreating the hierarchical relations we wish to abandon? How can we share skills in contiguous or side by side ways? How can we deal with difference non-hierarchically?

The French philosopher, linguist and psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray (cf. 1985, 1993, 1994; Whitford, 1991) deals with this question in two parts: she asks what it means for women to be equal to men when we have yet to make a place for sexual difference in our symbolic structures, arguing that in our present ways of understanding the world in the West, we only have a place for the the same, the Man or the monosexual One who represents the human of both sexes. There is no place for woman, no place for sexual difference. There is only the paternal, patriarchal genealogy of fathers and sons, the tyranny of the masculine neutral, which pretends it speaks for all, but really is the voice only of men, of their desires and fantasies which see expression in the words we have available to us, our stories, our myths, our religions, all of which reflect only the man in the mirror. This man in the mirror mistakenly sees himself as human, forgetting the other human holding the mirror reflecting him back to himself, is, as Irigaray points out, the unacknowledged woman. It is this place in the symbolic structures which Irigaray maintains must be created for the unacknowledged woman holding the mirror. Without a place in the symbolic structure which admits only the One, Irigaray argues, there is no place for sexual difference next to sexual difference. In a symbolic structure that only has a place for representations of the paternal genealogies, of fathers and sons and of women only in their relationship to men, there is no place in the symbolic structure for women in their relationship to other women, no way for these relations to be symbolized as other than patriarchal and hierarchical, no way for these relations to be represented contiguously. What we need does not yet exist in our symbolic structures: what we need we ourselves must create. Through our actions and our imaginations we must think through how women next to women who are different can act in ways which both respect their diversity and incorporate contiguous rather than hierarchical relations into our organizing strategies.

Irigaray's focus on the different and sexual difference as the question of the age which must be thought, may provide us with a way of escaping the recursive confinements of our organizing strategies; her focus on entrustment may provide us with a practical example of how we might both think about sexual difference next to sexual difference, and difference next to difference, in our pursuit of contiguous organizing strategies. Entrustment is the name given to the relations between the one who knows and the one who wants, the evocative phrase which captures, in a way that teaching to and learning from does not, the relations between two women who wish to organize contiguously, who wish to recognize their difference in non-hierarchical form, and in so doing, create a space in the symbolic structure for what has not yet been thought, but which now be named--sexual difference next to sexual difference, difference next to difference, without hierarchy.

Entrustment as an organizing strategy hinges on Irigaray's analysis of difference and equality. First, what does she mean by those two terms, and how do they relate to entrustment, particularly as it is taken up in a series of essays written by Italian feminists (Bono & Kemp, (Eds.), 1991; The Milan Women's Bookstore Collective, 1990) on their experience of the practice of doing, or entrustment translated as *affidamento*?

To Irigaray, as J. J. Goux (1996) points out, to be equal in our present means of understanding the world, in our spoken language, in the stories and myths, religions and philosophies we tell ourselves to make sense of the world, means to be the same as men, because there is no place for the different, for women. We have a symbolic structure which admits only men, a patriarchy that privileges only fathers and sons, or women in a relationship to fathers and sons, as their mothers, their wives, their daughters—but no place for women in themselves, and women in their relationship to other women.

In our language of the father and of the son, women are either erased, or they are lesser; the matriarchal genealogy, the relations of women to women, is missing. What we need, she stresses, is not the overthrow or replacement of patriarchal genealogies, but the addition of the matriarchal genealogy, to provide women a way of thinking through how to be and how to live in the world which women now lack—along with a penis, to paraphrase Freud, who only understood women as men with a lack, not complete on their own. As Irigaray has said at other times and in other ways, women are not a mirror image of men, and cannot be understood as a mirror image: What is revealed with a mirror for a man, and by extension, the philosophical and psychoanalytic theories which men have produced and which function to reveal themselves alone, is revealed by a speculum for a woman—and as Irigaray argues, those philosophical and psychoanalytic theories which would function to reveal woman to herself have not been constructed. The symbolic structures which men inhabit, they inhabit as men but in the disguise of the neutral, in the realm of the sexually indifferent, where the [masculine] neutral attempts to function for the two who are sexually different. Only the one or the same, that which is produced and reproduced, replicated endlessly in the mirror of [male] theory, has a place. The sexually different and the sexually different, together, remain in the realm of the not yet. The speculum of the other woman has not yet fulfilled its function, producing a symbolic structure of new myths, new stories, new religions, new ways of understanding and giving voice to the maternal genealogies which have been silenced in the reign of the masculine neutral, where men, looking in the mirror of theory, have mistaken the face looking back at them for the face of all the world.

In *Women-Amongst-Themselves: Creating a Woman to Woman Sociality* (Whitford, 1991), Irigaray writes “As for the ethics of sexual difference, what I observe is that men have never elaborated it” (p. 191). It is this ethics of sexual difference, an extension of her argument in ‘Equal or Different’ (Whitford, 1991), which concerns me here, and which leads to the its elaboration in its organizational forms as entrustment or affidamento by the Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective (1991).

First, to the ethics of sexual difference, and how to create this woman to woman sociality, given that women have no place in our present symbolic structures and hence no way of knowing how to act. So what do we draw on, what are we to think about, to be aware of, to take into consideration as we go about constructing woman to woman sociality that is the embodiment of the ethics of sexual difference, of how to act towards each other, woman and woman and woman to man, which recognizes sexual difference—and difference--in terms of respect and of wonder?

To Irigaray we need “rites and myths to teach us to love other women, to live with them. . . we need values we can share if we are to coexist and create together”(Whitford, p. 192). She goes on to point out that without symbolization, of words, of stories and myths, religions and philosophies which do not have representations of women as women, women lack the means of loving the same—themselves, and other women. They do not, then, have the means of knowing how to act and be with other women because there are no words, or stories, or myths that express the love of the same, of oneself as a woman, and love of other women. As she puts it, because “there are indeed almost no symbolic forms of love of the same in the feminine” (p. 192), and because we exist within “a language and a social organization which exile us and exclude us” (p. 193), we must create, or “invent another style of collective relations. . . . a new subjective and socio-cultural order”(p. 193).

Here Irigaray is referring to affidamento, a “style of relations between women at once new and traditional” which grapples with the various afflictions which have plagued women’s groups: “the unspoken, the implicit, the flare up of passions, persecution through silent consumption, demands or claims always expressed elsewhere or to others, the seizure of power by some women and the reduction of all women to ‘like everyone’ or ‘like me’ (p. 193).

To Irigaray, if we as women are to avoid the reconfiguration of hierarchical relations between and among us as women, we must create an interval--a border or a limit--to contiguous relations so that women can work together side by side, so they are neither obliterated nor erased. We do this through recognizing or creating a place for our mothers as mothers and as women--the desiring mother in other terms--and through “our sexual relationship with language, ideation, idealization and becoming divine” (p. 194). The divine provides us with a horizon, a way of thinking beyond the categories we have been thought which confines us, and in confining us, turns us against each other. It is the liberation of the group which does not demand that the collective define and expel the different, but that the group, by reference to this horizon, can provide a place for the contiguous relations which women seek, where “women—one plus one to the n—can gather or await one another without destructively competing or wiping each other out” (p. 194).

To the question of how we are to accomplish the strategy of creating a place for sexual difference where only the masculine neutral or sexual in-difference exists (the man, master,

mankind, my fellow Canadians, who stands in for both women and men), Irigaray stresses that “the sexuation of the symbolic order cannot be accomplished all at once, via technology or magic. It will correspond to an intellectual, ethical, aesthetic and political effort on the part of both sexes”. We wish, to Irigaray, to be neither only “mothers, wives, nurses and housekeepers to both children and men, or...technical assistants to or collaborators with the present world” (p. 196). We wish neither the past, nor the different as lesser, nor the present, as erased, but the future, of sexual difference next to sexual difference in a new, and contiguous, social order.

In the introduction to the Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, Teresa de Lauretis (1990) makes the point that we “need to make sense of, exalt and represent in words and images the relationship of women to one another” (p. 1). What we have now we cannot use and do not need: the oppressive gesture of extension which masquerades as magnanimity: you too can be just like me, but the rights you want are those I constructed to fit my needs and my wants. What we need is a place in the symbolic structure, a genealogy or relations between women

“that is at once discovered, invented and constructed through feminist practices of reference and address. . . . taking other women’s words, thoughts, knowledges and insights as frames of reference for one’s analysis, understanding, and self-definition; and trusting them to provide a symbolic mediation between oneself and others, one’s subjectivity and the world” (p. 2).

It is not mere equality with men which women desire, not just equality with the colonizers, the timid gestures of mere reform. That’s not enough to Irigaray, as de Lauretis points out. She asks, That’s all we want? Just that? And replies, For women to fight for equality with men is “to prevent their own sense of existence and to foreclose the road to women’s real liberation” (p. 6). We desire not to confine ourselves to the lesser of the same, the amorphous, undifferentiated, mysterious, unknowable Other who cannot know what She wants because She cannot know. Instead, we desire to explore what human culture does not know “about the difference in being a woman” (p. 10)

We need a theory and a practice of sexual difference in order to achieve freedom, not in the sense of equal rights to men, but a freedom that is much more creative. This practice takes of sexual difference shape in the form of entrustment, or the contiguous relations between the woman who wants and the woman who knows. And if this theory of sexual difference is to be realized in the restructuring of the symbolic to make a place for women where one has not existed before, the practice of sexual difference as entrustment must exist.

This relationship of entrustment between women serves to create those places of reference through which women are interpellated—hailed, brought into the symbolic structure where they take their place as authorized, validated human beings of the female sex who have responsibilities to the world, to shape the world in a way that suits women. Entrustment is a practice that provides a way and a place for women to be authorized, that is, admitted to the place of the subject, the one who can know. Now we have no place in the symbolic order other than as the rejected male body. In that sense we exist neither corporeally—the rejected male body that men might be the transcendent subject inhabits the place of our bodies--nor conceptually. The oppressive gesture of magnanimity in the form of the masculine neutral deprives us of our own conceptualisation of being, of our own subjecthood, of our own ‘I’ from which to speak and know the world.

The practice of these acts of entrustment between women provides a way to rethink the symbolic structure in other than hierarchical terms, to admit the sexually specific two as difference next to difference, as contiguous rather than in the hierarchical terms of sameness requiring difference as lesser. Entrustment provides a point of reference in the symbolic structure by which women can locate themselves. By symbolizing these acts of entrustment, we create the stories, the myths, the philosophies of how to act and how to think about these acts which are missing in the present symbolic structure that has no way of providing a way to symbolize the relations between women. As we do this, we simultaneously create the dual conceptualisation of contiguous, sexually different beings as we create a symbolic structure which is contiguous rather than hierarchical. No longer does the symbolic structure rest on the suppression of the disavowed and rejected other to give it meaning: I am a man because I am not a woman; if she wants to be equal to me she must be the same as me; if she wants to be different than me she must be lesser.

To de Lauretis, the “generalized social practice of Entrustment” (p. 9) will produce change in the symbolic structure: how we act among and between ourselves as women creates change in how we are able to think about ourselves. What before had eluded us, our inability to think about ourselves as other than lesser or as erased, we can now create through thinking about what entrustment means. Not only can we think about sexual difference where before there had been only the universalising [male] One, not only can we think about sexual difference next to sexual difference symbolically, sexually specific male subject next to sexually specific female subject, but we can also think about difference next to difference, contiguously rather than hierarchically. By rethinking difference as contiguous, by creating a space for women’s own difference from each other, for their own diversity, in entrustment we can valorize or give credence to that diversity, despite our disparities, despite our differences between the one who wants and the one who knows.

To talk about differences between women and men means to talk about differences between women and between men. It allows us to recognize that we are not all the same, that we exist as women in relations of disparity, that rather than hiding behind the mask of the same, that we figure out how to recognize disparity in our organizing strategies and that we create the flexible social order of Helen Brown in the light of that recognition. Through entrustment we are no longer subject to the masquerade of the masculine neutral, the male symbolic which demands sameness and erases difference. By recognizing difference in the symbolic structure it provides us a way of overcoming the “‘antagonistic comparison’ of one woman to another” (The Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, 1990, p. 112), because if we are all the same, we remain a projection of men’s desires and needs, we remain the other, undifferentiated. We need to think through and about our diversity by recognizing the value of the mother, not only in her function as a mother, the role of women in the present (male) symbolic, but also as a desiring woman, and in that sense of both/and, our own value. We need to recognize that we are different among ourselves, to relate to each other in our diversity and in our differentness. We need to admit in practice our differences so we can think about what we want, not as an undifferentiated mass, but as a female sexually specific subject in which we relate to each other in our differences and disparities so we can all use and benefit from our differences, rather than mire ourselves in envy and resentment.

Entrustment provides us with a mediation between the ‘I’ and the world; it is not a separation where we retreat from the world, but a relationship in which we name ourselves as having value,



as having a right to speak and to act. Disparity, differentness between and among women already exists. It must be recognized, not erased, so we can create new ways of acting and being, so we can think what has not yet been thought. If not, we remain in our sameness the prisoners of men, the mysterious other who is other than the same, the unfathomable black hole composed of men's projections of what they wish women to be.

To the Milan Women's Bookstore Collective (1990), what exists in the present is that women turn to men to get ahead but that doesn't change anything; the present symbolic structure continues to validate men and erase women. What we need instead is a "symbolic order. . . which admits of relations of mutual aid between women" (p. 122), the possibility of mutual exchange "between the woman who wants and the woman who knows"; (p. 123), the opportunities to attach ourselves to women who are more 'aware' (p. 123). The culmination, as they point out, is "if that relation is established between two women, a new combination enters the system of social relations which modifies its symbolic order (p. 123). Changing the social relations among and between women revolutionizes the symbolic order in a way that consigns equality to the status of reform: necessary, but not complete.

They go on to point out its revolutionary impact: that in order to take responsibility for what is--the world, her life--a "woman must take her experience as a measure of the world, her interests as a criterion for judging it, her desires as a motive for changing it", that together we must give ourselves "the authority to decide what to think, and what to want" (p. 126). We need to look at the other woman who knows so we can realize the sensibility of being more, not anxiously assess her in fear that she be more and we lesser. We need a symbolic relationship between this woman who wants and the woman who knows; we must symbolize the maternal genealogy which is unsymbolized in all that we tell ourselves which gives voice to our experiences that in our present symbolic structures, has no place for us from which to speak.

Equal or different is not only about abandoning the old way of equal—and erased—or different--and lesser. It is about difference in its creative possibilities, difference next to difference. The hierarchical forms of sameness/difference, equality as sameness/difference as lesser are rejected, and the creative possibilities of the two, of contiguity, of sexual difference rather than only the sexual indifference of the one, are embraced, in entrustment, the relations between women which exists to both restructure how we organize and restructure how we think.

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<sup>i</sup> To Briskin, working collectively and collaboratively both inside mixed sex organizations as women's committees, and outside, as separate, women only groups<sup>i</sup> depends on building constituencies through what might be termed consciousness raising, and then using that collective sense of togetherness in how the world is viewed to organize collaboratively, in participatory rather than representational organizing. As Briskin stresses, representational organizing and its pyramidal form is less threatening than the transformational possibilities of participatory, democratic, non-hierarchical organizing. It's easier, she points out, to accept a few women as leaders than to accept the "transformation of ... structures, policies, practices and priorities" (p. 545) which participatory, democratic organizing requires, not least of which is a profound redistribution of relations of power.

Equally importantly, Briskin also stresses that constituency building, or women becoming aware of shared goals, is absolutely necessary if increased numbers of women as part of a group of decision makers are going to be able to realize any of these shared goals. Without a strong constituency, either inside a mixed sex organization as a separate women's committee, or outside the organization, lobbying, women's shared goals are much less likely to be met<sup>i</sup>. This constituency building for increased representation is only the first step, not the final step; transformation is only achieved through increased participation of all women.

To Briskin, separate organizing inside an organization or outside, as a lobby group, works as she puts it, when it stresses separatism not from whom, but from what: "bureaucratic and hierarchical practices" (546). Women need to choose their organizing strategies carefully if they are to avoid "not only male domination but also bureaucratic, hierarchical, overly competitive and often undemocratic practices which also function to exclude women and other marginalized groups". In other words, the goals women are attempting to achieve must be embodied in the organizing strategies they employ, the means producing the ends.

Finally, she emphasizes that these choices of organizing strategies do not mean that women are saints, with its unspoken counter-argument that women are devils: the argument is not about what women innately are, or their moral nature. Instead, according to 1997 studies she quotes, women can choose through education to organize in ways that include all of them together; they can choose to listen more, to be more inclusive, to be less bureaucratic and hierarchical. They have options, and by learning how to organize more democratically and non-hierarchically, they can achieve more of their goals. To Briskin, organizing together first as constituents and then as participants in a common cause is not slower; it is more successful.

<sup>ii</sup> The key question Desai addresses is the nexus between process and outcome: if what we want is widespread change for women, if what concerns us is that women are excluded from the making of society which suits all of us, can we achieve this through exclusionary forms of organizing, the reality behind the supposed neutrality of hierarchy and centralized bureaucracy and their justification of relations of domination through appeals to efficiency? What is particularly interesting about her paper is that the research she draws on initially is mostly American, a point we need to keep in mind when we read literature on organizations. How we organize arises out of particular ways of doing things in acceptable ways; in general the more recent American literature on women's organizations points to the necessary link between

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hierarchy and efficiency (cf. particularly the articles in Ferree, 1995), her point is that her study of Indian women's organizations contradicts this. Both the "small urban autonomous group" and the "mass based, rural grass roots group. . . emphasize a non-hierarchical, participatory decision making process"; both non-hierarchical, participatory organizations. . . have survived and achieved political, mobilization and cultural goals" (Desai, p. 4).

Her examination of these two groups resonates with Briskin's in terms of constituency building and a commitment to participatory organizing. The terms the women use are not always ones familiar in the literature on organizing, and sometimes what is expressed in terms of warm feelings as a method for inclusiveness are inchoate, but nevertheless much of what needs to happen which Briskin explored in terms of the constituency building and the struggle to maintain participatory organizing surfaces in Desai's article as well. As she points out in her discussion of successful projects, one activist noted that "to organize, you have to work consistently, keep [the others] informed and be in touch regularly" (p. 37). Another activist stresses participation: "the whole idea evolved as we went along, evolved with the people; it was not the core group sitting and discussing [it] and then putting it out" (p. 33). By focusing on constituency building and on participatory, non-hierarchical organizing, both groups Desai studied achieved their goals.

<sup>iii</sup> We must also find ways to resist the requirements of a hierarchy imposed by funding or licensing agencies to guarantee "accountability"; for example, the requirement for a structure designating president, secretary, treasurer, etc. The development of hierarchy is not inevitable, as Newman (1980) found in a study of egalitarian organizations; dependence on funding and the requirements of that funding are key factors. She found, for example, that small print shops were able to maintain their egalitarian structure, whereas organizations dependent on outside funders that demanded the existence of a hierarchical structure were not.

<sup>iv</sup> As Brown uses the term, networking is the creation of interdependencies that cannot operate without rough equality among the participants. Let me be clear here: networking in Brown's analysis is not the much less complicated definition of the popular business texts of "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" with its connotation of individual advancement through knowing the right people. Integral to Brown's analysis of the process of networking is learning to construct allegiances, build political alliances, and devise organizing strategies for overcoming mutual problems. The rough equality of this networking process is crucial to a non-hierarchical organization, because it allows everyone to work out together what is going on and why, to decide what to do about the situation, and to translate that decision into action, in the process creating a flexible social order. To Brown the creation of a flexible social order is an ongoing and consciously egalitarian process of organizing, and one that involves its members in struggle: struggle to gain everyone's involvement, and struggle to minimize skill and task differentiation. It is a team building process that is continuous and repetitive because "interpretations, choices and allocations are the outcome of influence and exchange both within and between groups" (Brown, p. 48), and it is a process in which leading and political strategizing are "interactive and negotiated" because non-hierarchical relations are purposefully sought (Brown, p. 68).]]