Repositório ISCTE-IUL

POWERS OF ROMANCE:

THE LIMINAL CHALLENGES OF MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL INTIMACY[1]

Abstract

Problematic organizational relationships have recently been at the core of highly visible media coverage. Most analyses of sexual relations in organizations have been, however, simplistic, uni-dimensional and have placed insufficient systematic emphasis on the role of governmentality in the social construction of organizational romance. In this paper, we proceed in two theoretical steps. First, we elaborate a typology of organizational romance that covers different manifestations of this nuanced process. We think of these as organizational strategies of governmentality. Second, we elaborate and identify liminal cases that fall into the interstices of the four predominant ways of managing sexual relationships in organizational. We think of these as vases of liquid love and life that evade the border controls of regulation by governmentality. Finally, we relate these issues to debates about the nature of the civilizational process and suggest hypotheses for future research.

Keywords: emotion, organization, sex, romance, liminality.

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[1] The title alludes to PiL's "Flowers of Romance".

INTRODUCTION

Romance in organizations always involves social relations whose construction is shaped by a field of power relations that frame its contours, characterizing it as sexed and gendered. Butler notes that such construction "takes place not only in time, but is itself a temporal process which operates through the reiteration of norms" (Butler 1993: 10). Gender relations are performed within the context of regulatory norms whose performance frames the subject as an object of organization. Irrespective of gender, romantic relations that involve sexuality will occur in organizations. In this paper, the research question that we pose asks how organizations cope with romantic sexual relations as they are expressed within the sphere of organizational formal power relations. By the sphere of organizational formal power relations we mean, simply, the governmentality of sexual relations. The current governmentality literature developed from Foucault's later work (see, for instance, Dean 2010; Miller and Rose 2008). Essentially governmentality means governing through the 'conduct of conduct' of social subjects (Foucault 1982: 220-1; Dean 2010:217). The process of governmentality is linked to the creation of social subjects with certain capacities for action, in this case how organizational members are formally expected to manage romantic sexual relations at work. Governmentality is a form of institutionalized power, one that frames and presupposes the social integration of social actors into an organizational system. Such institutional power frames the capacity to affect organization members in a predictable way that reflects the structuring of a social system premised upon interacting social subjects who have internalized the legitimacy of certain structuration practices. Organization members exist as objects of regulation to be observed, in terms of the norms established, which, in turn, are formally expected to structure the socialization of these organizational subjects – organizational subjects are made members through such practices.

How organizations cope with romantic sexual relations as they are expressed within the sphere of organizational formal power relations is addressed in a number of ways. We start by very briefly analysing why the topic is important. Second, we argue that the sexual relationships of workers, mainly inside but sometimes outside the organization, became relevant matters for control from a managerial perspective. Next, we suggest that typical approaches to the management of romance and sex in the workplace solve some problems while potentially opening up others. We identify four typical ways in which these relations might be managed, recognizing that in liquidly modern times, social practices rarely conform to structural strictures lain down in the past but are constantly evolving. Hence, it is necessary to not only frame ideal types but to explore how behaviour within these might leach and leak into other spaces.

SEX IN MODERN ORGANIZATIONS

Civilizing Sex?

Modern organization, by and large, have increasingly defined relations at work as a sphere of action in which lapsing into gestures or expressions embodying any hint of sexual relations with another are liable to cause both offence and shame, being seen, especially when initiated by an older and more senior person, especially a male towards a female, as an inappropriate use of a position of power. (The recent trials of show business identities for behaviours that they argued were entirely acceptable in the context in which they occurred, or were false accusations, are a case in point, as would be the depiction of sexual mores in the pre-feminist setting of the drama *Mad Men*.) Especially with the growth of modern feminist mores, self-consciousness has increasingly been called for in the form of a quasi-automatic self-discipline and foresight. Such self-discipline became also patently more all-round, more stable, and more differentiated, occurring during the course of

the twentieth century's "loosening of manners and morals" in a "controlled decontrolling of emotional controls" (Elias & Dunning, 1986, p. 44; for a critical discussion, see Newton, 1998). Urges and impulses came to be more effectively subordinated to the requirements of increasingly intricate and differentiated social relationships that lead to and resulted from lengthening chains of social interdependence, Elias concludes.

Elias' thesis in *The Civilizing Process* (2000) identifies a long-term trend in Western European societies toward a restriction and refinement of social behaviour (for discussions of Elias's work and approach, see e.g. Fletcher, 1997; Kilminster, 2007; Mennell, 1998; Smith, 2001; Van Krieken, 1998). Of necessity, such restrictions and refinements find organizational expression, as the trickle-down effect of mimesis of those higher in the stratification order were central to the development of an ingrained disposition (cf. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) to act, think, and feel in ways characterized by greater individuation and more empathy, that are emotionally controlled, curbed, and refined, better capable to postpone immediate gratifications.

While Elias' focus was largely on the organizations of courtly society and the complex rules dictating their etiquette, we wish to look instead at the more mundane world of work. In modern times, for reasons of task interdependence, organizations have required both the physical and organizational proximity of workers. Physical proximity is defined as "the probability of people being in the same location during the same period of time" (Monge & Kirste 1980, p. 110), while organizational proximity is "the extent to which people in an organization share the same physical locations at the same time providing an opportunity or psychological obligation to engage in face-to-face communication" (Monge, Rothman, Eisenberg, Miller & Kirste, 1985, p. 1133). Thus defined, opportunity and psychological obligation for interpersonal relations are outcomes of proximity.

Some of these relations may well be sexual, given animal instincts, and romantic, given the conventions of the historical social formation of modern persons as subjects and objects of love.

Duerr (1988, 1990, 1993, 1997, 2002; also see Burkitt, 1996; Mennell & Goudsblom, 1997) argues that the late Middle Ages were more restrained in their behaviour than the early modern and modern era because people lived so close to each other, such that everyone could see, hear, smell what the other was doing. Certainly, the rise of more privatized domestic space from the early days of industrial capitalism (Engels, 1845/1977) saw an improvement and refinement of domestic proximities such that the conduct of private lives became more feasible – at least for the propertied and middle classes. Organizational work, especially in industrial settings such as factories, remained largely based on proximity and interdependence (although, with the emergence of digitally enabled postmodern organization, these conditions are obviously changing, leading to a concern with the management of Facebook and other social media). Not surprisingly, organizations have been at the forefront of regulating sexual relations. Increasingly, in recent times regulation has taken sexual harassment as its object. In this paper we want to broaden the span of attention of organization theorists to encompass more reciprocally romantic rather than unwanted social relations.

Romance and harassment: false or true twin constructs?

The organizational literature has recently become more alert to the importance of sexual relations and has adopted a number of theoretically nuanced positions between two polarized extremes (Williams, Giuffre & Dellinger, 1999). On one extreme lies the idea that as far as consenting adults are involved, romance and sexual matters involving members of an organization are part of the sphere of private life. Therefore, organizations and their management should not involve themselves in the sexual relations of their employees. The other extreme seeks to regulate these

relations in a prescriptive manner, seeing sexual relations as just another form of organizational relation and just as likely to be subject to incessant regulation and routinization (e.g., Dyonisiou & Tsoukas, 2012).

Sexual attraction may be defined as a feeling of excitement and mystery associated with the projection of desire on to the object of one's affections, which may or may not be reciprocated. If it is, we may speak of romance; if it is not, and it continues to be expressed, we should speak of harassment. Given the general avoidance of research and writing in management and organization theory about sexual relations in organizations (but see Burrell 1984; 1987, and Burrell & Hearn, 1989), a majority of the research has been concerned with one-sided relationships founded on what one party defines as sexual harassment by the other. Hence, a legal-centric and often prohibitionist view of expressions of sexuality has gained prominence, in both theory and practice, largely as a result of a changed climate concerning what was considered politically appropriate in terms of relations between the sexes.

The rise of second-wave feminism and an enhanced concern with organizational relations as gendered power relations have been responsible for changing the definition of sexual relations at work (Fitzgerald, Hulin, Gelfand, & Maglev, 1997; Tamboukou, 2013). Some recent contributions have explored the issue: see, for instance, Appelbaum, Marinescu, Klenin, and Bytautas (2007), Ariani, Ebrahimi, and Saeedi (2011), Bercovici (2007), Buzzanell and D'Ebeau (2013), and Salvaggio and Streich (2011). The association between relations constituted by one party as a workplace attraction and by the other party as sexual harassment has been repeatedly studied to the point that Mainiero and Jones (2012) presented them as "twin constructs". Pierce, Aguinis and Adams (2000, p. 879) observe that "workplace romances, although they are conceptually distinct from sexually harassing behaviour, should be considered in the context of organizational decision making

regarding hostile environment sexual harassment accusations". In line with these previous authors we distinguish between sexual harassment and workplace romance, with the latter being a "consensual relationship between two members of an organization that entails mutual sexual attraction" (Pierce, Karl & Brey, 2012, p. 238).

Increasing opportunities arise for romantic relations at work as workforces become more diverse in terms of gender composition, putting men and women together in the same place for long periods of time (Williams et al., 1999) rather than segmenting the organization on an occupational and gender basis, as in the old manufactories. However, the consequences of workplace romance vary between men and women. For example, research has suggested that women are more likely to be terminated by a company because of a workplace romance, especially if the female has a lower-level job (Gutek, 1985; Mainiero, 1993; Powell, 2001; Quinn, 1977). Riach and Wilson (2007) state that women are most likely to receive unequal treatment in situations of workplace romance and will be treated as the losers, regardless of their position. Indeed, women that enter into relationships in the workplace may be subject to slut shaming, while men will usually face no consequence (Lees, 1993). In these situations, the power relations are clear-cut.

Sex and romance in organizations as unavoidable "earthquakes"

Notwithstanding Weberian assumptions of ideal type rationality, organizations are permeable to everything human, including interpersonal attraction (Ross & Ferris, 1981) and sexual desire (Burrell, 1984). One organizational strategy for dealing with the subject of sexual relations at work is, of course, avoidance, which has largely been the path of organization and management theory, in which sexual relations, other than those defined as harassment, rarely intrude. Early modern organizations were premised on a highly accentuated rationality (Shenhav, 1999; Taylor 1911).

Early analyses of modern organizations were largely based on an avoidance of both gender and sexuality: it hardly featured in early management or organization theory at all.

Romance involving sexual relations has often been viewed from an "accounting" perspective, of gain and loss (Pierce, Byrne & Aguinis, 1996): what do organizations gain or lose when romance unfolds? Such a perspective is relevant but insufficient to understand the nuances of sexual emotions in organizational life. No matter what position an organization adopts about sexual relations between employees, their occurrence is as inevitable, as Westhoff has said, as "earthquakes in California" (quoted in Pierce et al., 1996: 5; see also Gutek, 1985). As of yet, no legislation has sought to ban Californian earthquakes although banning sexual expressions of romance is on the agenda of a number of organizations, most notably in the US (Boyd, 2010). According to Pierce and Aguinis (2009), there may be about 10 million new workplace romances every year in the US, suggesting that control may be Canutic.

Nonetheless, in contemporary times the implicit default position for analysis of and action in regard to sexual relations in organizations appears to be based on negation. Prohibitive power, often after the event, which is somewhat ineffectual, is an organizational norm. Making relations illicit after they have been consummated is not a good strategy. It is conventional for organization and management theorists not to talk about animal instincts at work and more convenient for managers to imagine that such instincts are under control in the workplace. Imagining organizations as cerebral and rational, freed from bodily humanity and intimate relations and neglecting the entanglements of the public and the private is a position that is not tenable in either contemporary theory or practice. Negation, and the implicit strategy of expecting animal instinct to be curbed, is rarely effective, with data clearly showing that a significant number of employees, including managers, have sexual relations with co-workers (Kiser, Coley, Ford & Moore, 2006;

Pearce, 2010; Pierce et al., 2012). As Amalfe observed of romantic sexual relations, if they "are prohibited, the employer doesn't really know what's going on" (in Solomon, 1998, p. 47), because the prohibition will merely create covert behaviour. Having realistic and fair "workplace romance policies" may be a better approach (Karl & Sutton, 2000; Pierce et al., 2012).

It is now well established that organizations are crucibles of emotionality. Managers increasingly are called to manage the emotional side of organizations, including feelings of sexual attraction, as part of the well-known quest for the emotionally intelligent organization (Bennis, Cherniss & Goleman, 2011). There has been a recent conceptual discovery of the role of collective emotions (Seyfert, 2012) and of emotional intelligence in particular ("the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth", Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 5). Researchers and practitioners have, in recent times, increasingly recognized and appreciated the importance of managing emotions in the workplace (e.g., Elfenbein, 2007; Flam, 1993), delimiting specific emotions that are acceptable and productive and those that are not.

Emotional intelligence is increasingly understood in hypostasized terms as an attribute of the person that can be explicitly cultivated (Bennis, Cherniss & Goleman, 2011) rather than being unmanageable. Emotional intelligence is a managerial construct: it is something that it is assumed can be managed and improved by managers. In different contexts it will be more or less managed. Emotions are far more deep-rooted as the object of the civilizing process: our interest in them is in them as socially constructed interior forms of governmentality, such as shame, Elias' classic topic. Sexual relations, after Freud, are a key site of the civilizing process in terms of shifting frontiers of shame. Romance, when it involves sexual relations between consenting adults, is inexorably tied

up with the frontiers of shame: some romances are blessed while others are castigated as shameful, depending on the circumstances.

Employees will act sexually in ways both desired and undesired by the organization. When it comes to personal relationships, they may explore the spaces between the rational-legal categories that organizations create to manage the potential of these relations by "crafting" relations in ways that serve personal rather than organizational agendas. In consequence, organizations may be forced to revise their official views on unofficial topics, not because they want to but because of the "viscosity" of present day social and organizational – and thus sexual – relations. Liquidity of love (Bauman, 2000) comes with a price and it sometimes dissolves traditional norms of rationality and the solid hierarchies that supported rationalizing views of organizations.

As organizations become more projectified (Lundin & Söderholm 1998; Midler, 1995), with employees taking on more responsibility for their work and identity as a series of life projects, there is an increasing burden of subjectification to be born. Such subjectification, predicated on increased personal responsibility and choice, is paralleled in the field of sexual relations, according to Illouz (2012). In a late modern world in which consumer sovereignty has spread almost everywhere, such that choice is the chief virtue, deracination and rootlessness, epitomized by the growth of Internet dating and more fluid domestic arrangements, make face-to-face situations those in which the search for authentic relations is most likely to find expression. Work offers plenty of opportunity for these situations.

Love is "in the air"

Managers may try to prevent personal intimate involvements between employees via formal rulings but they cannot stamp out interpersonal attraction. They can create rules for discouraging

intimate involvement, but as Freud (1964) explained in theory and more than a few people have experienced in practice, intimate involvement has rules of its own (Fein & Schneider, 1995). Alongside the managed organization, embedded deep within its everyday processes there is what Gabriel (1995) terms the "unmanaged organization". Unmanaged organization results from the diversity of perspectives, goals and interests, emerging from locales not controllable from the top. Given that formal regulations and rules are more honoured in the breach and often serve as a means of post hoc regulation, rationalization or insurance, it is important to look beyond the official categories in order to attend to those that are "unmanaged".

The social framing of human sexuality as an organizational issue is powerful and diverse. Post-modern organizations seeking to provide less rigid work environments often invest seriously in the creation of attractive, stimulating, authentizotic workspaces (Kets de Vries, 2001; Rego & Cunha, 2008), leading Kellaway (2002) to argue, with irony, "Love is the air". The trend to create these workspaces increases in direct proportion as the manufacturing hierarchies of the past give way to flatter, empowered, knowledge-based organizations (Rajan & Wulf, 2003). These organizations are increasingly occupied by professionals with higher levels of behavioural discretion and increasing participation in decision-making. The implications of such a high level of organizational stimulation may be both expected and unpredictable. In these stimulating environments, it is likely that "stimulating encounters take place" (Hewlett & Luce, 2006, p.54) as well as unwelcome advances, both characterizing relations in private in the unmanaged organization.

FOUR DIFFERENT WAYS OF MANAGING THE UNMANAGED

We will initially propose a typology of four ideal-type organizational strategies for coping with employee romance. Of course, all typification is an artificial accentuation of aspects that one might

encounter in practice, which poses the question of to what extent are these binary or continuous categories? In terms of the typification, generated as it is by analytic coordinates, the four ideal type approaches provide models of exemplar approaches – in the sense not of an analytical judgment of their moral worth but with respect of their representational capacity. Nonetheless, practice-based "orders of worth" (Boltanski & Thevenot, 2006) lurk behind these representations. They are framed as logically coherent approaches by organizations in practice such that, where the approaches are combined organizations will signify an absence of clear systems of thinking and moral reasoning. Operating at the intersections of different thought systems necessarily creates problematic tensions. Representational clarity inevitably meets practical fuzziness: As pointed out by Clegg and Baumeler (2010), in a world of rapid change and flow, categories and classifications are viscous rather than rigid, a viscosity that has implications for the process dynamics that flow from the application of the categories delineated. Researchers should be aware of the formal rules but need also to look at the liminal spaces in which problematic, nuanced processes incubate, challenging the usual rules and clear-cut categories, precipitating organizational change.

We will open substantive discussion through four categorical ways of seeking to define and corral sexual relations at work. Nonetheless, as we have intimated, we are well aware that borders contain, constrain and create thresholds of organizationally approved behaviour. Thresholds both exclude that which is without as well as inviting that outwith within. Thresholds are liminal objects: The Latin word for threshold, *limen*, is the etymological root of the notion of liminality. Liminality refers to "the condition of being betwixt and between, at the limits of existing social structures and when new structures are emerging" (Tempest, 2007, p. 821). Previous literature has noticed the power of liminality (e.g., liminal places) to challenge the management of emotionality sexual relations in organizations (see, for example, Di Domenico & Fleming, 2009). Current literature has

also noticed the fact that liminality may raise formidable ethical problems for organizations (Cunha, Guimarães-Costa, Rego & Clegg, 2010). In what follows we will discuss six liminal spaces that the institutional, legal, normative and eroticized categorical frameworks previously outlined cannot readily manage in all their implications. In doing so we will be taking cognisance of the ways in which, in liquid modernity, identities are increasingly fluid and less constrained by organizational regulation (Bauman, 2000; Clegg & Baumeler, 2010).

Before we transgress the borders of ideal type iconography by admitting the liquidity of modern organizational life and its tendency not to be shaped by strict governmentality we will first articulate the border control strategies that organizations most typically employ in dealing with unmanaged organization. Some organizations emerge as rational and non-emotional. Others express a legalistic stance. A third approach develops a soft perspective on emotions, while a fourth corresponds to the eroticized organization that accepts that romance is a powerful human energizer – including in organizational settings. Figure 1 depicts a framework that describes the four types of organizations according to how they manage romance. Two major variables explain these organizations: (1) the extent they try to manage romance, and (2) the extent they can manage emotional intelligence.

Figure 1 about here

Institutionally rationalized

This type of organization adopts a very rational approach. The notion of the organization as a social force of rationality resulted from a number of *fin de siècle* ideas developed in Europe as a reaction, in part, to German Romanticism (Greisman, 1976). It received an irresistible push with the contributions of Max Weber (1978) and Sigmund Freud (1964). Freud (Freud, 1964; Gabriel, 1999)

assumed that sexuality would be repressed for the benefit of the civilizing process, albeit that repression would generate civilizational discontents. As Williams et al. (1999, p. 81) put it, "sexuality (id) is counterposed to rationality (ego) and is considered disruptive, antisocial, dangerous, and in need of control". The same authors point out that this opposition is simplistic because every society promotes some forms of sexuality. The idea, however, is clear enough: rationality progresses by overriding undesired emotions and romantic entanglement between organizational members is one such, as Weber makes clear.

The impact of Weber is widely recognized and less controversial than that of Freud. Weberian description represented modern rationality as following the principles of bureaucracy. Organizations were to be seen as progressively institutionalized and depersonalized. Relationships in organizations would increasingly become expressions of formal roles contained in job descriptions and behavioural scripts, rather than forms of human spontaneity. In these increasingly performative organizations, space for expressions of emotion would become limited and prescribed by the deadening routines of rationalization, a matter of some regret for Weber (1946a; 1946b) for whom the emotional intensity of a vocation was so important. Ironically, Weber's rationalized organizations have become widely institutionalized. In organizational practice, the rationalized approach to romantic relations is manifest, for example, in the now abandoned US Armed Forces policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) (Prakash, 2009). In this approach, the organization adopts a policy of ignorance by choice and stays away from personal matters involving sexual and romantic relations.

The Catholic Church is another organization that typically has followed a policy of avoidance. Its very strict rules on sexuality, however, have been unable to impede an embarrassing number of priests from engaging in sexual relationships of various kinds, including heterosexual, homosexual

and paedophile relations, disclosure of which has rocked the church in recent years (Robertson, 2010). Under the rules of the church, priests are expected to be celibate, it being widely acknowledged now, even by the Pope, that many were not and have expressed their sexuality not only in ways disapproved of by church but also common law. The approach of the Roman Catholic authorities to allegations of priestly misconduct has, in the past, been largely to ignore issues of sexual relations. While much of the discussion has focused on criminal acts involving young people, the general response of the Church has been to cover up all cases, often by moving the officer elsewhere and ensuring secrecy concerning misdemeanours against the Church's code rather than being frank to the members in the new congregation. In highly rationalized organizations, such as Churches and Charities, in which avoidance of the topic of sexuality is practiced, sexual relations, whether romantic or not, tend to be defined in terms of normative breaches and will tend to be covered up (see http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/). Organizations that enact highly rationalized approaches adopt strategies that minimize evidence of transgression, assuming saint-like behaviour at best and at worst discretion, on the part of their members. The governmental relations are twofold: transgression is formally abhorred but informally tolerated, thus allowing behaviour in breach of the formal rules. Where breaches become evident then higher authorities in the organization seek to make the problem "go away" by covering up, neglecting to take any action against the abuse of authoritative guidelines (see the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests: http://www.snapaustralia.org/).

Legalistically rationalized organizations

Legalistically rationalized organizations manage workplace romance through a focus on a more legal than an emotional approach to managing romance . As we have identified, the literature often assumes a sexual harassment perspective (e.g., Mainiero & Jones, 2012), adopting a legal-centric

view that, according to some authors, represents the "traditional" approach (Pierce & Aguinis, 2009, p. 447). In such cases, organizations seek to prevent opportunities for sexual relations by creating and enforcing rules, often referred to as "workplace romance policies" (Pierce et al., 2012). The "no-fraternization" policy at Wal-Mart aims to prevent dangerous liaisons. Organizations with such explicit policies may require employees to disclose information about intimate relationships involving potential conflicts of interest (Williams et al., 1999). In such cases, sexual relations are viewed as potentially leading to the creation of what has been called "hostile work environments" (Pearce, 2010). Love (or "cupid") contracts, described as "the office version of a prenup, stating that their mutual affection will not interfere with the workplace", are examples of the legalistic stance that is often adopted (Morgan, 2010). The legalistic paradigm emphasizes the potentially negative aspects of sexual relations, sometimes labelled as the "dangerous liaison" syndrome (Pearce, 2010). These consequences can be internal as well as external, possibly hurting the company's reputation. When these processes involve top executives (as has happened in companies such as Boeing: see Kiser et al., 2006) these consequences receive an undesired amplification, even when no claims about unethical or criminal activities are involved.

In an increasingly legalistic organizational society (Pfeffer, 1994), sexual relations occurring within the context of organization come with a cost. Legalistic approaches represent a minimalist stance. They involve the creation of rules and their application. The limits of rule-based approaches entail that policing sexual relations at work, especially if they are one's own, is a demanding challenge that, if not managed appropriately, may treat employees like "love-sick adolescents" (Solomon, 1998). From a positive organizational perspective, if it is known that the rules have been broken, the organization has legal redress according to the dictates of its codes.

In legalistic organizations, only the innocent can expect to flourish. Organizations that enact legalistic approaches to romance will more probably adopt strategies that insure against transgression rather than prevent it. These organizations discipline employees found to have transgressed the formal rules.

Normatively pluralistic organizations

Normatively pluralistic organizations paradoxically encourage love even where they might frown on sexual relations (Lobel, Quinn, St. Clair, & Warfield, 1994). To do so is not as paradoxical as its sounds: the key point is that the love that is encouraged is celibate, non-specific love, love that eschews sexual relations. Sexual relations should be subordinated to a general pluralistic love for all. Some authors, including the management guru Gary Hamel ("what your company really needs is a lot more luuuuuv"; Hamel [2012, p. 37]) have defended the idea that "love" (as agape[2]) should enter the organizational vocabulary. Alan Mulally, CEO of Ford Motor Company and past CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes, spoke of this concept of love in an interview (Kaipa & Kriger, 2010, p. 112):

> "Maybe the center of it is, whatever religion it is, the center here is (referring to the four circles he drew and what he had written at the intersection of the four circles) 'to love and be loved'. We are here, two professionals who enjoy each other and learn from each other. We have this hour together. We are here, and regardless of what religion you or I ascribe to, right now we are here together. And then we will each be somewhere else. So what is the purpose underneath it all? There are only two reasons I

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[2] Several meanings of the word "love" have been identified: eros (passionate love); ludus (game-playing love); storge (friendship or familial love); pragma (logical, "shopping list" love); mania (possessive, dependent love); and agape (all-giving, selfless love).

can think of: that is to love and to be loved, not necessarily in that order. So what is it

that I am doing? I am loving—and getting people together around the world. I am loving

creating airplanes. I am loving all these different aspects of my life. And then do you

know what happens?"

Mulally assumed that his religious beliefs matter for what he is, how he manages people, as well as

how he values loving and being loved. In the interview, he was asked, "What is the role that

spirituality has had on you? Are you spiritual, or religious?"

"Well, I love Christianity and I love Buddhism. My favorite way to be is to think, 'Life is

good. Be happy now and let it go'. Because life is good, no matter what. I am never

thinking I will be doing something 'happy' at 4 p.m. or tomorrow morning. No matter

how hard it is, I am happy. I am happy because life is good. I am alive, I am loving – and

being loved" (Kaipa & Kriger, 2010, p. 114).

Authors and executives coming from a Catholic background in Latin Southern Europe (Argandoña,

2011; Leite, 2012), as well some of those aligned with the Positive Organizational Scholarship

movement (e.g., Sandelands & Worline, 2011), have stressed the relevance of this kind of love in

organizations. According to these authors, the term "love" captures a number of organizational

processes that refer to the treatment of others and to action based on caring about others beyond

the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). In these conceptions, love is more cerebral and spiritual

than being the expression of any physical desire. There is a romance of love as a feeling of

excitement and mystery associated with the projection of desire on to the object of one's affections

but this desire attaches to others and the organization they comprise in a diffuse and nonspecific

way. There is something almost new age about these attitudes: "All you need is love" seems to be

the mantra. For instance, Sandelands and Worline (2011) present love as the foundation of the human being, a process that is natural and realized in the body but that is also supernatural and metaphysical. Kouzes and Posner (1992, p. 479) argue, "leadership is more than an affair of the head, but fundamentally also one of the heart. Leaders are in love". Often with themselves no doubt but also, it is suggested, with the organization and its members.

For explicitly Christian managers, expressing love for generalized others is a moral obligation (Leite, 2012). For instance, the ethos of the Catholic social justice organization, Caritas, holds that human beings constitute one human family, no matter what are the differences between people and that "loving your neighbour" has global dimensions in an interdependent world. Holding these views would entail consistency with the tradition of managers concerned with the caring treatment of employees under a human relations orientation (Guillén, 1994). "High-road" human resource management approaches follow this emphasis in focusing on the quality of relationships (Gittell, 2006); however, foolish things can happen (Salvaggio & Streich, 2011).

Some organizations are characterized by attempts at charismatic leadership in which the leader become a symbol upon which emotional intensity and energy is projected. In cult organizations, where the leader becomes venerated charismatically, general projections of love can all too readily become demands for sexual gratification: notably, in the case of cultish leader of spiritual organizations (Raine, 2007). Political parties and religious organizations are especially likely to adopt strategies in which the love of the leader is projected and reciprocated. Commercially, the charismatic capitalism of direct selling organizations researched by Biggart (1989) provides ample opportunities for this projection; more recently, the cult of Steve Jobs by brand adherents of Apple is a case in point. The lionization of leadership and excellence cultures by Peters and Waterman (1982) sought to establish such romances of the organization – in the fictional sense – as the norm.

In business-oriented organizations, high-quality and intense relationships between organizational members may be seen as a source of competitive advantage (Dutton, 2003), despite the risks of sexual attraction from long hours in close contact on intense projects. Consideration of the emotional side of the organization is increasingly seen to be of major importance (Ashkanasy, Hartel & Zerbe, 2012; Lord, Klimoski & Kanter, 2002), associated with positive performance implications (Farh, Chien & Tesluk, 2012; Koban & Steven, 2008). The progressive use of culture as a management tool for inclusion through the creation of emotionally rich relationships is seen as source of competitive and relational advantage (Caldwell & Dixon, 2011). Caldwell and Dixon (2011) point out that the projection of love, together with forgiveness and trust, is critical for organization leaders committed to maximizing value for organizations. As such, organizations have been invited to explicitly address the importance of love: "people need to develop some form of love in their relationships within any human organization if the organization is to be effective, attractive to people, and capable of being sustainable or consistent over time" (Argandoña, 2011, p.82). The risk, of course, is that a discourse of love can easily be used for ends other than those commercially sanctioned.

Organizations that enact normatively plural approaches through a stress on a culture of love will more probably adopt strategies in which the boundaries of sexual relations are defined in terms of perfomativity. The strong normative rhetoric of love for all requires members to embrace whatever situational expressions of this general feeling of love are positively endorsed in local contexts. Hence, the governmental relations associated with this type of organization are open to local instantiations that can be glossed as being in accord with the general rules, in a range of behaviour that can stretch from the inspirational through the devotional to the deviant.

Normatively eroticized organizations

We borrow the "eroticized organization" label from Brewis and Linstead (2000). Organizations are "eroticized" not because they stimulate the expression of sexuality ("erotic" organizations would then be a better descriptor) but because they assume that organizational processes are inevitably, as Brewis and Linstead put it, embedded in sexuality. That this is the case should be adopted as a fact of life that should be managed one way or another. Sexual relations will occur. Such organizations assume they are not immune to sexuality and consider it better explicitly to assume it, rather than pretending it is not an organizational issue. It is with the normatively eroticized organization that we meet the Jon Snow's and Felicity Morse's of this world in which organizations are expected to manage workplace romance in emotionally intelligent ways; for instance, some eroticized organizations, such as Ben and Jerry's and Southwest Airlines (Williams et al., 1999), take a positive view of sexual relations involving co-workers. Organizations enacting eroticized approaches adopt strategies in which sexual relations are defined in informal terms of subjective and inter-subjective definition. In Felicity Morse's words, "sex inevitably plays a part in our relationships, no matter where we meet people. To tuck it tidily under the desk just because you are colleagues with that person is both impossible and unhelpful".

There are several possible explanations for organizational realism towards the sexual emotions "embedded" within the workplace. First, some organizations accept the ineluctable fact that their employees are biological creatures and that it is impossible to understand leadership and organization without taking biological facets into account (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). They are interested in agape but also in eros, recognizing that organizations are sexualized (Berebitsky, 2012). In some organizations "the expression of sexuality and 'flirting' are openly encouraged" and "the work environment is considered by a number of employees to be a fruitful place to proposition someone for a romantic 'date'" (Fleming & Spicer, 2004, p.85).

Second, as expressed by Williams et al. (1999, p. 84), "it may be the case that organizations with steeper hierarchies are more restrictive than 'flatter' organizations", the latter being more sensitive to the importance of emotional expression in the workplace. In these organizations, accepting the reality of sexual relationships may be part of new management policies necessary to attract and retain a highly differentiated workforce. One characteristic of many of these organizations is that people work long hours. People may be more willing to work long hours when they participate in networks of interesting and attractive colleagues, and organizations may actually perceive some advantage in this situation of reciprocal stimulation (Hewlett & Luce, 2006; Pierce et al., 1996). A great deal depends on the cultural context: call centers in India, for instance, are regarded as highly eroticized organizations by elders, because they represent a place where young people of both sexes can freely mingle without supervision by relatives (Das, Dharwadkar & Brandes, 2008).

Third, an emotionally tolerant organizational culture may help to create competitive advantage by reducing the burden of organizational control and the costs of vigilance. As a result, in one subset of eroticized organizations, it is often assumed that romantic involvement and sexual relations should not only be tolerated but also actually viewed as positive (e.g., Gittell, 2003; Martin, 2002). Organizationally, where this is the case, as long as there are consenting adults, there are likely to be no problems. The difficulties arise when relationships do not share the same definition of the situation (McHugh, 1968).

In conclusion to this section, we may say that *normatively rationalized organizations* assume that work is a fundamentally unemotional activity in which sexual relations and imagining should play no part. Organizations need not (should not) enter such dangerous terrains. For these organizations, sexual relations are best kept under cover, much as Pandora's box should remain closed, with openings tackled on an ad-hoc basis as they occur, if they do occur. *Legalistically rationalized*

organizations adopt a legal-rational stance. They establish what is acceptable and especially what is not. They are in tune with an increasingly legalistic society, which encourages organizations to become increasingly legally sensitive (Sitkin & Bies, 1994) in a version of the law of requisite variety. *Normatively pluralistic organizations* that encourage love for all assume that they need to manage emotions, including those that are sexual. They thus establish what can be acceptably expressed and what cannot. Celibate love is sanctioned and approved by the organization. Finally, *eroticized organizations* consider that sexual relations within organizational relations are unavoidable and maybe even desirable. They establish romance-friendly policies. They assume that they employ sophisticates and there is no point in treating sophisticates as sinners.

LIMINAL CHALLENGES IN CONTEMPORARY ORGANIZATIONS

Classical conceptions of organizations are overly rationalized, insufficiently attendant to the liquidity of organizational relations that can seep into liminal spaces unmanaged and ungoverned. In the remainder of the section, we discuss six potential problems originating in liminal spaces, betwixt and between the four categorical types discussed in the preceding part: (1) *discrimination*, the liminal space between the legalistic organizing and rational organizing; (2) *instrumental love*, the liminal space between legalistic organizing and the normatively pluralistic organizing; (3) *emotional panopticism*, the liminal space between the soft cultural approach and the eroticized organization; (4) *legal framing of emotions*, the liminal space between the normatively pluralistic organizing and the rational side of organizations; (5) *emotional rationality*, the liminal space between the normatively pluralistic organizing and rational organizing; and finally (6) *rationalized non-work*, the liminal intersecting of eroticized organizing with rational organizing. All those liminal spots raise unique challenges to the governmentality of emotions by various management

governmental strategies, specifically with respect to the case of sexuality and romantic involvement in organizational settings. The liminal spots are graphically depicted in grey in Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2 about here

One reason that managing these relations is more problematic in contemporary times is because these issues emerge with greater frequency in the increasingly liquid world of postmodern organizations, in which identities are increasingly fluid and less constrained by organizational regulation (Bauman, 2000; Clegg & Baumeler, 2010). Existing ways of managing the sexual aspects of organizational relations become more problematic in such increasingly liquid times.

Discrimination

Some organizations have traditionally assumed that the management of anything involving emotions such as sexual relations is not their responsibility. As a result, they adopt "cold" policies that discriminate against non-heterosexual relations. Whereas, in the era of modern organizations, management might have assumed that their organizations were populated only by heterosexually observant individuals, in liquidly modern times a far greater range of sexual identities are openly displayed. As Rumens (2012) observes, lesbian, gay and bisexual employees are often excluded from these discriminant organizational concerns, marginalizing non-heterosexual identities. As a result, claims against the rational approach become more visible, and organizations learn about the limits of this approach through the deviant reactions they create, as sexual minorities consider the discriminating policy insufficiently attuned to their rights. Discrimination charges suggest that the comfortable position of being ignorant about sexuality may be more difficult to sustain than once used to be the case. The awareness of the rights of sexual minorities to be acknowledged raises difficulties for this position.

Discrimination may result from other issues. Whereas modern organizations had relatively clear dress codes for men – suits – those for women were more implicit. They still are: consider the case of Debrahlee Lorenzana at Citigroup. She sued her former employee claiming that the company "fired her for being too sexy": "Dangerously curvy Debrahlee Lorenzana contends her ex-bosses at Citibank in the Chrysler building banned her from wearing sexy outfits or heels deemed 'too distracting' for male coworkers", the *Daily News* reported. "I can't help it that I have curves", Lorenzana replied (Martinez, 2010). Seeking to create organizations that make deviants of those who attract sexual interest may lead to the organization discriminating against "distracting" employees and thus increase litigation. Also, it is relevant to mention that women and men suffer from different treatments when they are involved in a workplace romance or sexuality, even if there is no power difference (Riach & Wilson, 2007).

Instrumental love

The organizational movement from normative regulation to employee seduction (Clegg & Baumeler, 2010) tempts managers to instrumentalize love and emotion. Instrumental love may be especially important for organizations that develop clan-like cultures (Ouchi, 1980). In organizational clans, team leaders are supposed to act as confidants rather than supervisors, and interpersonal care is to be cultivated. Where organizational members are invited to identify with the organization and to receive back, in turn, a number of positive affective outcomes, namely belonging to the "organizational family" or clan, ambivalence is hard to tolerate and dissensus threatens exclusion (Pratt, 2000). In such organizations managers have opportunity to press their claims for love and affection on members of the organizational family that less powerful members may find hard to resist: love and affection are often thought of as correlates of family life and in the context of organizational expressions of such emotions prohibitions on incest hardly apply.

Organizations that claim that their members should consider the company as a safe space for emotional expression urge members to appreciate the value of authenticity as an individual (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and organizational process (Kets de Vries, 2001; Courpasson, 2000). Empirical research on implicit leadership theories (Detert & Edmondson, 2011; also see Neves, 2012) indicates that even when new leaders genuinely invite workers to express their emotions and thus be true to their selves and feelings a lack of trust and "imprinted" representations of leaders may persist. The faking of "authentic" expressions of emotions is a possible byproduct of this approach, encouraging reciprocation of romantic advances that in other organizations might be more easily declined.

Emotional panopticons and synopticons

The intrusion of organizations into the private lives of their members is not new. Utopian communities (Kanter, 1968), political dystopias (Clegg, Cunha & Rego, 2012), and a variety of other types of total institutions have long claimed the right to rule the affective lives of those subject to their authority. When organizations assume that they can regulate not only work-related emotions but also personal matters, they run the risk of creating what employees may regard as emotional panopticons and synopticons. Spaces are constituted in which "private" life is lived under the simultaneously panoptical gaze of organizational elites and the synoptical gaze of the organizational community. These pressures are particularly acute in total institutions, leading to perceptions of over control by the organization (LeBlanc & Barling, 2004). Employees may feel that the sanctity of their sexual relations is at stake and that the organization's surveillance or that of their peers is breaching the line that should separate work and non-work. The model villages of philanthropic capitalism such as Saltaire are cases in point (Minnery, 2012). Such surveillance may be even more

concerning for the LGBT community, which may suffer different consequences from having their "private" life under organization scrutiny.

As organizations move from designs that resemble metaphorical iron cages to more transparent glass cages (Gabriel, 2005), they expose themselves to the risk of demanding transparency on issues that individuals prefer to occlude. Paradoxically, organizational demands for transparency may actually result in employees' attempts to hide from the organizational gaze.

Legal framing

In modern organizations moving into post-modern times of increasing attention to matters of sexual relations, employees past sexual relations at work, particularly as these were embodied in both hierarchical and gender relations, could often subject women to experience sexual harassment from former lovers (Pierce et al., 2000). In the past, many women would have been powerless to do much about these situations and would in all probability have kept quiet and simply accepted the misbehaviour. With the development of legal frameworks defining unwanted sexual behaviour at work from the 1970s onwards, there is increasing recourse to legal action. Situations that once might have been based on the assumption of mutual consent may be reinterpreted or communicated as harassment. Such reinterpretation is especially likely when involving organizational members belonging to different levels in the hierarchy. The ethical challenge raised in the liminal space between legal prescription and social action lies in the possibility of using the law, *ex post*, to reinterpret relationships, sometimes opportunistically: "employees who fear for their jobs are making sexual favouritism complaints as a means to ensuring their job security" (Morgan, 2010, p. 74). In other cases, laws originally created to protect the potential victims of harassment against their aggressors can be used to take revenge when

sexual relations that blossomed in love end in tears. The problem is not in the law itself, but in the space it creates for its use. In the process, those legally represented as being victims may actually become aggressors, in an unexpected twist opened by legal provision. However, while it is certainly possible that victims become aggressors, there is always a danger that this argument is also being used to maintain cover by those challenged. Being a victim exposes one to all manner of allegations, founded or not: others may use legalistic argument to state that the victim is inventing a situation in order to hold on to their jobs. Thus, blaming the victim may also be a consequence of the legal framing of the organization.

Emotional rationality

Modern organizations rationalize emotion and emotionalize reason. For these organizations, basic impulses should be countered by civilizing rules, with some companies acting as vigilant moral guardians of their employees. A dualistic separation of rules and relations, however, is simplistic. Neuroscience research shows that emotions are inseparable from categorical thinking, such that they necessarily are mutually implicated in cognitive processes (Fox, 2012).

In more liquid postmodern organizations, sexual relations are welcome to the extent that they fit the organization's expectations. Expressing emotions, as long as these are the "right" emotions, the right sexuality, those sanctioned and approved, are no longer viewed as an obstacle to decision-making. The message is clear: emotionally intelligent people know how far they can go and what the limits are. Training in emotional intelligence may be complemented with codes of conduct or formal rules regarding sexual relations in order to increase the chances of successful enforcement. This is also particularly puzzling when talking about global practices, considering how culture may play a role in how expressing emotions may be interpreted. For example, while doing business in

China, a Westerner kissed a Chinese college colleague on the cheek and got reprimanded by the Chinese business partner.

Rationalized non-work

When modern organizations adopt formal policies that reach beyond organizational life, they may do so because they see advantage in including employees' social relations under the organization's managerial reach. Personal relationships, namely marriages, are thus "rationalized" and put at the organization's service. When organizations regulate the non-work life of their employees, they assume an instrumental stance over all spheres of life. Managing non-work affective life, in this case, becomes a professional competence. The blurring of the line separating work and non-work raises some ethical issues and is not new. The line was crossed at the inception of modern organizations by Ford's Sociological Department as part of the project of "manufacturing" good workers (Clegg, Courpasson & Phillips, 2006).

More recently, knowledge-based companies, such as the professional services firms studied by Covaleski, Dirsmith, Heian and Samuel (1998), have become far more liquid in their conceptions of organizational relations than Fordist bureaucracies. These authors suggest that, in such organizations, partners in stable sexual relations, such as spouses, may be used as control agents at the service of the organization. As one regional partner and his wife reported, "they could not understand why [some other] members of the firm sought to segregate their professional from their personal lives. For this couple, the professional life *was* the personal life and, for them, this melded existence was 'fun'" (p. 312, italics in the original). In this organization, reports were sent to the partner's spouses at home "to add a little more pressure" (p. 312).

The invasion of non-work spaces by an organization's rationalizing agenda reveals diverse ethical challenges. Some of these have to do with legitimacy and individual rights. When organizations invade spaces that do not belong to the work sphere, such as the so-called third place (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982), they may be activating subtle forms of resistance, marked no longer by visible opposition but by irony (Fleming & Sewell, 2002), cynical compliance (Kjonstad & Willmott, 1995), and false adherence to the organization's project (i.e., good actors instead of good citizens; Bolino, 1999). The management of non-work affective life premised on sexual relations may thus provoke undesired expressions of emotionality.

CONCLUSION

Histories are inscribed with variable effect in the present. Modern organizations, based on classical models, are everywhere, even as their liminal thresholds and unmanaged interstices harbour elements of more liquid and less rigid life and work.

Two competing hypotheses frame research questions that require further address. On the one hand, the appropriate hypothesis might be thought to be one that predicted diminished organizational regulation as a feature of future organizational practice towards expressions of sexually romantic relations. In research terms, one way of interpreting newer organizations that position themselves as "post-modern" environments in which to work and that strive to be anything but bureaucratically modern (Google is the icon: see Garvin, 2013) is to see them as representing ever more lengthy and complex webs of interdependency that require people to take each other into greater consideration in which they have to juggle anxious, disciplined and relaxed, informal behaviour. Thus, hypothetically, the complex and lengthy interdependence chains of

postmodern organization are likely to imply a further shift toward self-regulation, in line with the Eliasian view of the civilizing process (Clegg & Iterson, 2013).

In organizationally loosely coupled networks the social bonds of sexual etiquette and restraint might be expected to loosen to allow eroticized organizations in which liquid love flourishes (Duerr, 1990). Fading spatial and temporal concentration associated with increased digitalization and projectification will lead to less self-regulation, to less "civilized" behaviour. Because many direct work contacts will disappear or occur only electronically, restraints will be expected to weaken. People will likely experience restraint and shame and repugnance less easily as they network, collaborate, and engage in project relations outside of the organization's physical space. Hypothetically, growing concerns about Internet use by employees and attempts to develop corporate rules for online etiquette may be early reactions to a trend toward the loosening of behavioural restraints and skilful expression, in line with Duerr's proximity claim. If these trends occur, then relations will become more febrile, less regulated, more freely expressed.

On the other hand, against the liberalization hypotheses, however, there is the sheer weight of the largely legalistic approaches to regulation that have focused not so much on romance but harassment: from this perspective one would expect there to continue being strong pressures framing prohibition of any relations that could possibly be misconstrued and/or bring the employees of the organization into disrepute. Given that romantic relations are invariably fraught with emotion and ambiguity one would not expect that in organizations in which legalism was well embedded that these relations would be encouraged.

In addition to there being research questions raised by the discussion there are also evident ethical implications. First, ethical problems associated with the management of sexual relations are better

grasped with a process-view that recognizes the liquidity of organizational life rather than being subject to rationalized categorization. Second, where such categorization strives to define thresholds managers should critically and reflexively consider the implications of the rules and regulations they seek to enforce. The way organizations present themselves with regard to the management of sexual relations influences the way employees communicate: more open policies may lead people to communicate more openly; less tolerant cultures may stimulate discretion and a propensity for secrecy (Mano & Gabriel, 2006). Governmentality also becomes much more problematic under conditions of projectification: whose norms of governmentality are to be followed when two or more very different regimes of regulation are represented in the one collaboration, network or project?

Our conclusion is that emotions surrounding sex are combustible and their management generates potentially inflammable problems. Emotions inhere in the realm of the "unmanaged" organization, rich in surprise, subjectivity, and fantasy (Cunha, Clegg & Kamoche, 2006; Gabriel, 2005) and bringing them into management's purview risks stripping excitement and mystery away, revealing only a core of disenchantment. That is certainly the case with romantic sexual relations, which are still an uninvited guest in most theories of organization, even in an age of the emotionally intelligent organization.

We conclude with a final note on the human side of organization (McGregor, 1960). The human element of organizational life has been reduced, very often, to human cognition and volition. We discussed an issue that goes beyond cognitive aspects. Humans are animals whose functioning is influenced by biology (Fox, 2012; Heaphy & Dutton, 2008) as much as by culture, categories in use in specific contexts. Sexuality, in its spiritual and biological implications, is likely to be integral to organizational life. If this is the case, then, rather than seeing it as an expression of irrationality to

be excluded, it should be a fitting subject for analysis. Dealing with all things social seems wiser than assuming that human organizations can be imagined and categorically configured as places fit only for saints, sinners, sophisticates, or innocents.

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Figure 1

Romance, power and organization: An interpretive framework

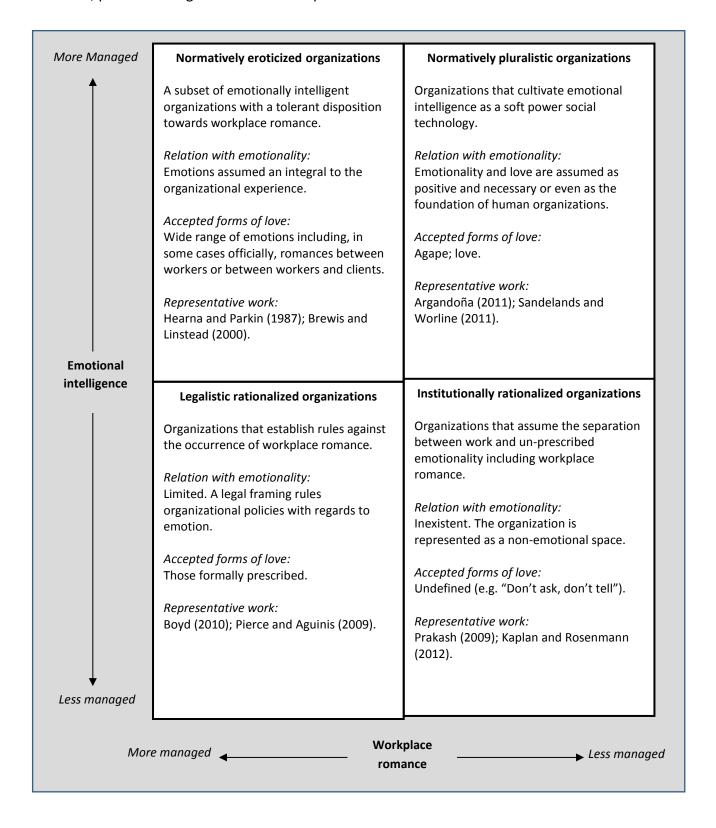|	Normatively eroticized organizations	Normatively pluralistic organizations
More Managed	A subset of emotionally intelligent organizations with a tolerant disposition towards workplace romance. *Relation with emotionality:* Emotions assumed an integral to the organizational experience. *Accepted forms of love:* Wide range of emotions including, in some cases officially, romances between workers or between workers and clients. *Representative work:* Hearna and Parkin (1987); Brewis and Linstead (2000).	Organizations that cultivate emotional intelligence as a soft power social technology. *Relation with emotionality:* Emotionality and love are assumed as positive and necessary or even as the foundation of human organizations. *Accepted forms of love:* Agape; love. *Representative work:* Argandoña (2011); Sandelands and Worline (2011).
Emotional intelligence	**Legalistic rationalized organizations**	**Institutionally rationalized organizations**
	Organizations that establish rules against the occurrence of workplace romance. *Relation with emotionality:* Limited. A legal framing rules organizational policies with regards to emotion. *Accepted forms of love:* Those formally prescribed. *Representative work:* Boyd (2010); Pierce and Aguinis (2009).	Organizations that assume the separation between work and un-prescribed emotionality including workplace romance. *Relation with emotionality:* Inexistent. The organization is represented as a non-emotional space. *Accepted forms of love:* Undefined (e.g. "Don't ask, don't tell"). *Representative work:* Prakash (2009); Kaplan and Rosenmann (2012).
Less managed		

More managed ← **Workplace romance** → Less managed

Figure 2

Liminal problems with the management of romance and their ethical implications

Emotional panopticons and synopticons	Normatively eroticized organizations	Rationalized non-work
Liminal problem: Organizations may develop totalitarian emotional spaces.		*Liminal problem:* Invading non-work life via the extension of managerial technologies.
Ethical implication: Overcontrol, emotional trespassing.		*Ethical implication:* Overcontrol, emotional trespassing, work-life unbalance.

Normatively pluralistic organizations	Emotional rationality	Institutionally rationalized organizations
	Liminal problem: Taking emotion of emotions.	
	Ethical implication: Cultivating detachment and a cynical distance.	
	Legal framing	
	Liminal problem: Using the law illegitimately.	
	Ethical implication: Victims as perpetrators; perpetrators as victims.	

Instrumental love	Legalistically rationalized organizations	Discrimination
Liminal problem: Commercializing sentiment.		*Liminal problem:* Creation of legally supported blind emotional spots.
Ethical implication: Disrespect of individual rights of employees; growing cynicism and destroying ethicality.		*Ethical implication:* Cultivated ignorance; organizational stupidity.

Table 1

Ethical challenges from liminal spaces

	Description	Liminal source	Ethical challenges	Managerial challenges
Rationalizing non-work	The organization includes part of its employees' affective non-work life in its agenda.	Work/non-work life spheres.	Intrusion in non-work life.	Delineating limits to the organization's reach.
Discrimination	The organization excludes some groups or individuals from its policies.	Formal policies and categories/specific cases that contradict policies and categories.	Policies for the majority will potentially create problematic exceptions	How to articulate the general and the particular?
Emotional rationality	The organization aims to overcome the separation between emotion and reason by rationalizing emotion and emotionalizing reason.	Separating the "hot" and "cold" sides of organization.	Threats to authenticity. Forcing expression of emotions in particular directions.	How to create organizations that respect affective lives of their members without "losing control"?
Legal framing	The organization adopts a legal lens to work relations including romance in the workplace.	The legalization of romance opens several questions. Is it acceptable? Can organizations establish	The separation of private and work lives of people becomes problematic.	Using the law without "legalizing" emotion.

		policies rather than broad guidelines?		
Instrumental love	Organizations create cultures for inclusive love and positive relationships.	Cultural management as a process at the crossroads between the formal and the informal, the acceptable and the manipulative.	Cultures of inclusion can become cultures of exclusion; "forcing" the right emotions may lead to lack of authenticity.	Culture management may lead to organizational cynicism and the faking of emotions.
Emotional panopticons	Organizations assume management of part of their workers' private lives.	Work/non-work spheres.	Legitimacy of putting romance in the organization's policies – explicitly.	Organizations may become invasive. They may become totalitarian spaces.