ORGANIZATIONAL BODY WORK:

EFFORTS TO SHAPE HUMAN BODIES IN ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we review management and organizational research that describes and explains "organizational body work"— purposeful, organizationally embedded efforts to shape human bodies. We conceptualize human bodies in terms of three dimensions—materiality, meaning, and functionality—and argue that organizational body work is constituted by programs of purposeful effort involving activities situated in and shaped by organizational life. Based on a review of 210 articles and books that feature descriptions of organizational body work, we unpack the concept in three main ways. First, we offer an inductively developed process model of organizational body work that comprises five key themes: the triggers, forms, consequences, contexts, and the variations of bodies targeted. Second, a key observation that emerged from our review was that organizational body work is animated by a set of organizational tensions, and so we explore three such tensions situated in the cultural, health, and political dynamics of organizational life. Third, we suggest eight directions for future research intended to illustrate and inspire, rather than set boundaries around the study of organizational body work.

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INTRODUCTION

What do a bartender wearing long sleeves to cover a tattoo, a patient trying to describe their chronic pain to an unreceptive physician, and an accounting firm building an on-site gym have in common? While these examples may seem disparate, we argue it is time to weave together previously fragmented findings into a coherent whole that we describe as "organizational body work"—purposeful, organizationally embedded efforts to shape human bodies.

Scholarly recognition of the human body in organizational life has advanced considerably since Acker's (1990) criticism of management research as "bodiless", as evidenced by recent reviews in the *Annals* and elsewhere that assemble scholarly contributions on body-centric themes, such as physical attractiveness (Nault, Pitesa, & Thau, 2020), physiology (Akinola, Kapadia, Lu, & Mason, 2019; Heaphy & Dutton, 2008), biology (Nofal, Nicolaou, Symeonidou, & Shane, 2018), energy (Quinn, Spreitzer, & Lam, 2012), and physical activity (Calderwood et al., 2021) (see Table 1 for a summary of existing body-centric literature reviews). Yet organizational research has only begun to acknowledge how the human body is shaped by the intentional efforts of individual and collective actors—efforts like those of the bartender, patient, and accounting firm. While the human body has begun to infiltrate organizational scholarship, purposeful efforts to shape bodies remain an "absent presence"—a provocation that tends to "fade from view in favour of … traditional analytic concerns" (Shilling, 2003: 179).

Insert Table 1 about here

We thus present the concept of "organizational body work" as a basis for elevating the interplay of agency and the human body to a place of central concern in management research. The concept of organizational body work represents a form of social-symbolic work (Lawrence

& Phillips, 2019), parallel to other forms, such as "identity work" (Brown, 2021), "emotion work" (Hochschild, 1979), and "institutional work" (Hampel, Lawrence, & Tracey, 2017). Like other "objects" in organizational life, the human body is a target of purposeful efforts to shape it that are constrained and facilitated by the organizational contexts in which they are embedded (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019).

The significance of organizational body work stems from its impacts on individuals' experiences, both at work and outside of it, as well as its effects on organizational outcomes. For individuals, organizational body work can shape their experience of organizational life, including enhancing or diminishing physical and mental well-being, contributing to experiences of inclusion and exclusion, and facilitating both autonomy and control (Burchiellaro, 2021; Chang, Milkman, Chugh, & Akinola, 2019; van Amsterdam, van Eck, & Meldgaard Kjær, 2022). For organizations, the effects of organizational body work can be functional (Bono, Glomb, Shen, Kim, & Koch, 2013; Sergeeva, Faraj, & Huysman, 2020; Stephens, 2021) or dysfunctional (Elidrissi & Courpasson, 2021; Pouthier & Sondak, 2021; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2015). While evidence of organizational body work and its effects are dispersed throughout management research, we lack a systematic understanding of its contours. Without an understanding of organizational body work, we run the risk of overlooking, mis-specifying, and undertheorizing critical realities of life in organizations.

Our goals for this review are to: (1) focus attention on a distinctive but under-recognized and unorganized area of organizational research; (2) clarify current knowledge about organizational body work; and (3) identify key issues in its study that can provide a foundation for future research.

To do so, we develop the concept of organizational body work in five steps. First, we articulate the concept of organizational body work by describing our conceptualization of the human body, purposeful efforts to shape human bodies, and the organizational embeddedness of those efforts, as well as how organizational body work is related to other concepts. Second, we describe the multi-pronged research strategy that helped us identify our sample of articles. Third, we offer an inductively developed portrait of organizational body work that comprises five key themes observed in the literature: the triggers, forms, and consequences of organizational body work, the contexts in which it occurs, and the variations of bodies targeted. Fourth, a key observation that emerged from our review was that organizational body work is animated by a set of organizational tensions, and so we explore three such tensions situated in the cultural, health, and political dynamics of organizational life. Fifth, we outline a research agenda intended to inspire further study of organizational body work by identifying key opportunities for additional research.

THE CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL BODY WORK

To develop our conceptualization of organizational body work, we draw on organizational research and interdisciplinary conceptions of the human body. We begin by explicating its constituent elements: "the human body" as a multidimensional "object"; the "work" or purposeful efforts in relation to the human body; finally, its "organizational" embeddedness, to understand how body work can be meaningfully situated in organizational life.

The Human Body

Organizational body work is fundamentally about the human body. This focus contrasts with traditional management research which, with its focus on the mind and implicit Cartesian assumption that the mind controls the body, has paid limited attention to the body (Hassard,

Holliday, & Willmott, 2000; Heaphy & Dutton, 2008). As Acker (1990: 151) argues, the foundational image of the individual in management and organizational research is the "abstract, bodiless worker, who occupies the abstract, gender-neutral job has no sexuality, no emotions, and does not procreate". In recent decades, however, an awareness of the human body has emerged across the social sciences, including management research, as scholars have begun to explicitly study the role of the body in individuals' lives, as well as in work, organizations, and society (Albrecht, Seelman, & Bury, 2001; Boero & Mason, 2020; Robinson & Thomas, 2021).

Our conceptualization of the human body is inclusive: we promote a plurality of constructions of the body that alert us to the heterogeneity of organizational body work. More specifically, we identify three lenses—materiality, meaning, and functionality—each of which is associated with distinctive understandings of the body, disciplinary foundations, and methodological approaches. Although these three lenses on the human body provide distinct insights and opportunities, we are not suggesting that the facets of the human body that they highlight are separate (Dale, 2001): the materiality, meaning, and functionality of human bodies are overlapping and intertwined in the study of the human body and in organizational life. What they provide are analytical lenses that bring to the foreground different qualities of the human body and different forms of organizational body work.

First, we conceptualize the human body in terms of its materiality. A material approach to the body considers "the flesh, bone and skin, emphasizing the physical realities of the body as well as how being a body manifests as a series of relationships with other materials" (Attala & Steel, 2019: 5). This conceptualization of the body acknowledges it is a substantive object composed of matter—with substance, weight, form, and shape. It also highlights the body as a complex network of embedded systems (e.g., respiratory, musculoskeletal, kinesthetic), some of

which we are aware of some of which we are (or can be) aware of (e.g., the musculoskeletal system when it is taxed or injured) while others operate outside of our awareness (e.g., the hormonal system). Moreover, the material body is not static: it is constantly evolving as our bodies grow, age, acquire and shed viruses, build and lose muscle mass, and gain and lose sensitivities.

A material conceptualization of the body also invites us to appreciate its relationships with material objects, including the desks, chairs, and tools in the built environment, the myriad objects that make up the natural environment, and the ever-expanding array of technologies through which our bodies are augmented and repaired (Boxenbaum, Jones, Meyer, & Svejenova, 2018; Leonardi, Nardi, & Kallinikos, 2012). The body is both like these objects and unlike them in critical ways, particularly in relation to the body's boundaries and connection to the self. Consider, for example, the use of a wearable insulin pump (Balsamo, 1995). Attached to a human body, the body-with-insulin pump represents a hybrid, distinct from and irreducible to either the body or the pump alone (Latour, 1999): the pump is attached to the outside of a body but penetrates the skin and releases a hormone in response to bodily conditions—shaping the body's functioning, abilities, meaning, appearance, and lived experience. The body-with-insulin-pump illustrates the intimate relationship between human bodies and many material objects, echoing Belk's (1988) "extended self" whereby material objects and human bodies comprise integrated units with distinct abilities, risks, and social positions.

The materiality of the human body is important to our conceptualization of organizational body work for several reasons. First, focusing on materiality helps us avoid long-standing tendencies, rooted in Cartesian dualism, to separate and devalue the body in favor of the mind (Dale, 2005). This lens on the body helps us materialize the body where it in the past has been at

best an “absent presence”, mentioned in passing but subordinated to other concerns (Shilling, 2003). It thus helps us move toward an embodied conception of humanity (Boero & Mason, 2020; Robinson & Thomas, 2021; Wacquant, 2004). Second, a material understanding of the body situates it explicitly in networks of other material objects that shape organizational life (Cristea & Leonardi, 2019; Orlikowski, 2007; Rafaeli & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2004). One might consider, for example, the materiality of a body in relation to work technology (e.g., the da Vinci robot (Sergeeva et al., 2020)) or material objects in the natural environment (e.g., slipping on ice (Whiteman & Cooper, 2011)). Finally, considering the materiality of the body allows us to draw on and contribute to emerging literatures within management and organizational research, including work on physiology (Akinola et al., 2019; Heaphy & Dutton, 2008; Nofal et al., 2018), biological processes in the workplace (Grandey, Gabriel, & King, 2020; Harding, Gilmore, & Ford, 2021), the senses in organizational life (Riach & Warren, 2015; Solnet et al., 2019; Whiteman & Cooper, 2011), and embodied cognition (Stephens, 2021).

The second lens that we employ conceives of the human body in terms of its meaning. A meaning-centered approach focuses on how individuals, groups, and organizations interpret, make sense of, and ascribe meaning to human bodies, both privately and socially (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010). The assignment of meaning to the human body can involve individuals constructing interpretations of their own and others’ bodies based on perceptions and contextual influences including social interactions and norms (Nault et al., 2020; Orgs, Hagura, & Haggard, 2013). People construct the meanings of their own bodies through sensation, observation, and reflection (Pennebaker, 1983), sometimes publicly (e.g., blushing, crying) and at other times privately (e.g., butterflies in one’s stomach), both in and out of our control (Heaphy, 2007; Joas, 1996). The meaning of human bodies is also a social accomplishment, negotiated among actors

through discursive and other means (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2009; Jammaers, Zanoni, & Hardonk, 2016). This can involve individuals, groups, organizations, and even whole societies, as the meaning of specific human bodies is negotiated and adjudicated (Cox, 2018; Gatrell, 2013). These social processes may be holistic in that they attribute meanings to the whole body, or they may focus on specific attributes of bodies, as when job candidates are evaluated based in part on their perceived level of fitness, height, or skin color (Prato & Ferraro, 2018; Rivera, 2017).

It is important to note that abstract notions of "the body" fall outside the scope of our review. While important, we do not attend to how individuals and organizations attempt to shape, for example, societal meanings of "disabled" in public discourse (Cieza, Sabariego, Bickenbach, & Chatterji, 2018) or "beautiful" in the fat acceptance movement (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015). Research in this tradition examines institutional work that targets societal ideas of the body—in contrast to organizational body work that involves efforts to shape specific human bodies.

Incorporating meaning as a lens on human bodies is important for developing the concept of organizational body work for several reasons. First, attending to the meaning of bodies respects a core aspect of its phenomenology (Dahl, Falke, & Eriksen, 2019; Küpers, 2014). The meanings attached to a body are integral to a person's internal life, sense of self, and identity, as well as to their experience of others (Dolezal & Petherbridge, 2017). Second, a focus on the meaning of a body explicitly locates it in networks of meaning that shape organizational life, and the psychological and social processes through which those meanings are constructed (Ely & Meyerson, 2010; Johnson, Joshi, & Hogan, 2020; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006). Organizational body work could involve the work of leaders to shape how organizational members view their own bodies (e.g., as a source of emotional energy, as an object to be

controlled) and how these shared meanings affect performance and coordination in organizations (Brown, 2015; Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012; Lepisto, 2021). Third, this conceptualization of bodies provides a bridge to important streams of management and organizational research. These include research on embodied sensemaking (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012; de Rond, Holeman, & Howard-Grenville, 2019), job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) embodied ethics (Bell & Willmott, 2020; Wray-Bliss, 2002), meaning-making in relation to specific kinds of bodies (Acker, 2006; Harlan & Robert, 1998; Kang, 2010) and research methods (Locke, Golden-Biddle, & Feldman, 2008).

The third lens we adopt focuses on the human body in terms of its functionality. A focus on functionality highlights "everything that the body is able to do, across diverse domains" (Alleva & Tylka, 2021: 149). The functionality of bodies is multifaceted: it includes physical capacities, but also bodily abilities in relation to the senses (Gardner, 1993). A functional conception of the body can be found, for instance, in human capital research, which conceives of bodies as parts of the stock of skills and abilities available to a job or labor force (Goldin, 2016). It also foregrounds factors that might affect performance, including the design and management of work roles (e.g., Carayon, 1994) and activities outside of work (e.g., exercise, sleep, sex) (Leavitt, Barnes, Watkins, & Wagner, 2019; Sonnentag, 2003).

The functionality of the human body is important to our review of organizational body work research for at least three reasons. First, conceiving of the body in terms of functionality acknowledges the body as a medium for performance in organizations, which is of central interest to management scholars, both in terms of the performance of individuals (Aguinis & O'Boyle, 2014) and their contribution to organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Delaney & Huselid, 1996). Second, considering the functionality of the body highlights the significance of

variations in the abilities of specific human bodies. Attending to how such variations are constructed, enacted, and responded to in organizational life has motivated research focused on (dis)ability and neurodiversity (Hatak, Chang, Harms, & Wiklund, 2021; Roberson, Quigley, Vickers, & Bruck, 2021; Williams & Mavin, 2012), and the problem of "ableism"— "the process of favoring, fetishizing, and building the world around a mostly imagined, idealized body while discriminating against those bodies perceived to move, see, hear, process, operate, long or need differently from that vision" (Taussig, 2020: 10). The third benefit of conceptualizing the body in terms of functionality is its connection to a range of literatures in management research that pay explicit attention to the physical capacities of employees, such as research on ergonomics (Clegg, 2000), job design (Kompier, 2003), and aesthetics (Baldessarelli, Stigliani, & Elsbach, 2021).

We use these three lenses on the human body—materiality, meaning, functionality—throughout this paper, but it is important to comment on three issues they raise. First, we do not claim these are either exhaustive or mutually exclusive conceptualizations of the body. We use them because they provide generative approaches that engage with a range of scholars across disciplines. We hope that scholars will also consider the value of other lenses or an integrated, holistic perspective on the body (Dale, 2001) in relation to organizational body work. Second, we are not claiming any hierarchy or sequence among these three conceptualizations. While some scholars might suggest that a specific lens is foundational and that other lenses follow from it (e.g., materiality as a starting point and functionality flowing from it), we make no such claim. Third, and perhaps most fundamentally, we view each of these dimensions as possible ways of constructing the body rather than as transcendental phenomena there to be revealed (Weinberg, 2012).

Purposeful efforts

The reference to "purposeful efforts" in our definition of organizational body work is tied to the notion of work. Our use of the term work is consistent with lay understandings that emphasize "activity involving physical or mental effort and undertaken in order to achieve a result" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2022). More precisely, organizational body work is a type of social-symbolic work, which describes "purposeful, reflexive efforts intended to shape or maintain" meaningful patterns in social systems (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019: 5). Social-symbolic work has recently been examined in relation to emotions (Barberá-Tomás, Castelló, de Bakker, & Zietsma, 2019), identities (Mantere & Whittington, 2021), and communities (Livne-Tarandach & Jazaieri, 2021). The term "work" in "organizational body work" thus equates with people's efforts (including physical, mental, and social efforts) to shape bodies in relation to the dimensions described above (materiality, meaning, and functionality). A way to understand what we mean by purposeful efforts is in relation to other "objects" in organizational life. The concept of "emotion work", for instance, describes "the act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling", as when a person describes having "psyched myself up" or "squashed my anger down" (Hochschild, 1979: 561); in this example, the object of work is emotions.

Turning to work on human bodies, we begin by contrasting organizational body work with aspects of organizational life that may affect a body without representing "work" on it. Bodies may be shaped, for instance, by the serendipitous effects of organizational processes and by people's automatic reactions to the variety of pressures they experience in organizations. Consider the phenomena of an altered voice. Entrepreneurs modulating their voices to convey passion to investors (Allison, Warnick, Davis, & Cardon, 2022) represents an example of purposeful efforts and therefore organizational body work. In contrast, if long-habituated or

anatomical differences in those entrepreneurs' voices affected investors' perceptions, these would not reflect purposeful efforts and would therefore not suggest organizational body work on the part of entrepreneurs.

It is important to note that purposeful efforts in relation to organizational body work does not describe a discrete or homogeneous phenomenon. People can have different degrees of agency and reflexivity, which might vary over time in their appearance and experience (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019). Building on the example above, entrepreneurs may engage in body work in their early years, but over time, it becomes habit, incorporated into bodily memory by repeated performance until it becomes habitual (Ball, 2005). Our perspective assumes that purpose and effort are heterogeneous: they may appear as projective agency oriented toward shaping a body's future state, as practical action intended to resolve an immediate problem by shaping the body, or as habitual action that involves shaping the body through the "selective reactivation … of past patterns" of action (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: 971). Moreover, the purposeful efforts of organizational body work do not occur *de novo*, but as instantiations of practices, or improvisations around such practices (Nicolini, 2013). This does not mean they are simply repetitions of previous actions or the mindless carrying out of organizational routines (Ashforth & Fried, 1988): although such mindless activity may shape human bodies—sometimes profoundly—we do not consider it purposeful and so not organizational body work. Thus, building on current conceptualizations of agency, we are not asking whether individuals can have agency, but rather what conditions facilitate agency, how relationships and interdependencies affect it, and what outcomes it produces.

Conceptualizing the human body as a target of purposeful effort

Bringing together our conceptualization of the human body and the notion of purposeful efforts to shape bodies, we consider how the body can be understood as a target of such efforts. In the language of social-symbolic work, the targets of work are social-symbolic objects (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019: 24), but the distinctive qualities of the human body make it important to clarify its status as such an "object". Critically, we believe it is important to avoid reproducing a simplistic subject-object Cartesian distinction in which the body is defined as a passive object with pre-determined and immutable properties, one that is confined to an instrumental role, at the beck and call of the "mind" or "self" (Joas, 1996). At the same time, the concept of organizational body work needs to reflect the reality that human bodies (or parts of them) are often constructed as objects in organizational life and worked on as such.

To reconcile these aims, we conceive of the body as sitting on "both sides of the intentional relation" (Gallagher, 1995: 226). On one side, the human body can become the object of intention (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997)—known in our minds, discourse, and interactions as a thing we "remember, imagine, conceptualize, study, love, hate" (Gallagher, 1995: 226). From an organizational body work perspective, human bodies—our own and others—can be constructed as objects in organizational life and thus available as targets for actors to intentionally shape.

On the other side, the human body also acts as a source—rather than a target—of intention. For people in organizations to construct human bodies as targets of purposeful efforts, they need to bring those bodies into awareness and apply their understanding of the human body to them—processes rooted in and shaped by the subjective, lived experience our own bodies. The body makes perception possible and constrains intentional consciousness (Gallagher, 1995;

Pullen & Rhodes, 2014). Through our lived, sensory experience we encounter the conditions that motivate, guide, and sometimes enact our intentions in relation to our bodies and those of others. This can occur slowly and reflexively, as we draw on lifetimes of experience held in our bodies that act as "latent knowledge" constraining and enabling our perceptions and insights (Clark, 1999). Or it can occur spontaneously beyond our control, as when blushing, laughter, or crying—moments in which our bodies act outside of our conscious awareness or intention (Plessner (1941), cited in Joas, 1996)—trigger intentional effort, such as having to explain why we are blushing or escape from a social situation to avoid further embarrassment.

In organizational body work, the body's roles in these two sides of intentionality are inescapably bound, like "the indeterminate surfaces of a Möebius strip" (Slutskaya & De Cock, 2008: 856). Thus, unlike more abstract or inanimate objects, efforts to shape human bodies are always anchored in an empathy grounded in our own subjective bodies: what we believe is necessary, possible, desirable, and avoidable in terms of shaping human bodies begins with our experience in shaping our own.

Body work as organizationally embedded

We conceive of organizational body work as "organizationally embedded" in that it is situated in and shaped by organizational life. To unpack this idea, we discuss what we mean by "organizational" and then turn to the notion of "embeddedness". Although an organization is "commonly understood to be two or more people who interact on an ongoing basis around a shared goal" (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019: 117), we broaden this notion, as contemporary organizational life unfolds in far more heterogeneous settings (Puranam, Alexy, & Reitzig, 2014). Organizations continue to exist in brick-and-mortar formats, with employees going to work in buildings, students attending universities and other schools, and consumers shopping in

physical commercial and retail spaces; organizational life also occurs virtually in the context of digital banks, virtual universities, and online marketplaces (e.g., Task Rabbit) that convene individuals using the internet and algorithms. The idea of "organizational" for our purposes includes participation in processes that might not traditionally have been cast as organizationally embedded: gig work, freelancing, side-hustles, temp workers, volunteers, online platform workers, and contactors all fall under the umbrella of "organizational life". Thus, organizational body work may unfold in an office space in a building, in the home of a remote employee, in a coffee shop meeting between client and freelancer, and in the car of a rideshare worker.

By "embedded" we mean that organizational body work is anchored in and shaped by the cultures, structures, routines, and politics of organizational life (Dacin, Ventresca, & Beal, 1999; Lashitew, Bals, & van Tulder, 2020). These might include organizational beliefs, norms, values, and taken-for-granted assumptions about appropriate behavior, as well as interpersonal networks, social and task relationships, official and unofficial roles, and formal and informal routines (Goldberg, Srivastava, Manian, Monroe, & Potts, 2016; Tsai, 2001). Organizational body work might, for instance, involve organizational members making changes to their physical appearance in keeping with organizational norms, as when stewardesses attempt to satisfy their employer's height and weight requirements (Tyler & Abbott, 1998). The embeddedness of boundary work in organizational life also triggers work on the functionality of human bodies, as when a workgroup establishes norms around exercise to ensure their own health and productivity (Malik, Blake, & Suggs, 2014).

To be clear, "organizationally embedded" means more than body work simply occurring "at work": a person might, for instance, take up jogging prompted by a workplace chat; we would not consider this organizational body work unless the motivation was organizationally

embedded (e.g., fitness interventions for employees (Calderwood et al., 2021)). So, we do not count as organizational body work, for example, personal efforts to shape the body in terms of grooming and hygiene not motivated by an engagement with organizational life.

Concepts adjacent to organizational body work

To clarify the boundaries of organizational body work and its relationship to other concepts, we discuss adjacent concepts that sit at three intersections, each constituted by two of the three key elements of organizational body work: work and organization (organizationally embedded forms of social-symbolic work not targeting the body); body and organization (bodily aspects of organizational life); body and work (non-organizational body work) (see Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 about here

First, concepts adjacent to organizational body work can be found in research on other forms of organizationally embedded social-symbolic work. Research on those forms of work captures purposeful efforts that are organizationally embedded, but do not have as their aim the shaping of bodies. Examples of these forms of social-symbolic work include identity work (e.g., Essers & Benschop, 2009; Watson, 2008) and career work (e.g., Petriglieri, Petriglieri, & Wood, 2018; Tams & Arthur, 2010). Although these other forms of social-symbolic work are distinct from organizational body work, they represent important potential connections because of the intimate role that the human body can play in work on other social-symbolic objects.

Another set of concepts that are adjacent to yet distinct from organizational body work include those that describe other bodily aspects of organizational life. Research on how the attractiveness of job candidates influences raters' hiring decisions, for example, involves a characteristic of the body (i.e., attractiveness) but no direct work on any bodies (though a study of someone preparing their body for an interview would be organizational body work)

(Meriläinen, Tienari, & Valtonen, 2015). Similarly, physicians may use their bodies in multiple ways to coordinate patient care across shift changes without working to shape their own or others' bodies (LeBaron, Christianson, Garrett, & Ilan, 2016).

A third set of concepts adjacent to organizational body work is associated with social-symbolic work targeting the body but which occurs outside of organizational life – work done on bodies that is embedded in families, communities, or societies rather than in organizations. Research on beauty work, for instance, has examined the experience of women joining fitness classes to fulfil their nonwork goals of conforming to societal ideals of attractiveness and appearance (MacNevin, 2003). While the effects of body work outside of organizations may spill over into organizational life, we conceptualize it as distinct from organizational body work because the work is embedded in other contexts.

REVIEW SCOPE AND PROCESS

The diffuse nature of research on organizational body work necessitated a multi-pronged literature search and analysis strategy. Our aim was to identify articles in management and organizational research that: (1) addressed the human body explicitly; (2) described purposeful efforts to shape human bodies (including articles containing descriptions of organizational body work, even if the article was not explicitly focused on it); and (3) described efforts to shape human bodies embedded in organizational contexts. Our search process involved four main steps, which collectively produced a final sample of 210 journal articles that formed the foundation for our review (see Table 2 for a summary of the search process and Table 3 for an overview of our sample). Although the steps in our search process and analyses occurred in a recursive fashion, with each new tranche of articles advancing the analysis, we present our sampling and analysis strategies separately for clarity.

Sampling

Our approach to sampling was influenced by our aim of understanding a phenomenon that has largely been unacknowledged or taken-for-granted in management research (Heaphy, Locke, & Booth, 2016). Thus, we began with an exploratory approach in which we worked to excavate work on the body from this research and gradually developed a more precise and efficient way of "seeing" it in the literature. This process involved a great deal of close reading of papers, coding to identify possible instances of organizational body work, memo-ing about whether specific extracts of text described organizational body work, and team discussions in which we worked systematically through papers to reach agreement on whether they did or did not include descriptions of organizational body work.

The first step in our search process involved conducting a broad search using Web of Science for the keywords bod*, embod*, and corporeal* in the title or abstract of articles published in the 35 most cited management journals and 20 most cited sociology journals based on journal 1-year impact factor. We restricted our search to the past three decades—from 1990 (when Acker's (1990) formative article on the human body in organizations was published) to 2021. Our initial aim was to surface a corpus of literature that could provide a foundational understanding of how the human body had been studied in contemporary management research.

We narrowed the initial sample to include only articles that contained descriptions of organizational body work. Specifically, we excluded articles: (1) where the meaning of bod* was not in relation to human bodies, but to a "body of literature" (e.g., Robbins, Ford, & Tetrick, 2012); (2) that examined human bodies at work, but not purposeful efforts to shape them (e.g., Pullen & Rhodes, 2014); (3) that included descriptions of purposeful efforts to shape bodies, but those efforts were not organizationally embedded (e.g., Tulle, 2007); (4) that described

organizationally embedded, purposeful efforts to shape "social conceptions" of the body rather than specific bodies (e.g., Seale, Cavers, & Dixon-Woods, 2006); and (5) that focused on the effects of body-related phenomena occurring outside of work on life at work (Leavitt et al., 2019).

Second, we expanded our search by identifying two sets of journals to read closely to identify descriptions of organizational body work not picked up by automated search processes. We selected two sets of highly-cited journals: American publications (*Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Journal of Management*, and *Organization Science*) and European publications (*Human Relations*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organization*, and *Organization Studies*). The European journals were important because our initial Web of Science search suggested that much of the research on the body in organizations, and especially on organizational body work, was published in these journals.

We read all articles published in these eight journals between 2016 and 2021, inclusive. Each author was assigned a subset of the journals to read and identify all articles that contained descriptions of organizational body work. We then collectively discussed each identified article to confirm it met the criteria specified in our definition of organizational body work. This process ensured our sample was robust in terms of its fit with our definition and allowed us to develop a more nuanced and shared understanding of what did and did not constitute organizational body work.

The third step in our search process involved a deeper dive into a subset of the journals listed above. In working through the eight journals, we identified three journals that contained the most numerous and compelling examples of organizational body work: *Organization*, *Organization Studies*, and *Human Relations*. We extended our analysis of these three journals

back to the year 2011. For each, we repeated the process of individually identifying potential articles for the sample and collectively confirming the presence of organizational body work in those articles.

Fourth, we extended our search via snowball sampling to include highly cited articles not picked up in the previous search processes, chapters in edited volumes, and books that described organizational body work.

Analysis

To review the articles in our sample, we followed a "synthesis by explanation" approach which involves the systematic assembly, analysis, and reflective interpretation of a body of relevant empirical evidence (Rousseau, Manning, & Denyer, 2008). This approach was well-suited to our goal of surfacing fragmented and unacknowledged descriptions of body work in management research. Instead of relying on a subset of available research relevant to a question (as would be appropriate in a conventional literature review of a mature area of research), a synthesis by explanation approach allowed us to be agnostic about the hierarchy of evidence and consider an array of studies from diverse sources. Ultimately, it enabled us to discern important patterns based on each study's contribution and develop a rich understanding of the phenomenon of interest.

Our analysis initially focused on two main issues: developing our definition of organizational body work and identifying emergent themes in the literature. Developing our definition of organizational body work involved integrating existing social science research on the human body, writing on other forms of social-symbolic work (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019), and empirical evidence from management research. Previous social science research, primarily from sociology (Gimlin, 2002; Kang, 2003; Wolkowitz, 2002), provided important examples and

conceptual discussions of a social conception of the body and body work beyond organizational contexts, which anchored our initial search for descriptions of organizational body work. Writing on other forms of social-symbolic work, including writing on emotion work (Heaphy, 2017; Taylor & Tyler, 2016), identity work (Brown, 2021), and institutional work (Hampel et al., 2017) were instructive with respect to how to identify and describe body work in organizations.

Although previous research was invaluable in providing conceptual foundations for our analysis, the results of searches provided an essential basis for developing our definition of organizational body work. Because organizational body work is often "hidden" or taken-for-granted in management research (Acker, 1990; Shilling, 2003), we were compelled to make these descriptions explicit in the extracts we distilled from each article. We interrogated these extracts as a group to understand what forms of organizational body work produced certain outcomes, for whom, and under what circumstances. An instance of such an extract is from Beane's (2019: 96) study of how trainees in a community of practice learn new techniques and technologies:

> From well before they arrived until they left, residents built surgical skill—**the ability to use one's body to execute appropriate surgical maneuvers effectively**—in a hierarchically ordered fashion. After an initial phase focused on building conceptual knowledge (e.g., anatomy, organ system function), **they moved on to building embodied capability with basic materials and tools (e.g., learning to tie certain kinds of knots).**

As we examined this extract, we formatted as bold portions of the text that resonated with our definition of organizational body work. The extract above illustrates an instance of

organizational actors (surgical trainees) developing their bodies in specific ways to enhance their learning and acquire a novel professional skill (learning how to tie knots).

The composition of our team had unexpected productive effects on our conceptual definition and key themes. Examining research that describes organizational body work brings up aspects of organizational life that are personal, intimate, and unspoken in most academic conversations, including aging, (dis)ability, body dysphoria, sexuality, care giving, self-esteem, physical and mental health, and life experiences related to gender, race, and culture. The relationship we have to our bodies thus shapes what we see—and do not see—in relation to organizational body work, and how we interpret what we see. Such experiences surfaced insights among our research team, diverse in age, gender, and ethnicity. Our collective and differentiated experiences influenced how we "saw" and wrote about organizational body work. These differences also led us to be more reflexive about our positionality as researchers, our analytical choices, and the themes and tensions we surfaced. They also led to a host of personal epiphanies as we became aware of our own taken-for-granted conceptions of the human body and its place in organizational life.

THEMES IN THE STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL BODY WORK

Our analysis surfaced five key themes in descriptions of organizational body work: its forms, triggers, and consequences, the contexts in which it occurs, and the varieties of bodies targeted. Together, these themes suggest a process model (Langley, 2009) that can provide structure to previously diffuse descriptions of organizational body work in the literature. We describe each theme below; for each theme, we highlight the prevalent categories in the literature, recognizing that these do not represent a comprehensive set of possibilities (Figure 2 presents a process model that summarizes the themes and subordinate categories).

Insert Figure 2 about here

Forms of organizational body work

We begin by identifying forms of organizational body work, which we locate at the center of our process model. By forms we mean patterns of physical and mental activities undertaken to maintain or change the materiality, meaning, or functionality of bodies in organizations. Identifying forms of organizational body work is important because it allows us to see both the commonalties and differences across instances of organizational body work. Further, by developing an understanding of the forms that organizational body work takes, we can begin to compare it to other types of social symbolic work, such as identity work or boundary work.

We found that organizational body work fit into three main categories largely based on the relationship between the agent of body work (who engages in the purposeful efforts) and the target (whose body are those efforts intended to shape). These categories are "personal body work" (where the agent and target are the same person); "interpersonal organizational body work" (where an identifiable actor—individual or collective—targets the body or bodies of a second actor); and "systemic organizational body work" (whereby organizational systems operate as the agent of body work that targets an identifiable individual or collective actor).

Personal organizational body work includes forms in which the agent and target are the same person (people working on their own bodies); these were the most prevalent forms of organizational body work in our sample. Two forms of personal organizational body work were especially common: efforts to shape one's bodily appearance and efforts to adapt one's bodily capabilities. Personal organizational body work oriented toward shaping one's appearance included women applying cosmetics prior to a job interview (Nash, Fieldman, Leveque, Pineau, & Hussey, 2006), male stock traders engaging in physical exercise to conform to the ideal "male

trading body" (Riach & Cutcher, 2014: 784), and call center workers modulating the pitch of their voices to convey professionalism (Mirchandani, 2015). A second form of personal organizational body work involved people adapting their bodies in ways that improved its capabilities in relation to performing a job. This included bankers suppressing their experience and display of physical pain so they could keep working (until they burned out) (Michel, 2011), surgeons training their hands to move in ways that were adaptive to using robotic arms to perform surgery (Sergeeva et al., 2020), and female firefighters continuously ingesting birth control pills to halt their menstruation and perform as consistently as their male colleagues (Woodfield, 2016).

Interpersonal organizational body work includes forms in which an organizational actor (individual or collective) works to shape the body or bodies of an individual or group. This category of organizational body work primarily comprised three main forms: caring, disciplining, and training the bodies of others. Caring as a form of interpersonal body work was often found in contexts such as healthcare, where nurses, doctors, and healthcare professionals attend to the needs of sick or frail bodies (Mik-Meyer, 2016), and service labor where workers tend to the adornment and aesthetics of customers' bodies (Kang, 2010; Tyler, 2012). Interpersonal body work was also often associated with disciplining others' bodies, as when a correctional officer sprayed an inmate with mace (DeCelles & Anteby, 2020), rugby players scolded each other for displaying inappropriate emotions (Coupland, 2015), and Chinese luxury hotel managers insisted female employees brush their teeth when their "breath stinks like garlic" (Otis, 2008: 24). The third common form of interpersonal body work involved training the bodies of others, often by shaping their bodily comportment or abilities. This included educational body work, such as massage school instructors teaching their pupils how to use their

bodies to deflect sexual advances by clients (Sullivan, 2014), and military flight instructors training pilots to perform bodily "gestures … which, due to sustained repetition, become almost mechanical" (Bouty & Godé, 2022).

Systemic organizational body work includes forms in which efforts to shape bodies involve creating or transforming organizational systems that in turn affect the bodies of organizational members. Our review surfaced two main forms of systemic organizational body work. First, organizational actors established rules and processes intended to homogenize the appearance and comportment of bodies. This occurred in prisons where rules required inmates "to wear loose-fitting orange clothing" (Rogers, Corley, & Ashforth, 2017: 235), airlines that governed a "flight attendant's figure, and 'dieting'" through rules regarding bodily appearance and demeanor (Tyler & Abbott, 1998: 433), and in sex shops that imposed rules demanding shop workers maintain a "neutral, de-sexualized appearance at work … in order to discourage predatory behavior from customers" (Tyler, 2012: 905). The second form of systemic organizational body work involved systems to protect and nurture human bodies. We observed this form in organizations that provided mindfulness training to reduce workplace stress (Wolever et al., 2012), and recycling firms with regular training on "how to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), a common form of workplace injury" (Stowell & Warren, 2018: 797). In a dramatic example of systemic organizational body work, an Everest mountaineering group established behavioral rules intended to avoid "hypoxia" and maintain the ability of mountaineers' bodies to recover at very high altitudes (Suarez & Montes, 2019: 579).

Triggers of organizational body work

Descriptions of organizational body work included a range of triggers that showed when and why such work occurred. By triggers we mean individual or situational conditions that

motivate or facilitate organizational body work. Delineating triggers enables organizational scholars to more easily notice organizational body work and connect it to other phenomena. While some triggers are tightly tied to the human body, others are rooted in more general conditions of organizational life. We found three main categories of triggers: "bodily changes," which occur when there are real or perceived disruptions of a body's taken-for-granted ability to fulfill its organizational role; "organizational role changes," which occur when changes in organizational roles are associated with different bodily demands; and "commodification opportunities," which occur when there emerge opportunities to create economic value through organizational body work.

Bodily changes that trigger organizational body work involve disruptions in a body's relationship to an organizational role (formal or informal), which motivated actors to protect, restore, or repair bodies. People experience these disruptions either directly through their own body schema (perhaps through feelings of discomfort or pain) or indirectly through signals they observe in the language or behavior of others (van Amsterdam et al., 2022). The bodily changes described in the management literature involved changes in the materiality and the meanings associated with bodies. Material changes in bodies that triggered organizational body work included hearing loss that led employees to lip-read and pretend to hear normally during team meetings to conceal the loss (Baldridge & Kulkarni, 2017) and normal but taboo bodily changes such as menstruation, maternity, and menopause that triggered their suppression and endurance to avoid costs to career advancement (Grandey et al., 2020). A contrasting example of normal change triggering organizational body work involved visibly aging women who had been pushed out of organizations reshaping the meaning of their bodies by emphasizing their graying hair as a signal of experience and gravitas (Meliou & Mallett, 2021).

Organizational role demands act as triggers of organizational body work when fulfilling task requirements or complying with occupational norms requires employees to reshape their own or others' bodies in some way. Healthcare represents a context in which many organizational roles come with demands that triggered organizational body work, as when being on an anesthetic teams required preparing patients for surgery: in the 15 minutes prior to surgery, patients "are connected to various forms of monitoring equipment …, anaesthetized, hooked up to an automatic ventilating machine, … physically arranged for surgery, and then … wheeled into the main operating theatre" (Hindmarsh & Pilnick, 2007: 1398). Sometimes, role demands triggered organizational body work as both compliance and resistance: a consulting organization held a costume party at which all male consultants were expected to dress as James Bond ("ruthlessly masculine and irresistible hero") while female consultants were told to dress as Mrs. Moneypenny (who occupied a "more ambiguous, marginal role in the Bond narrative …, performing low status back-office work" (Hawkins, 2008: 425); some of the female consultants complied to avoid being accused of "wimping out" and "letting the team down", while others refused or altered costumes to avoid being sexualized and diminished (Hawkins, 2008).

Changes in organizational roles—when individuals changed roles or when the bodily demands of roles changed—also triggered organizational body work. We see this when promotions motivated managers to develop a fitness orientation and lead "athletic lifestyles" in order to "energize others", "gain respect", and "impress the pack" (Johansson, Tienari, & Valtonen, 2017: 1141). Changes in the bodily demands of organizational roles can arise as a result of technological shifts, as when the introduction of robotic surgery triggered surgeons to train their bodies to work in new ways (Beane, 2019), and changing occupational requirements,

as when increases in clerical work triggered police officers to display their fitness and hygiene routines to prove their physical superiority (Courpasson & Monties, 2017).

Commodification opportunities involved the emergence of an opportunity to create economic value through organizational body work. Commodification opportunities arose as entrepreneurial opportunities in which actors could extract economic value from their own bodies and as exploitation opportunities in which actors could extract economic value from the bodies of others. Entrepreneurial opportunities involved situations in which actors exercised control over their own bodies, as when female entrepreneurs worked on their physical appearance and demeanor to gain more followers on social media (Heizmann & Liu, 2022). A study of disabled entrepreneurs shows how some turned traumatic accidents into entrepreneurial opportunities when they engaged in organizational body work that transformed the meaning of their disabilities by opening disability-related businesses: Diego, for instance, became a mobility impaired sports coach after an accident left him in a wheelchair (Jammaers & Williams, 2021: 13). Other examples involved more mundane instances of commodification, as when people looking for employment worked on their bodies to fit more closely with stereotypes of the "ideal jobseeker": this included jobseekers with mental health conditions manipulating their medication levels to improve their concentration and appear more employable (Scholz & Ingold, 2021).

Exploitation opportunities arose most commonly when organizations engaged in organizational body work to extract economic value from their employees' bodies. This occurred, for instance, when managers pressured makeup artists to practice applying makeup and post photos of their facial beauty on social media to generate sales and earn higher commission (Hollis, Wright, Smolovic Jones, & Smolovic Jones, 2021). Similarly, hair salons trained staff (both men and women) in matters of dress and bodily comportment to increase their appeal to

affluent clients (Chugh & Hancock, 2009), and luxury hotel managers in China worked to ensure their your women staff displayed “Western” elegance and poise (Otis, 2016).

Entrepreneurial and exploitation opportunities also arose together. In one instance, managers of lap dancing clubs exploited dancers by surveilling and staging women’s bodies as sexual objects available for consumption, while lap dancers used self-tanning products, wore stilettos, and underwent cosmetic surgery to attract clients and earn greater tips (Hales, Riach, & Tyler, 2021). In another instance, in an “LGBT-friendly” organization, “gender/sexuality [were] put to work … in the (re)production of queer value” to the advantage of individual employees like the man whose career benefited from “just being the right kinda gay guy”, and the organization itself which translated the body work of its employees into reputational capital with customers and employees as diverse and inclusive (Burchiellaro, 2021: 771).

Consequences of organizational body work

By consequences, we mean the intended and unintended effects of organizational body work. Identifying consequences is important because they show how organizational body work makes a mark on individuals and organizations. That said, it is important to remember that organizational body work is not defined by its consequences: like other forms of social-symbolic work, organizational body work is defined in terms of its purpose—to shape human bodies—whether that purpose is achieved; moreover, human bodies are shaped by myriad forces and so simply identifying effects on human bodies does not necessarily lead back to organizational body work. In categorizing the consequences of organizational body work, we found they clustered into two broad types: “individual consequences” and “organizational consequences”.

Individual consequences are the intended and unintended effects of organizational body work on individuals, including those who engaged in organizational body work and those

targeted by such work. A major consequence for individuals concerns their health and wellbeing. This can include improved physical and mental health resulting from organizational body work (Côté, 2005; Ganster & Rosen, 2013; Meyerson, 1998), as might be produced by health-focused workplace interventions (Bono et al., 2013). Improved health may also result from organizational body work by individuals: emergency workers who did strength and endurance training, for instance, were better able to cope with "bursts of intense physically demanding work" (McGill et al., 2015: 1682). Improved health and well-being may also be an indirect consequence of organizational members' efforts to shape the meaning of their own bodies, as has been shown in the positive impacts of breastfeeding in the workplace (Grandey et al., 2020) and revealing pregnancy at work (Jones et al., 2016).

On the other hand, organizational body work can also lead to impaired health and well-being. Such negative effects are seen, for instance, in transgender employees who experience exhaustion and depression resulting from their dressing and grooming to conform to binary gender expectations at work (Thanem & Wallenberg, 2016). Some personal body work intended to facilitate productivity also led to negative health consequences: artisans who chose to not use protective eye- or footwear suffered from cuts and bruises that made their work painful (Ranganathan, 2018); employees who curtailed the number of hours they slept tended to experience lowered cognitive functioning, including limited information processing and perception (Barnes, 2012; Mullins, Cortina, Drake, & Dalal, 2014). The negative impacts of organizational body work also arise systemic and interpersonal forms of organizational body work, including companies deploying tracking devices on their employees to boost productivity at the cost of their mental health (Moore, 2018), and the experience of depression and post-

traumatic stress disorder that result from being the target of sexual harassment or violence at work (McDonald, 2012; Parkin & Hearn, 2001).

Individual consequences may also be primarily symbolic—through the effects of organizational body work on the meaning that individuals, groups, and organizations ascribe to human bodies. An important symbolic and often unintended consequence was the stigmatization of individuals' bodies, as experienced by sex workers who experienced different degrees of stigmatization depending on whether their work involved full or partial nudity and physical touch from clients (Toubiana & Ruebottom, 2022). Similarly, the Olympic Committee's formalizing women's bodies as "athletically able but inferior to men" in their codified rules sustained the construction of female athletes' bodies as inferior to men's bodies (Pape, 2020). In contrast, individuals' bodies were sometimes elevated in status as a consequence of organizational body work, as when massage therapists wore medical scrubs to depict medical authority and Santa Claus performers attended to their personal hygiene, accessories, and make-up to authentically embody their character (Hancock, Sullivan, & Tyler, 2015).

Organizational consequences include intended and unintended effects on the organizations in which body work occurs. An important organizational consequence of concerns organizational performance, which stems from the impact of organizational body work on the functionality of the human body, sometimes detracting from that functionality and at other times improving it. When organizational body work detracts from the body's functionality, it can negatively affect organizational performance: this occurred, for instance, when employees worked to regulate their own sleep patterns, often depriving themselves of the sleep necessary to meet job demands thus decreasing organizational performance (Elmholdt, Elmholdt, & Haahr, 2021; Rothbard & Wilk, 2011). Organizational body work in the form of restricting bodily

displays of emotion (e.g., avoiding frowning or smiling) have similarly been linked to decreased organizational performance due to increased employee strain and risk-taking behavior (Côté, 2005; O'Neill & Rothbard, 2017). Organizational body work may also have important positive effects on organizational performance through its impacts on functionality: workplace health interventions, for instance, are shown to potentially result in reduced workplace absences (Calderwood et al., 2021) and increased overall effectiveness (Harden, Peersman, Oliver, Mauthner, & Oakley, 1999).

Another potential organizational consequence of organizational body work stems from its connection with organizational culture (Flores-Pereira, Davel, & Cavedon, 2008). The reproduction of organizational culture through organizational body work is illustrated, for instance, by the maintenance of organizational norms of femininity when managers at Manpower Japan (a temporary work organization) engaged in "grading [female] applicants from 'A' to 'C' on the basis of physical appearance" (Gottfried, 2003: 268), shaping the meaning of applicants' bodies and reproducing the sexualized meaning of women's bodies in the organization's culture. This reproductive effect is also seen when gay men working in retail are told that their voices and physical expressions are "too gay for the store", reinforcing cultural assumptions about the connections between physical appearance, behavior, and sexuality (Einarsdottir, Hoel, & Lewis, 2016: 497). Organizational body work can also transform organizational culture, as when activists in a social movement organization deprived themselves of sleep, which led to the emergence of a culture of self-sacrifice (Elidrissi & Courpasson, 2021).

Contexts of organizational body work

The penultimate theme we identified in management research concerned the contexts in which organizational body work occurred. All social-symbolic work is profoundly situated—the

social, cultural, technological, and geographic contexts in which it occurs shapes the likelihood that actors will engage in work to shape social-symbolic objects, the different forms of work actors might employ, and the outcomes of that work (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019). In our process model of organizational body work, we locate it "above" the main flow of the model: our reading of the descriptions of organizational body work suggests that context affects its triggers, forms, and consequences. While there was great variety in the contexts in which organizational body work occurred, three distinctive contexts predominated.

Service work settings are contexts in which people perform work directly for customers. In such settings, we observed that organizational body work was often oriented toward ensuring that employees' bodies were consistent with the expectations of customers and the values of the employer. This included beauty salons in which employees engaged in aesthetic labor by working on their customers' bodies—doing nails, cutting hair, applying cosmetics—as well as their own bodies as they presented themselves in an aesthetically appealing manner (Sheane, 2012: 145; Kang, 2003). In retail and hospitality settings, employees presented their bodies in aesthetically or sexually pleasing ways (Warhurst & Nickson, 2009), as when young women employees in luxury retail worked to look like fashion models to "exemplify a new, modern version of femininity associated with affluence, luxury, and deferential service" (Hanser, 2005: 582). Some service work settings facilitated organizational body work on the part of both employees and customers, as in gyms that maintained a "keep fit culture" (Sassatelli, 1999: 227) by advertising glamourized bodies in their spaces and inviting clients to invest time and money in efforts to shape their own bodies (Frew & McGillivray, 2005; Craig & Liberti, 2007).

Physically demanding work settings are those in which organizational routines depend on physical strength or skill, such as professional sports (Howe, 2004; Operti, Lampronti, &

Sgourev, 2019) and mining (Bryant & Jaworski, 2011). Organizational body work in these contexts included efforts to shape the functionality of bodies such that they would be capable of performing effectively, as well as attempts to shape the meaning of bodies to be consistent with organizational and broader societal cultures. In professional rugby, for instance, coaches and trainers break down the bodies of athletes into functional systems—"They might be weak in a certain part of their anatomy, it might be they might have weak glutes"—that then require specific work to augment or repair (Coupland, 2015: 799). Along with specific, material changes, coaches work to shift the psychological relationship a player has to their body:

> "We try and make it as horrible as we can and so obviously we have them all being sick and puking up and crying … push them to their limits mentally as well as physically, how much can you tolerate". (Coupland, 2015: 800)

In Amazon distribution warehouses, where order fulfilment involves intense physical labor, the company tracked workers' movements, heart rates, proximity to other employees, body temperature, and skin conductance in order to maximize employee effectiveness and avoid workplace injuries (Moore & Piwek, 2017). In emergency services, both the functionality and the meaning of human bodies were targeted: firefighters, for example, "sometimes roll in ashes and splash mud on themselves (a.k.a., 'the firefighter's make-up kit') to look as if they have been in a fire", a status that earns the trust of colleagues (Pratt, Lepisto, & Dane, 2019).

High compliance settings are those in which the organization exerts significant control over the bodies of organizational members, as in prisons (Wacquant, 2002) or healthcare facilities (Heaphy, 2017; Martin, 2002). Control over bodies might stem from such factors as the high visibility of bodies, the design of workspaces that constrain movement and interaction, extensive rules regarding the presentation, use, or modification of bodies, or the vulnerability of

the bodies in question. Research on prison management, for example, has observed how bodies are processed in prisons both physically and symbolically (Goodman, 2014), as when, "deputies assign inmates to beds in a race-conscious manner. When, for example, a Latino inmate in an open dayroom is released or transferred, the vacated bed is designated for another Latino inmate" (Walker, 2016: 1061). Some organizations ensure compliance by virtue of their ability to enforce rule-following: in the airline industry, for instance, airlines work to achieve a particular image of femininity when training female flight attendants to "use their 'body language' as much as possible: … above all, use your hips, hands, arms and your voice" (Tyler & Hancock, 2001: 31).

Variations in bodies

The final theme that emerged from our review concerned the variations in bodies on which organizational body work was performed. Identifying variation in targeted bodies is important because of the paradoxical tendency for organizational scholars to overlook the human body in general while rendering certain bodies as hypervisible in organizational life (Smith, Watkins, Ladge, & Carlton, 2019). Observing and naming those bodies subject to organizational body work thus helps disrupt the taken-for-grantedness of body work and the vulnerability of certain bodies. In our process model, we locate variations in targeted bodies "under" the main process model to suggest that the specific bodies involved underpin the entire process—affecting how organizational body work is triggered, the forms it takes on, and the consequences that result.

Although a range of bodies were identified across the literature, the most common approach was to focus simply on the bodies of "employees" without specifying a particular body type or characteristics (Driver, 2008; Gonsalves, 2020; Grandey, 2003). There were, however, three variations regularly identified: gendered bodies, racialized bodies, and differently abled

bodies. Although the literature we reviewed tended to treat these variations as separable, we recognize that they intersect in important ways with distinctive outcomes for the people involved (Acker, 2006; Crenshaw, 1989).

Gendered bodies in the context of organizational body work have been ascribed identities, such as woman and man, based on sex-based characteristics or socially defined traits and behaviors considered normal for those identities (Fausto-Sterling, 2020). The prevalence of organizational body work targeting gendered bodies reflects the myriad ways in which organizational life is organized around societal and organizational gender norms (Acker, 1990; Berdahl, Cooper, Glick, Livingston, & Williams, 2018). Organizational body work in relation to gendered bodies was especially visible in traditionally male-dominated settings, as when women academics experienced unwanted touching and sexual harassment in management schools (Fotaki, 2013). Organizational body work targeting gendered bodies was also common in relation to "maternal bodies": female pilots were denied maternity leave and banned from pumping in-flight (Gatrell, Cooper, & Kossek, 2017); and breastfeeding women were pressured to pump in unsanitary conditions, conceal their "leaking", and regulate their lactation cycle to avoid being shamed (Gabriel, Volpone, MacGowan, Butts, & Moran, 2020; Gatrell, 2019). Gendered bodies were also subject to organizational body work in relation to their sexual and gender expression, sometimes horribly as when coworkers sprayed scent near their trans woman coworker, claiming "she smelt of urine, 'like a man's toilet'" (Tyler & Vachhani, 2021: 257); the intersection of gender and sexuality can also lead to more subtle organizational body work, as when transgender employees at call centers altered their voices to sound more male or female so as to sound "sexy" to clients on the phone (David, 2015).

Racialized bodies are bodies that in the context of organizational body work have been ascribed specific racial identities usually based on physical features but also based on behaviors and dress (Ahmed, 2002). These attributions are not neutral: they are invested with meanings that form the basis for social inclusion or exclusion. The racialized bodies in our sample focused overwhelmingly on Black or white bodies. Racialized bodies often became the targets of organizational body work when they occupy a "minority" status or differ from racially coded cultural norms defined by dominant groups. These norms are not always explicit: students from racial-ethnic minority backgrounds, for example, were sanctioned for slouching in class (Ramarajan & Reid, 2020). Organizational body work targeting racialized bodies was not restricted to situations in which the target was of lower status than the agent: personal shoppers scrutinized the bodies of Black clients, brushing and styling a Black woman's hair to make her "look professional" and fit with white beauty norms (Cummins & Blum, 2015). Organizational body work on racialized bodies is often carried out by individuals on themselves as they strive to comply with situationally specific cultural demands: some African-American boys attending a white majority U.S. high school emulated hip-hop stars by dressing in "baggy pants" and participated in athletics to avoid being seen as soft, while other African-American boys adopted "more intellectual" speech patterns to "gain more white friends" and avoid being stereotyped as aggressive and unintelligent (Holland, 2012). Similarly, Black women entrepreneurs worked to make themselves less visibly Black by "whitewashing" themselves—adopting Anglicized names and avoiding posting a picture of themselves online (sometimes posting a photo of a white person instead) to appeal to a wider market (Dy, Marlow, & Martin, 2017).

Differently abled bodies are those interpreted as having distinctive physical capacities that may include visible or invisible disabilities, or extraordinary physical abilities or appearance.

Differently abled bodies often become the targets of organizational body work when they depart from social norms that celebrate or stigmatize their distinctive abilities or disabilities (Williams & Mavin, 2012). Older bodies and disabled bodies are frequently targets of organizational body work: care workers developed "bodily techniques" to help seniors out of bed and shower (even when they resisted) (Yakhlef & Essén, 2013); and wheelchair users were penalized for their absences when they lost working time looking for accessible toilets in the workplace (Jammaers & Zanoni, 2021). An important stream of organizational body work in relation to differently abled bodies involved constructing the meaning of those bodies, often in devalued ways: performers with dwarfism were mocked, stereotyped, and fetishized when asked to wear gnome costumes and dance on top of the bar for a club gig (Jammaers & Ybema, 2022). Differently abled bodies targeted by organizational body work also included highly abled bodies such as Israeli combat soldiers who performed their masculine identities by either "shaving and shining" (controlling body hygiene and hair growth) or opting for "mess and filth" (Kachtan & Wasserman, 2015), and ballet dancers who endured extreme injuries and physical pain from over-rehearsing (Wulff, 2008).

TENSIONS ANIMATING ORGANIZATIONAL BODY WORK

A key observation that emerged from our review was that organizational body work is animated by a set of organizational tensions: these tensions motivate organizational body work, are seen in its enactment, and can arise as its consequence. We argue that these tensions may be an inevitable feature of organizational body work arising from the more general tensions that exist between embodied selves and the social contexts in which they exist. Our bodies are undeniably vessels of the self—our bodies define the corporeal limits to our individual existence and are foundational to how we each develop a sense of self (Bermudez, Eilan, & Marcel, 1998).

And yet human bodies are also undeniably social objects—their materiality, meaning, and functionality are not the province of an individual but continuously negotiated with and among other bodies and myriad other cultural, social, and material objects, structures, and meanings. We identified three specific tensions, each of which is situated in a specific domain of organizational life. (See Figure 3).

Insert Figure 3 about here

Cultural tensions: Between lived experience and cultural conformity

The first tension we observe in organizational body work is anchored in the cultural dynamics of organizational life. The tension between lived experience and cultural conformity is linked to how individuals, groups, and organizations interpret and ascribe meaning to human bodies. This tension emerges from the status of the body as both a private and public object: the assignment of meaning to the human body involves both the private negotiations that individuals engage in within themselves and the social negotiations that hinge on publicly available conceptions of what bodies are and what they ought to be (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2009; Jammaers et al., 2016). This tension becomes salient when the lived experience of individuals diverges from or does not conform with cultural conceptions of human bodies. We are not suggesting that the lived experience of individuals is transcendentally authentic while culture is simply an imposition from the "outside"; instead, we argue that the relationship between them can provoke tensions.

An important site of the tension between lived experience and cultural conformity in organizational body work is the older body (Meliou & Mallett, 2021). The aging of human bodies represents more than a natural, inevitable physiological process because "[a]ge is a significant organizing principle in contemporary society" (Hyde, Burns, Hassard, & Killett,

2014: 1701), such that "[s]ocial practices advantage youth and the 'young body' and cast the older body as different and in some respects unnatural" (Hyde et al., 2014: 1701). Old age is—despite its inevitability—often seen as a problem (Hazan, 1994) and captured at a cultural level in a "master narrative of decline … characterized by loss of meaningful activity, chronic illness and growing dependency" (Hyde et al., 2014: 1701). Of course, this master narrative of decline only captures a portion of the lived experience of aging (at best) and for many older people it fails to capture what is most meaningful about their bodies or their lives. As Gergen and Gergen (2003) document, people construct alternative narratives of aging in a variety of ways, assigning to their later lives an emphasis on the cultivation of knowledge, the acquisition of wealth, and the pursuit of pleasure, all of which may have been previously hindered by mid-life responsibilities.

The tension between the lived experience and cultural expectations of aged bodies animates organizational body work in a range of organizational contexts, including those that facilitate alternatives to the master narrative of decline. A dominant organizational expression of the master narrative, however, has evolved as the accommodation of aged bodies has become an increasingly corporatized domain, particularly in advanced Western economies in which governments and private businesses are tasked with the housing and care of older people. In a study of residential homes in England providing care for older people, Hyde et al. (2014) identify three dynamics that explicitly illustrate the tension for older people between living in ways that privilege their own experience of aging and ways that conform to culturally dominant expectations.

The first two dynamics describe ways in which bureaucratic forms of caring "colonized" the bodies of aging people such that they would conform with the master narrative of decline: the "appropriation of the body", which involved the "the physical and social practices involved in

placing older people in care homes", and the "separation from previous identities", which describes how people leave and lose the anchors that made their previous lives meaningful and "how a range of new subjectivities are produced in the process of becoming a 'resident'". In both cases, the bureaucratic organization is central, but the family and the individual also actively work to transform the body to one "in care". For the older individuals, a common motivation was to relieve others of burden:

> "I can't walk since I've done my hip and I'm terribly deaf and I'm nearly blind so I couldn't manage on my own. No. So they got me in here. My sons chose it. … They were at their wits' end because … they've all got jobs to hold down. Yeah so it's difficult. I was more than ready to be helpful to them, to make it easier for them. (Hilda, a resident for 23 months)" (Hyde et al., 2014: 1706)

In contrast, the third dynamic describes how older people contest their "colonized identities" and thus assert their lived experience. They do this by "challeng[ing] normative concepts of managed physical and mental decline" (Hyde et al., 2014: 1699). This included, "avoiding certain spaces, refusing help from staff, or indicating personal preferences for the care of their bodies" (Hyde et al., 2014: 1710).

The example of aging bodies illustrates the complex relationship between cultural tensions and organizational body work. These tensions can motivate organizational body work by care home employees who work to establish control over the aging bodies and by the older people who work to maintain some degree of control. We also see these tensions pervade the enactment of organizational body work by older people who both conform to cultural expectations by moving into a care home while striving to maintain their lived experience of their body as a source of agency. In aggregate, the organizational body work of families, care

home workers, and older people reproduces the tension between cultural conformity and lived experience of aging bodies, with no individual necessarily sitting comfortably in one position or the other. The example of aging bodies is only illustrative: this cultural tension was visible in relation to a wide range of cultural categories including gender, race, and ability, all of which displayed organizational body work that sat at the intersection of lived experience and cultural conformity (Foster & Wass, 2013; Gatrell, 2013; Grandey et al., 2020; Greene, 2010; Zanoni, Thoelen, & Ybema, 2017).

Health tensions: Between thriving and suffering

A second tension we observe in organizational body work involves human health—both physical and psychological—and its full range of experiences from thriving (Spreitzer & Hwang, 2019; Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005) to suffering (Gill, 2019; Stowell & Warren, 2018). The tension between thriving and suffering in organizational body work springs from the connections that tie people's health and well-being to how bodies are shaped in and by organizations. These links can be relatively direct, such as the effects of physical stresses of manual labor on people's physical health (e.g., Descatha et al., 2012) and the impacts of workplace psychological stress on physical conditions including heart disease and mental illness (Ivancevich, Matteson, & Preston, 1982; Tetrick & Winslow, 2015). Health tensions also become salient through indirect pathways, such as when social relationships impact the bodies' physiological systems, thus impacting the health, recovery and engagement (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008; Hefferon, 2013). Finally, health tensions in organizational body work are also seen in the context of the efforts (described in the previous section) to police or comply with cultural expectations regarding bodily appearance and behavior (Eliason, Dibble, & Robertson, 2011; Grandey et al., 2020).

A powerful illustration of the tension between thriving and suffering in organizational body work comes from Stowell and Warren's (2018) auto-ethnographic study of e-waste recycling in the United Kingdom. Because recycling e-waste is a potentially dangerous and toxic process for the individuals involved, the UK government has established instructions—Best Available Treatment Recovery and Recycling Techniques (BATRRT)—intended to establish and maintain a "safe system of work". These instructions are, we argue, a systemic form of organizational body work: they are intended to influence recycling organizations such that "[w]aste is recovered or disposed of without endangering human health or the environment" (quoted in Stowell & Warren, 2018: 796). The study focuses on a specific recycling firm—RSME—which tries to reinforce government instructions through its own formal guidelines that emphasize the health and safety of its workers: "Our recycling facilities are managed to ensure the highest standards of quality and safe working practices" (RSME Website, quoted in Stowell & Warren, 2018: 798).

Despite these systemic forms of organizational body work focused on health and safety, Stowell and Warren (2018: 796) document the physical suffering of RSME employees in the form of "strenuousness, bleeding and blisters, and stench", as they go about the day-to-day labor. The physical strains associated with e-waste recycling in RSME emerged significantly from the temporal demands on employees:

> "The work is made harder because speed is of the essence, given that RSME's overriding aim is to process as many computers as possible per day, an objective very much bought into by the waste workers, who took pride in their swift work and high throughput of units." (Stowell & Warren, 2018: 796)

The pressure for speed affected, for example, workers' decisions regarding the use of safety equipment: despite being provided with specialized gloves, the "bulky fabric" slowed down the workers and so "very few of the RSME waste workers actually wore their gloves despite being regularly injured" (Stowell & Warren, 2018: 800). The tension between thriving and suffering is thus not so simple as an abusive employer exacting a physical toll on employees. In this case, both the government and the employer engaged in organizational body work explicitly intended to safeguard their physical health; but the competitive and operational demands of the workplace led workers to resist, inevitably leading to their own physical suffering.

The example of handling e-waste shows how the tension between thriving and suffering can motivate organizational body work—by prompting legislation intended to minimize bodily harm to workers. This tension is also visible in the enactment of organizational body work as e-waste workers were torn between caring for their bodies and sacrificing their health for the sake of efficiency. The tension between thriving and suffering also appears as a consequence of organizational body work in this example: the tension spans levels as individual, organizational, and societal actors work to manage the balance between the safety of individuals and the health of the natural environment. Again, this example illustrates the tension between thriving and suffering in organizational body work (c.f., O'Toole & Grey, 2016), but that tension plays out in myriad ways, as seen in relation to employee illnesses (Twigg, Wolkowitz, Cohen, & Nettleton, 2011), global health threats (Bapuji, Patel, Ertug, & Allen, 2020), and workplace injuries (Maitlis, 2022) in ways that may amplify harm or foster growth (Kanov, 2021; Maitlis, 2020).

Political tensions: Between empowerment and control

A third tension that animates organizational body work involves political dynamics in organizations: this tension involves the trade-offs between empowerment and control. The

tension between empowerment and control is rooted in the functionality of human bodies and reflects the question of functionality for whom: whose goals, needs, and interests will be served by the body's capacity and abilities? On one hand, organizational contracts with people typically specify an exchange of effort and ability for wages or other compensation, and thus the body's functionality is explicitly allocated to the realization of organizational interests. Organizations invest considerably in developing workplaces and other technologies that allow the functionality of human bodies to be translated into organizational outcomes, such as the design and manufacture of products, or the provision of services to clients. The control of an employee's body is thus a reasonable and expected accompaniment to such contracts and investments on the part of the organization.

At the same time, maintenance of control by individual organizational members over their own bodies is a matter of both strategic and moral concern. The strategic argument for ensuring that individuals maintain control over their own bodies is rooted in the realization that organizations are limited in their ability to predict the most effective behaviors on the part of employees. Managerial discussions of empowerment have thus emphasized the value of employees' control over their own bodies for organizational stakeholders including customers, suppliers, and owners (Wall, Wood, & Leach, 2004). Empowering organizational members to control their own bodies also has important moral foundations (Kanungo, 1992). Any time individuals have jobs that threaten their health, employees perhaps should be empowered to alter the conditions of their work, but that is not always the case (Michel, 2011), nor do regulations always allow for such empowerment (Kellogg, 2011).

A canonical site of the tension over empowerment and control in organizational life concerns women's bodies. The tension over how women's bodies are controlled in organizations

and by whom was a prominent theme in descriptions of organizational body work that we surfaced in the literature—particularly in the feminist and critical management literatures, as well as in sociology and gender studies.

A powerful and complex illustration of the tension between empowerment and control is provided in Mears' (2015) study of women who engage in unpaid aesthetic labor in VIP "bottle service" nightclubs. The women, as Mears (2015: 1100) describes, "are recruited and mobilized by promoters, who are mostly male brokers hired by VIP clubs" to go to clubs, dance, drink, and especially look beautiful and desirable by dressing well and having fun. The economic value of the women's labor is seen in its effect on the spending habits of wealth men in VIP clubs. Mears (2015: 1105) "observed [wealthy men]spending $200,000 for parades of hundreds of sparkler-lit bottles of champagne brought to their table (known as a "bottle train")". Even less extraordinarily wealthy men, such as "affluent businessmen and tourists … spend in steadier and smaller amounts of $1,000 to $2,000 a night". Whereas the promoters and especially the club owners profited significantly from the women's effect on these men, the women themselves were not paid wages: instead, "they work for free and with a felt sense of obligation to their brokers, who shower them with gifts and perks" (Mears, 2015: 1105).

Mears' study illustrates the complex tension between control and empowerment in organizational body work: whereas bureaucratic organizations are typically associated with top-down managerial control, control and empowerment in the VIP nightclubs revolves around the meanings and relationships established by both the women and the promoters who "manage" them. Mears documents how relational work by the promoters is central to every step of the labor process, including the recruitment, mobilization (getting them to the clubs), performance (ensuring the women behave appropriately at the clubs), and control of how the women look and

dress: friendship, and the possibility of sex and romance, with the promoters, and friendship with the other women act as the primary motivators through which promoters regulate the women, with rejection and exclusion acting as the primary sanctions.

Ironically, that the VIP women are unpaid elevates their social status—at least as perceived within their own circle of friends—in contrast to adjacent roles they construe as closer to sex work: the "bottle girls" who work for the clubs serving drinks and the "table girls", "who are paid about $100 per night to sit at clients' tables" are both "viewed with suspicion for their explicitly paid labor and, hence, their closer proximity to commercial sex" (Mears, 2015: 1116).

Like the other examples we have discussed, Mears' study illustrates the complex relationship between organizational body work and the tension between empowerment and control. In Mears' study, the organizational body work motivated by this tension was complex, with the women working in VIP clubs motivated both to take control of their own bodies and to allow promoters to control their dress, comportment, and food and alcohol consumption. This tension was even experienced by the author in her "go-along ethnographic" research: she described how, "When I tried to leave one dinner after the entrée to make it to another promoter's party, a club owner and former promoter stopped me and publicly scolded my manners" (Mears, 2015: 1113). Finally, the organizational body work observed by Mears (2015) also reproduced the tension between empowerment and control. One way that women were rewarded for their (unpaid) participation in the VIP club life was with shared accommodation with other participating women; this shared living space was a key site of the tension between empowerment and control, as the women both colluded with the promoters to ensure compliance and formed strong bonds with each other that could form the foundation for independent and collective agency. Again, the example of women's bodies highlights some of the dynamics

associated with the tension between empowerment and control in organizational body work (c.f., Fleming & Spicer, 2007), but that tension plays out in multiple ways in organizational life, as seen, for example, in relation to bodily privacy (Bhave, Teo, & Dalal, 2020), diversity and inclusion (Ely, 1995; Rosette, Ponce de Leon, Koval, & Harrison, 2018), and personal safety (Vogus, Sutcliffe, & Weick, 2010).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Our review of organizational body work is intended to overcome its taken-for-granted nature that has left it relatively overlooked status in management research. As scholars, we are attentive to the mind despite its invisibility, while we look right past the body despite its material presence. The attention of management research is caught in a bind that seems to reflect our inability to move past the dualisms of the past: we are enchanted by artificial intelligence, machine learning, and neural networks—starting courses and programs at a breathless pace—while we suffer from bodily strains and stresses born both from the self-induced pace and nature of our labor as well as the invasion of a pandemic that has left millions dead. We are not suggesting abandoning attention to matters of the mind; in fact, we suggest that organizational body work is important in part because of its entanglement with other forms of work, including identity work, emotion work, career work, technology work, boundary work, and institutional work. But without the human body and without efforts to shape the human body, our understanding of organizations and management is vastly incomplete. The human body touches every aspect of organizations and organizing; organizational body work thus represents a fundamentally important and yet terribly overlooked component of organizational life.

To foster scholarship that attends explicitly to organizational body work, this section presents a set of research opportunities that build on our conceptualization of the human body,

the themes we observed in the literature, and tensions we identified (see Figure 4). For each opportunity, we provide an illustrative set of theoretical and empirical research questions.

Insert Figure 4 about here

Connections between organizational body work and work on other objects

The first opportunity for future research stems from the embeddedness of the human body in networks of other objects in organizational life. One way to explore these connections is along the dimensions we used to conceptualize the body—materiality, meaning, functionality. The materiality of the human body is, for instance, intimately connected to the materiality of organizational objects such as production and information technologies (Shaiken, 1984), buildings (Hofbauer, 2000), and all manner of transportation (Featherstone, 2004). Similarly, if we trace organizational body work focused on the meaning of human body, we may discover its connections to work on the meaning of other organizational objects. Consider, for example, the relationship between technology and disability: some research has shown that technologies may empower disabled bodies on the one hand but simultaneously reproduce the distinction between abled and disabled that they try to undo (Moser, 2006). We encourage scholars to surface ambivalence in relationships between organizational body work and other organizational objects to develop boundary conditions for the occurrence of intended and unintended consequences of organizational body work.

Illustrative research questions:

1. How is organizational body work that targets a specific dimension of the human body (i.e., materiality, meaning, functionality) influenced by other forms of social-symbolic work (i.e., identity work, community work) targeting the same dimension?

   For example, in military organizations, how are female officers' efforts to shape their identities as women affected the organization's requirements restrictions on dress, hair, and make-up?

2. How does organizational body work targeting the materiality of human bodies interact with work to shape the materiality of other organizational objects?

   For example, how do efforts to implement robotics in manufacturing interact with work on the part of the organization to support or undermine the health and well-being of shopfloor employees?

3. When does work on the meaning of other objects in organizations trigger organizational body work focused on the meaning of human bodies?

   For example, when would the construction of an occupation as a profession lead occupational members to work to reshape the meaning of their own bodies (e.g., suppressing displayed fatigue)?

Relationships among materiality, meaning, and functionality in organizational body work

A second research opportunity concerns the relationships among the dimensions of organizational body work. We have conceptualized the human body in terms of three distinct dimensions, each highlighting specific facets of embodied experience and potential targets of organizational body work. But we recognize of course that these dimensions do not exist separately either in the phenomenology of the body or in actors' efforts to shape human bodies. Consider the experience of one of the authors of this article who fell ill with long-term COVID-19 and suffered from brain fog and fatigue. This experience triggered her to work on her body's materiality, leading to a shift in meaning: she started prioritizing sleep to accommodate her body's increased need for recovery, which prompted her to shift the meaning of her body from a 'racehorse', urging it to move as quickly as possible, to conceiving of herself as aspiring to have a 'balanced wholesome body'. This personal observation of the benefits of analyzing the materiality, meaning, and functionality of the human body in relation to another can also be seen in studies of medical doctors at universities struggling to get funding to study the effects of orgasms on the immune system (Bancroft, 2008: 176) or employees trying to normalize workplace naps (Baxter & Kroll-Smith, 2005). In both cases, the complex meanings attached to

bodies with respect to sex and rest impedes organizational body work on the materiality and functionality of human bodies.

Illustrative research questions:

1. How do forms of organizational body work focused on different dimensions interact?

   For example, how do efforts to transform schools into "healthier" facilities (e.g., playground gardens, nutritious food and drink, enhanced air filtration) affect the work done by teachers and parents to shape the meaning and health of students' bodies?

2. How are the long-term effects of organizational body work affected by the interaction of different dimensions of the human body?

   For example, how does exposure to different cultural meanings associated with the human body (e.g., through international moves, or working with diverse teams) influence the organizational body work of a manager over time?

3. What are the challenges of engaging in organizational body work that simultaneously targets multiple dimensions of the human body?

   For example, what distinctive challenges are faced by physiotherapists working with clients on physical injuries that also profoundly affect their identities and self-esteem (e.g., facial injuries)?

Pathways of organizational body work

Another research opportunity involves charting and exploring how organizational body work occurs as a process. A process perspective highlights events and streams of action, multiple levels of analysis, and temporality (Cloutier & Langley, 2020). Thus, examining organizational body work as a process may facilitate seeing how different aspects of organizational body work are interdependent and intertwined in potential pathways. A process approach may be valuable for understanding how different elements of organizational body work intersect, and how certain elements become more salient at specific points and for specific reasons. For example, triggers such as those that involve disclosure (e.g., outing someone at work without their consent), physical contact (e.g., workplace safety and harassment) vary in their salience at different times

and different contexts. Similarly, the focus of organizational body work on certain types of bodies (e.g., the ailing and aging, the homeless, those suffering from addiction) may vary widely over time.

Illustrative research questions:

1. How does variation in different elements (e.g., triggers, forms) shape the pathways through which organizational body work unfolds?

   For example, how does the immigration status of an individual (e.g., citizen, visa holder, undocumented, refugee) affect the commodification opportunities that might trigger organizational body work and shape the ensuing process?

2. What factors moderate the links between elements in organizational body work processes?

   For example, how does the availability of new prosthetic technologies (e.g., robotic prostheses, corrective ocular lenses, cerebral implants for people with Parkinson's) shape the likelihood and forms of organizational body work triggered by bodily changes?

3. When and how do forms or outcomes of organizational body work act as triggers of further organizational body work, effecting a recursive loop in the process?

   For example, what types of organizational body work occur in the context of a union drive by a manual labor workforce? How do employers, employees, and union organizers work to shape the bodies of the workforce?

The visibility and invisibility of organizational body work

Another research opportunity tied to organizational body work as a process involves attending to the relative visibility or invisibility of those processes. Organizational body work can be relatively subtle, occurring largely in the background, as when professional musicians go to great lengths to hide painful injuries that could threaten their livelihoods (Maitlis, 2009). At other times, organizational body work is more public and explicit, as when Black women straighten their hair to fit with white norms of professionalism or wear it in Afrocentric styles as a form of resistance (Opie, 2018; Rosette & Dumas, 2007). The potential invisibility of organizational body work may have serious consequences, as when individuals (often women)

conceal efforts to shape their bodies in line with organizational or societal demands, or obscure their work caring for the physical needs of dependent children and elders (Mik-Meyer, 2016)—efforts that may be required by their organizations, families, or communities, but which are inconsistent with the image they need to present to employers. Not only is invisible organizational body work unlikely to be compensated or integrated into organizational life, it is also more difficult to critique or resist (Smith et al., 2019). It is therefore important for scholars to explore how organizational body work becomes "seen", both in day-to-day organizational life and in management research.

Illustrative research questions:

1. How do processes of organizational body work become visible or invisible in organizations?

   For example, how can employees in mines or other remote sites make visible their efforts to maintain their physical health and obtain the resources necessary to do so?

2. Who is affected by the visibility of organizational body work and in what ways?

   For example, why has the study of racialized bodies emphasized the organizational body work of Black and white workers while overlooking other racial groups (e.g., Asian, Latinx)? What might we learn by studying the organizational body work of other ethnic or racial groups, or of biracial and multi-racial employees?

3. How would systems of control and governance interact with invisible personal body work by members to comply with those systems?

   For example, how does the implementation of scheduling and surveillance technologies intended to facilitate just-in-time scheduling affect the organizational body work engaged in by employees who have little control over the unpredictable schedules fostered by such technologies (Misra & Walters, 2022)?

Interactions between tensions in organizational body work

An exciting opportunity for research concerns the interactions that arise among the tensions we identified—conformity-lived experience, suffering-thriving, control-empowerment. The tensions may amplify, diminish, or otherwise influence one another such that responses will

inevitably span tensions and may potentially trigger unintended effects. These dynamics are illustrated by the experiences of pregnant women working from home during Covid-19 (Kessler, 2022). These women report doing less organizational body work because their bellies were not visible to their coworkers, which seemed to have freed them somewhat from cultural expectations about how such pregnancy should affect their work (Little, Hinojosa, & Lynch, 2017). At the same time, the diminished cultural tensions may have led to increased political tensions: the women may have missed out on opportunities to interact with other women experiencing (or having experienced) pregnancy at work and the potential empowerment that accompanies being part of a social group that can share concerns and experiences. A key risk of lessened empowerment in relation to one's body is the potential for increased suffering, as the needs of the organization come to overwhelm those of individuals: as Martin (1990) highlighted, organizations are often able and willing to prioritize organizational interests over those of pregnant women. Diminished visibility may thus lead to decisions with harmful consequences for mothers and their children by shaping the workplace experience of pregnancy, the timing and organization of births, and the post-natal care received by women and babies.

Illustrative research questions:

1. Are there contextual conditions (occupational, organizational, societal) that affect how cultural, health, and political tensions amplify, diminish, or otherwise influence each other?

   For example, how do emerging technologies (e.g., drones, virtual reality headsets) affect the intensity of cultural, health, and political tensions associated with organizational body work?

2. How would specific combinations of tensions (e.g., cultural-political, health-cultural) shape resulting organizational body work?

   For example, how would organizational body work be shaped by the interaction of workplace threats to the health of construction workers and cultural demands for

conformity with traditionally masculine conceptions of bodies as powerful, functional tools?

3. How do organizations establish priorities when the tensions that animate organizational body work are in conflict?

   For example, how would a professional service firm national culture shape the personal body work of pregnant women in service industries?

Exogenous influences on tensions in organizational body work

Another research opportunity involves the potential influence of external events on how cultural, health, and political tensions shape organizational body work. Although our focus has been on bodies embedded in organizational life, the tensions that animate organizational body work are also shaped by external events such as political conflict, disease, climate change, natural disasters, and violence (Clark, 2017; Klüppel, Pierce, & Snyder, 2018; Leigh & Melwani, 2019). The shocks from such events ripple through people's efforts to balance cultural, health, and political tensions in organizational life. Powerful social movements such as #MeToo and Black Lives Matter have reframed organizational conversations about the appropriate levels of control people should have over their own bodies in organizations (Asare, 2021; Greene et al., 2019). These dynamics open up important avenues for research that link organizational body work to its broader societal context.

Illustrative research questions:

1. Through what mechanisms do external events shape the cultural, health, and political tensions in organizational life that animate organizational body work?

   For example, how do legal changes related to working conditions (e.g., Kellogg, 2011) influence personal, interpersonal and organizational forms of organizational body work?

2. How is organizational body used to promote or resist institutional or organizational changes as they relate to the cultural, health, and political tensions?

   For example, how do corporate managers create organizational systems that respond positively to new societal norms around the authentic expression of gender and sexuality

while assuring the interests of other organizational stakeholders, such as customers, are satisfied?

3. How do social change agents use organizational body work to effect changes in societal rules, norms, or beliefs?

   For example, how do environmental activists work on the meaning of their own bodies (e.g., as animals, or as environmental costs) to shift cultural conversations around the natural environment?

The interplay of organizational body work and people's lives outside of work

We encourage scholars to explore how organizational body work transcends the boundaries of work—how it influences and is influenced by life outside of work. The human body does not just exist at work; it travels across boundaries, "keeping score" as it moves through, shapes, and is shaped by a variety of life experiences (Van der Kolk, 2014; Hefferon, 2013). If a workplace cafeteria switches to healthier meals to improve the health of employees and decrease healthcare costs, this may also affect employees' lives outside of work including their personal eating habits and their relationships with their families who may or may not appreciate those new habits. Similarly, organizations that introduce fitness routines to build a shared culture may inadvertently shape the health, functioning, and social relationships of employees outside of work as well (Lepisto, 2021). The influence may also go in the other direction: yoga training outside of work, for instance, can shift how individuals experience and work on their own bodies in their daily work lives (Creary & Locke, 2021). The influence of even the most intimate aspects of daily life can shape organizational body work, as illustrated by recent research on the effects of using menstrual cups on the experience of menstruation at work (Owen, 2022) and on the effects of sexual behavior at home on next-day job engagement (Leavitt et al., 2019).

Illustrative research questions:

1. How does organizational body work shape life outcomes for individuals?

   For example, how does performing stigmatized labor (e.g., janitorial work, garbage collection, sex work) affect employees' identities and relationships to their own bodies?

2. How do individuals' activities outside of work shape organizational body work?

   For example, how do extreme experiences outside of work (such as traumas or joys) that shape the body on multiple levels influence the triggers, forms, and consequences of organizational body work?

3. How do the characteristics of organizational body work shape its effects on individuals' lives outside of work?

   For example, what are the similarities and differences between the effects of organizational body work in response to changes in their own body (e.g., plastic surgery, aging) or in response to a change in work-role demands (e.g., moving to customer-facing role)?

The study of other forms of social-symbolic work

Finally, our exploration of actor's efforts to shape human bodies suggests opportunities for research on other forms of social-symbolic work. A key opportunity arises from the way the body refuses to fit as neatly into a subject/object dichotomy as seems to be the case for other social-symbolic objects (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019). The body is both a focus and source of intentionality, with the boundary between these roles being fluid and constructed in an ongoing way. This complexity prompts us to ask whether other types of social-symbolic work might be enriched by examining how other social-symbolic objects are subjectively known, and how that subjective knowing informs perceptions of them as potential targets of work. In particular, the study of self work (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019: 55) including emotion work and identity work may benefit from a consideration of whether and how the "objects" of study may sit on both sides of the intentional relation (Gallagher, 1995).

Illustrative research questions

1. How does our understanding of organizational body work reshape conceptions and theories of other forms of social-symbolic work?

   For example, how can the idea of organizational body work as a process with multiple pathways inform scholarly research on dirty work?

2. How do people's embodied experience of emotion lead to intentional efforts to shape their emotions or other aspects of the self?

   For example, how does emotion work shift when the emotions are out of the control of an actor, such as when people are overcome by panic, grief or joy and thus the emotions are not subject to control?

3. How do bodily changes disrupt people's work identities and thus prompt identity work?

   For example, when people must wear different attire as a result of job change, how, when and why does that influence the cognitions, emotions, and embodied feelings associated with a professional identity shift?

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The efforts of individuals and collective actors to shape human bodies pervade organizational life and affect the experience of organizational members and the social and economic outcomes that flow from organizations. Our review suggests that the impacts of organizational body work may be particularly visible for individuals and groups who lack material and discursive resources and whose physical differences make them targets of organizational body work—either because those bodies are valuable and thus amenable to economic exploitation or because they are interpreted as problematic and thus reformed or erased. While the significance of organizational body work for people whose identities are more obviously tied to their bodies may not be surprising, our review suggests the ubiquity of organizational body work and its profound impact on a broad population of organizational members. Organizations are settings of endemic efforts to shape human bodies, even if those

efforts are in some instances so mundane and routine that we take them for granted as parts of organizational life not even worth discussing.

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FIGURE 1. CONCEPTS ADJACENT TO ORGANIZATIONAL BODY WORK

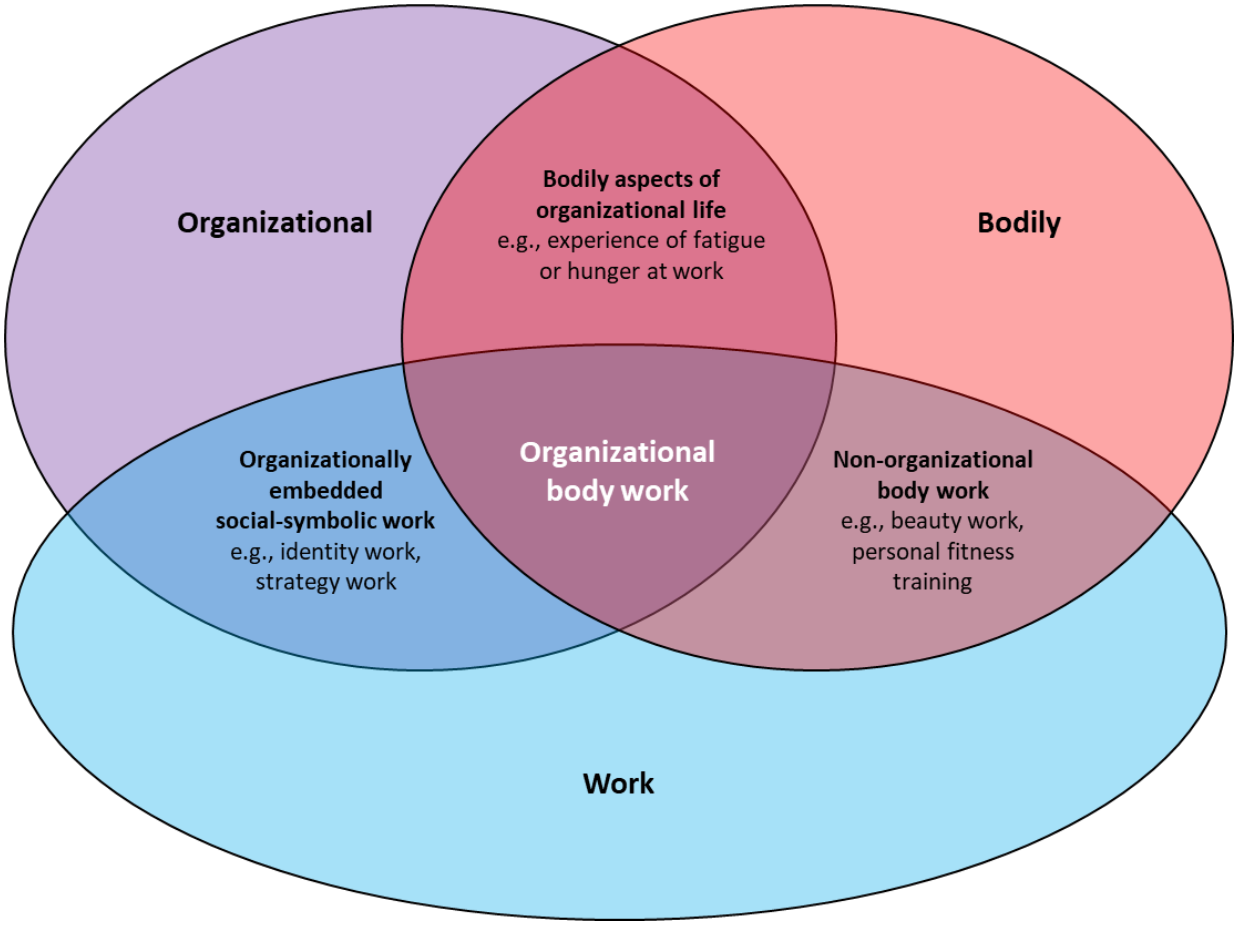

FIGURE 2. A PROCESS MODEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL BODY WORK

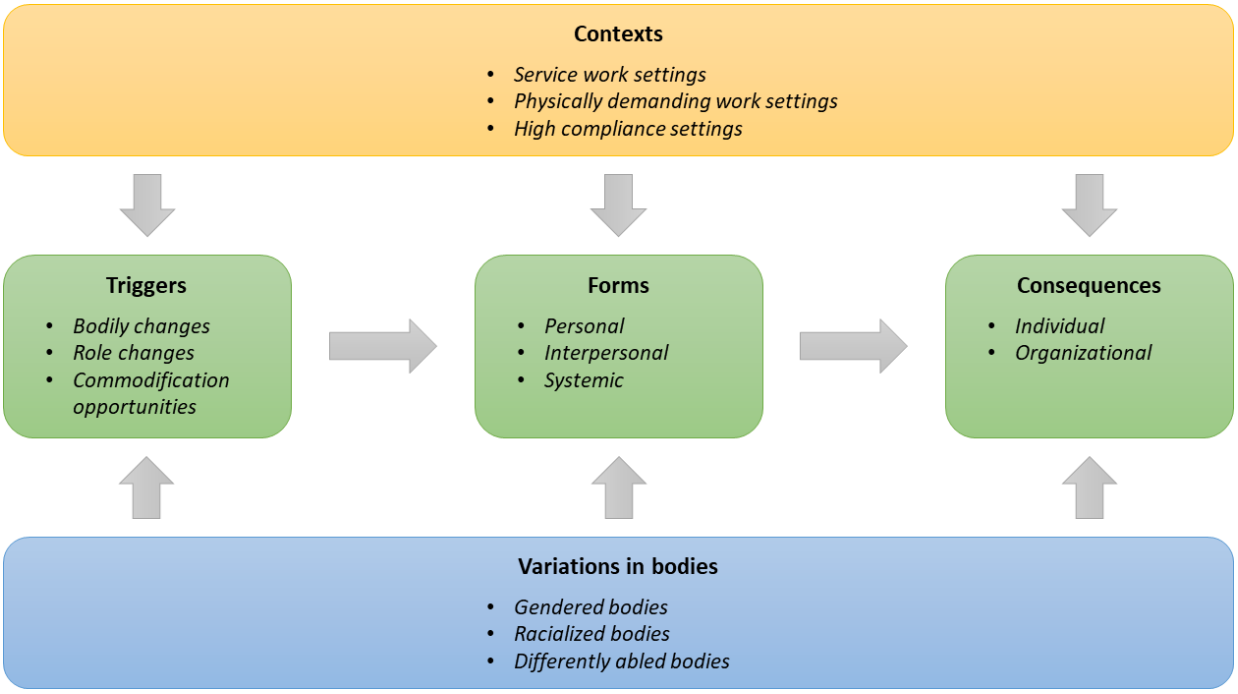

FIGURE 3. TENSIONS ANIMIATING ORGANIZATIONAL BODY WORK

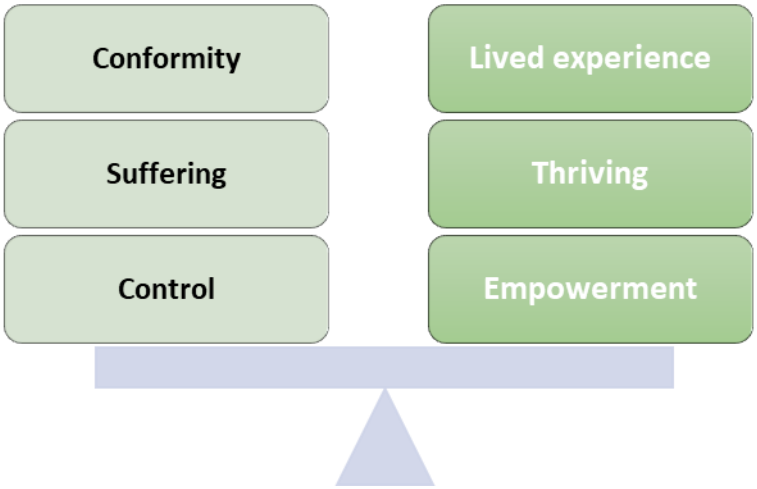

FIGURE 4: RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

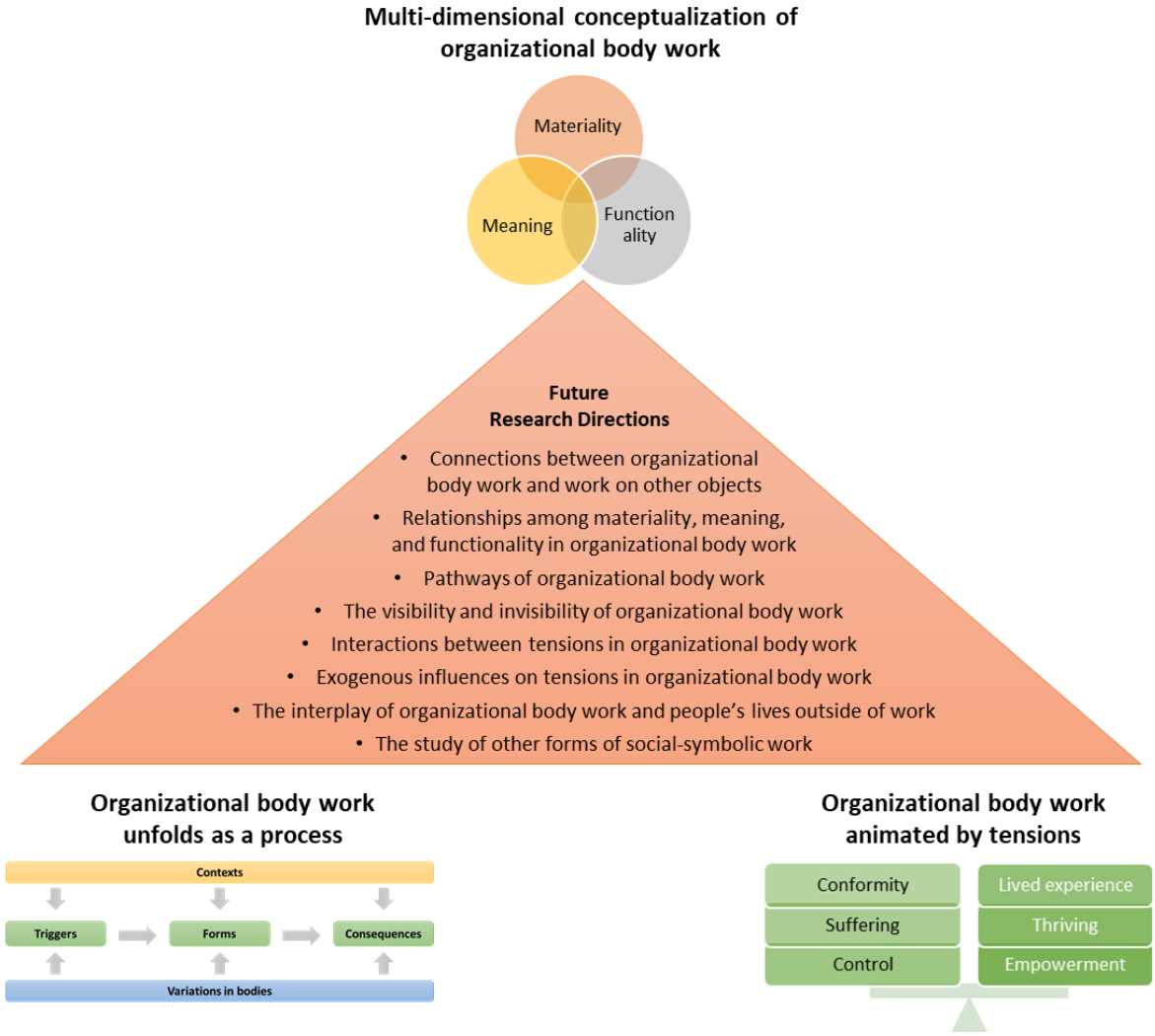

TABLE 1. EXISTING LITERATURE REVIEWS ON THE BODY

Reviews in Management	Topic	Summary and key focus
Heaphy, E. D., & Dutton, J. E. (2008). Positive social interactions and the human body at work: Linking organizations and physiology. *Academy of Management Review*, 137–162.	Physiology	• Role of physiological correlates of positive interactions and its organizational implications. • Focus: Workplace social interactions.
Quinn, R. W., Spreitzer, G. M., & Lam, C. F. (2012). Building a sustainable model of human energy in organizations: Exploring the critical role of resources. *Academy of Management Annals*, 6(1): 337–396.	Human energy	• Role of energy in motivation research and review of literatures related to human energy in a work context. • Focus: Individual-level processes and outcomes.
Nofal, A. M., Nicolaou, N., Symeonidou, N., & Shane, S. (2018). Biology and management: A review, critique, and research agenda. *Journal of Management*, 44(1): 7–31.	Biology	• Role of biology in management with a focus on genetics, physiology, and neuroscience. • Focus: Implications for theory and the practice of management in general.
Akinola, M., Kapadia, C., Lu, J. G., & Mason, M. F.(2019). Incorporating physiology into creativity research and practice: The effects of bodily stress responses on creativity in organizations. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 33(2): 163–184.	Physiology	• Role of physiological mechanisms on the influence of stress on creativity. • Focus: Individual-level mechanisms and effects.
Nault, K. A., Pitesa, M., & Thau, S. (2020). The attractiveness advantage at work: A cross-disciplinary integrative review. *Academy of Management Annals*, 14(2): 1103–1139.	Physical attractive-ness	• Role of physical attractiveness in hiring and promotions. • Focus: Impact of perceptions on organizational decision making.
Calderwood, C., ten Brummelhuis, L. L., Patel, A. S., Watkins, T., Gabriel, A. S., et al. (2021). Employee physical activity: A multidisciplinary integrative review. *Journal of Management*, 47(1): 144–170.	Physical activity	• Role of employee physical activity in job performance. • Focus: Link between physical activity and individual resources.
Reviews in sociology		
Wolkowitz, C.(2006). *Bodies at work*. London, UK: Sage.	The body at work	• Role of the body, embodiment, and body work in paid employment. • Focus: the micro and macro politics of bodies at work.
Gimlin, D. (2007). What is 'body work'? A review of the literature. *Sociology Compass*, 1(1): 353–370.	Work on and with the body	• Review of four meanings of "body work" in sociology. • Focus: how bodies are worked with and on in paid employment.
Mears, A. (2014). Aesthetic labor for the sociologies of work, gender, and beauty. *Sociology Compass*, 8(12): 1330–1343.	Aesthetic labor	• Role of screening, managing, and controlling workers based on physical appearance. • Focus: Impact on distribution of economic and symbolic rewards.

TABLE 2. LITERATURE SEARCH PROCESSES

Source	Aim	Initial Selection Criteria
Step 1		
Systematic search of Web of Science *Time frame:* 1990 through 2021 *Sources:* - 35 most cited management journals - 20 most cited sociology journals	Identify articles that include descriptions of organizational body work in management research and sociology journals (sociology included because the study of body work began in sociology). Narrow down initial sample to include only articles that contained descriptions of organizational body work	Keywords in abstract or title: "bod*", "embod*", and "corporeal*" Articles excluded if they: - did not relate the meaning of bod* to human bodies - examined human bodies at work but not efforts to shape them - included descriptions of purposeful efforts to shape human bodies, but efforts were not organizationally embedded - described efforts to shape "social conceptions" of the body - focused on the effects of body-related phenomena occurring outside of work on life at work
Step 2		
Close reading for instances of organizational body work *Time frame:* 2016 through 2021 *American Journals* - Academy of Management Journal - Administrative Science Quarterly - Journal of Management - Organization Science *European Journals* - Human Relations - Journal of Management Studies - Organization - Organization Studies	Identify articles from highly cited management journals that include descriptions of organizational body work not identified through the keyword searches.	Articles that included descriptions of organizational body work
Step 3		
Deep dive into a subset of journals *Time frame:* 2011 through 2021 *Sources:* - Human Relations - Organization - Organization Studies	Identify articles that include descriptions of organizational body work not identified through the keyword searches.	Articles that included descriptions of organizational body work
Step 4		
Snowball sampling with Google Scholar *Time frame:* 1990 through 2021 *Sources:* - Forward snowball sampling from articles previously identified using "cited by" - In-press articles - Co-authors' collective knowledge of research in the area	Identify highly cited articles that include descriptions of organizational body work not captured in previous steps	

TABLE 3. PUBLICATIONS ON ORGANIZATIONAL BODY WORK BY SOURCE

Source	Count	Source	Count
HUMAN RELATIONS	27	BRITISH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT	1
ORGANIZATION STUDIES	25	BRITISH JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY	1
ORGANIZATION	22	CULTURE AND ORGANIZATION	1
ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE QUARTERLY	14	ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY	1
ORGANIZATION SCIENCE	12	EMPLOYEE RELATIONS	1
WORK EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIETY	12	HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REVIEW	1
BOOKS	11	INT. J. OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	1
ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL	10	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT REVIEWS	1
GENDER & SOCIETY	10	JOURNAL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY	1
JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT	6	JOURNAL OF OCCUPATIONAL REHABILITATION	1
BODY & SOCIETY	4	LEISURE STUDIES	1
SCANDINAVIAN JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT	4	OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SCIENCE	1
ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT REVIEW	3	OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE	1
AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW	3	ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY REVIEW	1
JOURNAL OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY	3	SOCIOLOGY	1
SOCIOLOGY	3	SOCIOLOGY COMPASS	1
ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES	2	SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION	1
AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY	2	SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT JOURNAL	1
ERGONOMICS	2	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT JOURNAL	1
ETHNOGRAPHY	2	THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY	1
GENDER WORK & ORGANIZATION	2	THE SERVICE INDUSTRIES JOURNAL	1
PERSONNEL PSYCHOLOGY	2	LAW & SOCIAL INQUIRY	1
JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES	1	DUKE JOURNAL OF GENDER LAW & POLICY	1
ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT LEARNING & EDUCATION	1	FASHION STUDIES	1
ANNUAL REV. OF ORG. PSYCHOLOGY AND ORG. BEHAVIOR	1	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN PSYCHOLOGY	1
Sum			**209**