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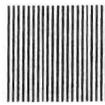
'Mobilizing Masculinities': Women's Experiences of Men at Work

Patricia Yancey Martin
Florida State University, USA

***Abstract.** To understand gender relations in organizations, I use feminist standpoint theory and critical scholarship on men and masculinities to guide an analysis of accounts from six women about their experiences with/interpretations of men at work. Restricting these accounts to those in which women perceived men as not intending harm to themselves or other women, I conclude that men routinely act in concert to 'mobilize masculinities' at work, that men routinely conflate masculinities and work dynamics, that often men are only liminally aware of mobilizing masculinities, and that women experience masculinities mobilization, especially when conflated with work, as harmful. The discussion notes how the gender institution makes men's masculinities mobilizing behavior possible, and shapes women's interpretations and experiences of these behaviors. To subvert gender practices that harm people, I call for more research on how these practices are mobilized and conflated with work relations. **Key words.** conflation; gender as institution; liminality; women's standpoint(s)*



A growing body of research shows that men and women *do* gender in social interaction even as they claim and believe that they act in gender-free ways (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Scott, 1997). According to Ridgeway (1997), people bring their beliefs about gender into social relations with little reflexive thought, thus gendered performance becomes pervasive and taken for granted. In industrialized economies, such as the United States, millions of adults spend long hours in work



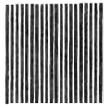
organizations. Men of employment age, more than women, have few other social contexts in which to interact with one another, and few other ways to define their identity than by the (paid) work they do. In this context, it is not surprising that they *do gender* as they *do work* (Acker, 1990, 1992a, 1998).

Collinson and Hearn (1994, 1996) argue that men routinely behave 'as men' in organizations – enacting varying kinds of masculinities – yet, we know little about how, when, or why they do so. While it may seem that there has been an explosion in the 'masculinity' literature, there is a paucity of field research about these dynamics, particularly when it comes to understanding their effects (but see Cockburn, 1991; Gherardi, 1995; Woodward, 1996; Roper, 1996).

There are important reasons for understanding 'masculinities' in organizations. Usually, it is men who have higher status, legitimacy and power, and it is their behaviors that shape the context for everyone in organizations. In the last instance, some scholars observe, the planet's fate may well depend on how men act in certain organizations, such as in the military, science labs, multinational corporations, state bureaucracies and supranational institutions (e.g. Acker, 1998; Connell, 1995). If that is the case, then better understanding of men's masculinity practices in these settings could have very significant effects (cf. Ranson and Reeves, 1996; Witz and Savage, 1992).

In this paper, I explore how men collectively *mobilize masculinity/ies* at work. My goal is to make men's recondite and abstruse, and normally unacknowledged concerted masculinity practices visible and subject to critique (cf. Collinson and Hearn, 1994; see Smith, 1987 for an explanation of *concerted action*). I am concerned with developing insights into the nature of masculinities in the workplace, including the ways men routinely produce them. I define *masculinities* as practices that are represented or interpreted by either actor and/or observer as masculine within a system of gender relations that give them meaning *as gendered 'masculine'*. Behavior can be represented, perceived or interpreted as masculine because of (a) who does it and/or how, (b) the social and/or cultural contexts in which it is done, or (c) how those in power represent it (see Martin, 1998b). Using this definition, I differentiate individual men's 'doings of masculinities' (see Coleman, 1990) from collectivities of men's mobilization of masculinities (see Martin, 1996).

Mobilizing masculinities, the core concept of this analysis, refers to practices wherein two or more men concertedly bring to bear, or bring into play, masculinity/ies. As West and Zimmerman (1987) note, society encourages men and women to 'do gender' nearly continuously, through displaying dress, action, demeanor, posture, hair styles, interests and so on consistent with their gender standpoint. Such gendering practices are routine and pervasive and nearly invisible even to their practitioners (Rogers, 1992; Gherardi, 1994; Davies, 1996; Hearn, 1996; Fletcher, 1999). Yet, when groups of men concertedly behave in ways women colleagues



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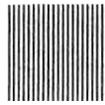
have difficulty framing as 'official work,' sometimes they interpret this behavior as men 'behaving like men' or, to use my term, mobilizing masculinities.

Although this paper studies men's mobilizing behavior that does not intend harm to women, I believe that this concept can be used to study intentionally harmful behavior as well – groups of men who sexualize, make fun of, harass or even rape women. Nonetheless, most of what is considered intentional harm to women by men is culturally disapproved and, as such, made visible and often forbidden by law and policy. What is 'mysterious', and difficult to see or name overtly, is men's behavior not primarily directed toward women, but enacted in the presence of women, that men see as natural or harmless but women often experience as harmful. It is dynamics of this kind that I focus on here. Different from other work on men *by men* about the performance of masculinity in organizations (e.g. Barrett, 1996; Maier and Messerschmidt, 1998; Whitehead, forthcoming, 2001), I approach the issue *from women's standpoint(s)* by analyzing women's experiences of/with men at work and focusing on masculinities that men enact concertedly, or collaboratively, with each other.

Critical work on men and masculinities and feminist standpoint theory guide my analysis. While Connell's (1987, 1995) path-breaking work on masculinities changed how scholars conceptualize gender, it failed to address how organizations serve as sites for men to socially construct themselves (see Collinson and Hearn, 1994, 1996; Kerfoot and Knights, 1993, 1998; Whitehead, 1998). The growing body of research that addresses this omission tends to focus on masculinities from men's standpoint(s) and to ignore women except as objects of men's actions (e.g. Collinson, 1988, 1992). Studies of men *from women's standpoint* are thus rare in organizational research (but see Cockburn, 1983, 1988; Collinson and Collinson, 1996). Yet, approaching the subject in this way can reveal dynamics that are ignored by mainstream organizational theories (and descriptions) and illuminate how gender affects workplaces through interactions and interpretations between sexes.

In this paper, I further emphasize women's standpoints relative to men's behaviors by acknowledging my own gendered standpoint. I, a woman, interpret stories from six other women, thereby taking my standpoint as well as theirs into account. My gender is key to this analytical exercise. I do not assume or require the women (or the men they observed) to agree with my conception or analysis of men's masculinity mobilizing practices, but I did create (cf. Kondo, 1990) the data by asking the women I interviewed to tell me stories of their work experiences and selecting some aspects of this information for my analysis.

Men's behavior is thus analyzed from women's standpoints in two stages – my own and that of the women in my sample – constituting, as such, a double reflexivity. Feminist standpoint theorist Sandra Harding (1991) views such an approach as beneficial rather than problematic,



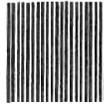
claiming that a more accurate understanding of the social world – an improved *objectivity* – can be developed only by taking *multiple subjective* understandings into account. Although I take only women's subjective interpretations into account in this paper, I compare them in other papers with men's accounts of similar dynamics (e.g. P. Martin, 2001). Still, a man in my place might have elicited different stories from women and/or interpreted them differently. From a standpoint theory perspective, his interpretation would not be any more legitimate than mine would. It would merely increase understanding of the social world where interpretations of gender and gender relations play a central role.

This analytical exercise also sheds light on the institutional dynamics of gender (Connell, 1987; Lorber, 1994; Risman, 1998). Gender, conceptualized as an institution, is a complex and contradictory system of social relations and culture that includes expectations and ideology, social, economic, and political structures, and micro-level statuses, identities and practices, among other elements (Acker, 1992b; Connell, 1997; Smith, 1997; Harding, 1997). Its processual character makes it difficult to observe and study (Ridgeway, 1997; McGinley, 2000; Ridgeway and Correll, 2000). Seeing how 'men behave concertedly as men' in the presence of women in organizations will, I hope, foster insights into how men socially construct masculinity and how masculinity and femininity are interdependent.

Femininity receives little attention from organization scholars (but see Pringle, 1989; Williams, 1989; Gherardi, 1995; Martin, 1998a; Britton, 1999) yet, if masculinities and femininities are relationally constituted (Connell, 1995; Lorber, 1996, 1999), learning about masculinity/ies can offer insights into femininity/ies as well (Hall, 1993a, 1993b; Clawson, 1999; Pierce, 2001). Understanding how men mobilize masculinity/ies at work can inform us about gender's fluid, shifting and plastic character, and the diverse uses that organizations and their members make of gender as a cultural resource (Holstein, 1987; Leidner, 1993; Thorne, 1993; Martin, 1997; Fobes, 2001).

The paper is organized as follows. I first review critical work on men and masculinities and feminist standpoint theory, and explore the potential, but largely unexamined links between the two. The key concepts for my analysis are *masculinities as practice*, *women's standpoint* and *mobilizing masculinities*. Drawing on the literature, I argue that information about men and masculinity practices obtained from women's standpoint can instruct us about how men mobilize masculinities at work in ways that, with no harm intended, nevertheless frequently are harmful to women.

After reviewing the theoretical background of the article, I then provide the stories of six women employees of US multinational corporations. Seeking to analyze these accounts, I identify two sets of masculinity practices that men in these organizations seemed to mobilize, and note



how they conflated masculinity dynamics with work relations or tasks. Finally, I address the utility of studying men from women's standpoints, appraise my analysis of masculinity dynamics, and propose some implications of understanding both masculinities and femininities in work organizations.

Theoretical Background

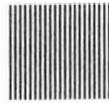
Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities

A growing body of literature seeks to develop a critical perspective on men and masculinities (e.g. Brod, 1987; Brittan, 1989; Morgan, 1992; Kaufman, 1993; Messner, 1993; Coltrane, 1994; Kimmel, 1996; Schwalbe, 1996; Jacques, 1997). Connell's conception of masculinities as 'configurations of practice' (1995: 75) that are culturally and historically specific, exist in multiple forms (hence the term *masculinities*), and are actively contested (via masculinity politics) has set the standard for this debate. His concept of *hegemonic masculinities*, referring to practices that are dominant in a given context and time, has been widely adopted, including by organization gender scholars. This research has focused on power, control, rationality (the suppression of most soft emotions), the sexualization and domination of women, homophobia, violence, aggression, competition, athleticism and so on (e.g. Messner, 1992; Kimmel, 1999; Messerschmidt, 2000).

Critical work on masculinity/ies in organizations has focused on men's identities, relations with each other, status and power concerns, practices used to obtain resources, exercise control, differentiate themselves from each other and from women (and femininity/ies), and related issues (e.g. Padavic, 1991; McIlwee and Robinson, 1992; Wharton and Bird, 1996; Bird, 1996; Calvert and Ramsey, 1996; Lane, 1996; Kerfoot and Whitehead, 1998; Collinson, 1992; Hearn, 1993).

Collinson and Hearn (1994, 1996), working in this vein, identify five masculinities that men enact at work and analyze them relative to men's discourse, identities, and social relations. Others focus on men's obligations and social relations, the meanings they attach to work, how they assert and resist particular masculinities, use work to develop/assert a masculine self, elevate themselves, and subordinate and/or exploit women (e.g. Leidner, 1991; Pierce, 1995; Kerfoot and Knights, 1996). In general, these scholars aim to make men's status and actions *as men* in organizations visible and problematic.

Many scholars have, unfortunately, misused Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinities by conflating ideological hegemony with actual practice, and/or treating hegemonic masculinities as a 'type' of masculinity/ies (e.g. violent, competitive), rather than a depiction of whatever type is culturally dominant (see Martin, 1998a; Addleston and



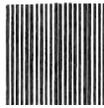
Stirrat, 1996 exemplify this mistake). In this paper, I argue that, irrespective of the masculinities that are *ideologically hegemonic* in an organization or society, men practice multiple 'types' of masculinity, some of which are not hegemonic. If we *assume* that (only) hegemonic forms are practiced, we may fail to discover that a given group of men practice a range of masculinities. As will be illustrated later, the accounts that I analyze suggest that men at work practice multiple masculinities concurrently, including a form that I call *affiliating*, and that is seldom acknowledged in the literature on organizations or on men and masculinities.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Feminist standpoint theory refers to a system of social relations that organizes experience and consciousness, and offers a way to link women's experience with men's masculinities (Hartsock, 1998; Harding, 1991, 1997; Haraway, 1988). A *standpoint* is a social location from which one observes, relates to, and socially constructs, interprets and enacts, oneself and others. A woman's standpoint is represented by the gender location *woman* within the gender institution that posits woman and the feminine in opposition to the gender location of *man* and the masculine (see Harding, 1991, 1997). Few studies of masculinity practices in organizations address women's experiences of men. In the present study, I argue that studying men solely from men's perspectives cannot readily capture certain masculinity/ies practices of which men are aware only liminally while, as I explain below, studying men from women's standpoint can.

Feminist standpoint theory indicates that women's observations of men can provide evidence that would otherwise be lost. It suggests that a view of men from women's standpoint(s) provides information that cannot be obtained from inside men's standpoint(s). Men – especially white, able-bodied, heterosexual, 'northern,' professionally and organizationally advantaged men – rarely see gender as a source of privilege, yet women often experience men's gender as an advantage and their own as a handicap.

To be clear, women differ extensively among themselves (as do men) on social class, race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, appearance and health, among other ways, and I do not propose a universal standpoint with identical implications for all women. I do suggest, however, that women collectively share commonalities such as a lower gender status relative to men and negative stereotypes about female traits, skills, and capacities (see Martin et al., forthcoming, 2002). Status affects access to material and symbolic resources, including power, and negative stereotypes affect how women are viewed and treated in social interaction (Ridgeway and Correll, 2000; Reskin, 2000; Risman, 1998), albeit the effects of these interactions are shaped by many other contextual factors.



Standpoint Theory as Corrective

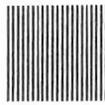
One premise of feminist standpoint theory is that accounts of the less powerful offer knowledge of the more powerful. A standpoint specifies a relationship to power because it is embedded in relational systems that are hierarchical, with different (e.g. gender) positions having different degrees of power. Attending to one's standpoint requires attending to others'; thus to view men from women's standpoint(s) requires one to address men's standpoint(s) as well.

A focus on women's standpoint(s) lets me explore women's experiences of men from their *accounts* (or subjective justifications), mediated by their perceptions, interpretations and reactions to men at work (Harding, 1991; Rogers, 1992; Chase, 1995). Different locations 'tend to generate distinctive accounts of nature and social relations' (Harding, 1997: 384), thus accounts of the less powerful offer otherwise unavailable knowledge of the more powerful, including clues about how power works. Accounts from the less powerful can make visible the differences between (women's) experience and the claims about workplace behavior of mainstream theories of organizations and management. They can also correct for bias in critical work on men and masculinities by providing knowledge about men that *cannot* be provided from men's perspectives alone.

Linking Micro Processes to Macro Structures

Feminist standpoint theory helps me link women's (and men's) micro (interpersonal) experiences to the macro (systemic) structures and ideology of the gender institution because it draws attention to experience in the form of material practices. The micro activities of everyday life are a starting point for understanding the *macro relations of ruling* in society (Smith, 1987). Men and women are gendered at work because they participate in the society's gender system that includes formal organizations. However, many women experience a disjuncture between dominant theoretical descriptions of organizations, that are idealized and abstracted, and their everyday 'lived' experience in organizations. They therefore have 'bifurcated knowledge' of the abstract world of ideas that men have created and the material world that they (women) create in daily practice. Women's simultaneous locations in both worlds mean that they have some knowledge that men lack and from these locations they can observe and offer insights about men's masculinity practices.

Given simultaneous location in a bureaucracy and the gender institution, women have multiple frames with which to interpret what men do. A bureaucratic frame encourages them to see men behave in accord with their formal positions – as employees, professionals, colleagues, bosses, whereas a gender frame encourages them to see men behave as men (see Martin, 1997). I suggest that women interpret men's behavior as gendered – i.e., about 'men behaving as men' – when other frames fail to explain



what they see men do. That is, when men collectively act in ways that contradict a bureaucratic (official, formal) point of view, women sometimes invoke gender to explain or make sense of what they observe (Rogers, 1992).

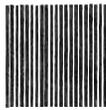
Two points deserve emphasis. First, it is because women and men are situated within the same gender system that they *can* invoke gender to make sense of each others' (and their own) behavior. That is, when they invoke gender, their action reflects the potentialities of the gender institution in which they are situated. Second, their invocation of a gender frame contributes to the perpetuation of the gender institution. I address some implications of this analysis regarding changes in the gender institution at the end of this paper. I suggest that it is only by questioning gender and by resisting gender frames and interpretations that the gender institution can be changed.

Women's Accounts of Men at Work

In the following paragraphs I introduce a set of stories provided by six US women employed in large organizations in the US (see Gherardi, 1996; Czarniawska, 1997 on using narratives and/or stories in research). I collected them in conjunction with a study of 'diversity' in 17 for-profit corporations, nine of which are listed in the combined *Fortune* magazine industrial and services list. Open-ended interviews and observations in managerial and operational settings were conducted between 1992 and 1995. Interviews lasted from one to two hours and focused on tasks and responsibilities, work relations and experiences, the meaning of work for the interviewees, changes in work and companies, and diversity issues, especially gender (but also race/ethnicity, age and sexuality). Detailed notes from interviews and observations were developed for analysis using a combination of grounded theory (Martin and Turner, 1986), extended theory (Burawoy, 1998) and feminist, postmodern, interpretive methods (Kondo, 1990).

I selected the accounts for this paper based on their evocative content (Kondo, 1990), because they contained gendering dynamics of a type that I describe as *recondite* (intricate but also abstruse and profound), and because they showed a degree of uncertainty in the women's interpretations of what men were doing and/or why. The women's uncertainty, and 'theorizing' about what they were observing, provided a space for me, as sociologist, to also theorize their experiences with men and masculinities in organizations. As noted, I excluded stories in which women thought men *intended to harm* them (or other women) simply because they were women.

Early in the fieldwork, I learned that announcing a focus on gender prompted defensiveness, confusion, or a focus on 'problems' like sexual harassment, glass ceilings, risqué jokes or sexual liaisons. To correct for this tendency, I refrained from mentioning gender prematurely in inter-



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views and used other approaches to elicit conversations that included gender.¹ The stories I selected for this paper, told by six women from among a multitude of other stories and people I encountered during fieldwork, were gathered along the way and were not a result of a straightforward prompting of a discussion of gender. I selected these stories based on their utility for exploring subtle gender dynamics in organizations, specifically how women saw men 'behaving as men' at work.

In line with a goal of uncovering abstruse gender dynamics, I invite readers to question the women's stories with me. What sense did they make of the men's behavior? What kinds of behavior, and in what contexts, did the women interpret men as 'acting like men'? How certain were the women about the men's intentions or reasons for acting as they did? How did the men's behavior affect these women?

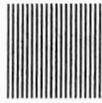
The Women

The six women in these stories worked in chemical, banking, insurance, construction and computer manufacturing organizations. They held managerial or professional positions such as vice-president, research scientist, accountant and engineer. All had college degrees and three had earned PhDs. One woman was born in the Caribbean, the others in the United States with European ethnic roots. All were married or cohabiting with men, two were mothers, all were able-bodied. The men about whom the women talked were in privileged positions regarding rank and education. Their jobs ranged from research scientist, to design engineer, manager, vice-president and division president. These men were white, able-bodied and (presumably) heterosexual.

The Stories²

Men Prolong Meetings to 'Peacock' or to Become Buddies. Dr Christine Jones, a chemist in the research laboratory of a multinational corporation, is one of seven women among 50 PhD scientists in her building. Her work with men is 'exhausting' because they 'waste time . . . [instead of] getting on with the work'. She described meetings in which she is usually the only woman present.

We need to meet. We have to decide who'll do what [divide up the work] and the time-line [by what date]. So, the idea of a meeting is good. But we do the work in the first 10 minutes then the guys stay on for another hour or two *peacocking* [sic]. [/What does that mean?] Well, one will say something at great length; then the next will have to say something too, just a little bit different, at great length. Then the first one or another one has to speak again. They're just trying to impress each other . . . I get so weary. I want to say, 'Let's assign the work and get on with it. Let's get out of here.'



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I asked if she could leave the meeting after the assignments were made. No, because the men would see her as missing valuable information. I asked if she ever speaks and, if she does, whether the men listen.

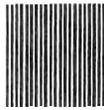
Sure, of course. They're polite. They listen when I say something. [/So why don't you join in the conversation?] I don't talk because there's nothing to say. We've done the work. I don't have any questions. And I don't need to impress anyone. [/If the work has been done, why can't you say you have to get back to your lab. and leave?] Oh, I can't do that . . . because the *men* think we're *working*. [/What does that mean?] They see their talking as work . . . They would think I was missing [out on] something valuable if I left.

Christine believes her colleagues jockey and contest with each other over who is most knowledgeable, informed, or committed yet they view their behavior as *working* and justify their and her investment of time on those grounds. *She* does not see them as working and views their behavior as about *being men* who waste her time to no avail.

A vice-president, Jennifer Peebles, works with men as a senior officer of a large regional bank. She agreed with Christine that women cannot leave meetings with men but, unlike Christine, she believes their prolonged talk reflects their concern to build alliances and express feelings of camaraderie rather than to compete. Yet, Jennifer agrees that men prolong meetings to talk about 'guy things'; she sees their talk as concerning camaraderie with each other, not as peacocking but also not as true work.

I see it [men's prolonged talking in meetings about non-work matters] all the time. Look, men grew up in sports together and they know all that stuff, all the facts. They use phrases . . . enjoy talking about sports . . . I know what an end run here in the office is but I don't know what an end run in football is. But men . . . they talk like that, think like that, and I think it gives them a sense of camaraderie, closeness . . . I try to avoid those meetings [described by Christine Jones] if I can. They waste a lot of time and, she's right, they are boring. [/But why don't you leave?] Oh, you can't. You can't afford to leave. You have to be there. You have to be part of whatever is going on [and hear] what they say.

Men Attend to and Assist Each Other. Andrea Porter's boss, Bob, wants everyone to eat lunch together in the cafeteria and 'take the corporate walk' afterwards but she and other women in the office decline the invitation. An accountant, Andrea has a MBA degree and works in an office with two men and four women. She prepares quarterly and annual financial reports for the company and, as a result, works many hours of overtime at the quarter's and fiscal-year's end. Andrea and her husband, a graduate student, have a seven-year-old child. She likes her job but dislikes the heavy workload, overtime and her lack of promotion prospects and salary increases. The company has fallen on hard times and she is thinking of circulating her resume.



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Bob and Mack are the men in the office. Andrea's supervisor, Fran, reports to Bob and the two other women, who are support staff, report to Mack. Tom, a retired former company executive, comes to the office to read the newspaper and go to lunch with Bob and Mack. Although he has come daily since Andrea came to the office, he 'only recently started speaking to me', Andrea said. Tom, although retired, as well as Bob and Mack have offices with doors and windows to the outside; none of the women does. Andrea's office is a cubicle located outside Tom's door where he passed without speaking to her for two years.

When I asked *why* Bob wants everyone to eat and 'take the corporate walk' together, Andrea was unsure. She prefers eating alone, to 'read a book or just relax. I see enough of these people all day'. Tom, the retired man, dominates lunchtime conversations and talks about boring topics, she says.

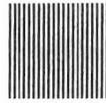
Well, Tom is the big guy, really important [in the company] in the past; has tons of connections and is highly thought of. Well he 'holds forth' all during lunch. He's of the old school. He'll talk about his lake house or his alpatians [dogs] . . . I don't want to listen to him. He's boring. [/Does he ask you questions, e.g. about your child?] Heck no. He barely speaks to me. He doesn't even know about [her child]. Oh, he's a nice enough man. But the two guys are sucking up to him; they hang on his every word. [/Why?] Well, because they think he can help them, I guess. At any rate, the boys stick together.

Except for her husband's teaching assistantship, Andrea's earnings support her family. Bob and Mack (and Tom) support their families too, with wives who do not work outside the home. Bob's and Mack's salaries are much higher than Andrea's, however. Andrea said Bob helped George, no longer in the office, obtain a lateral transfer for a pay raise because 'he [George] has five kids and a wife to support and they [Bob] said, "Well, old George really needs the money."' Bob does not help her obtain more money, however.

I have a child and a husband who's a student. Do you think they would use that line [rationale] to give me a raise? I need the money far worse than George does, I'm sure. But they would not consider giving me a raise because of my family circumstances. It's like men understand a man who supports his family; they don't view a woman in the same way. They don't even see her supporting her family and the need it entails. My boss [Fran, a woman] is unmarried so they look at her and say, 'she doesn't need it'. Yet, they don't look at me and say I do. Yet I do.

Bob refuses to institute flextime, which would help Andrea juggle work and home.

He said, 'Andrea, I don't know how you do all you do. I surely couldn't.' And he's right; he has a wife doing most of the things I do . . . They have no idea what it's like for me. January nearly kills me every year . . . All those Saturdays and long days are too much . . . [Bob] says he hasn't got the power to do it [institute flextime] but he has . . . We know we can do it but



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he says he can't. [/Why not?] I don't know; I think he's afraid someone will look at our office and think we're not serious [sic] . . . He's afraid we'll [the office] get dropped so he keeps volunteering our office for extra work. They [the company] have no money . . . and they keep piling work on us and Bob keeps letting them even though we get no promotions and no raises to speak of.

Bob protects Mack as the only other (paid) man in the office, Andrea says. And Bob does not hold Mack accountable. Bob would get in trouble if he suddenly rated Mack incompetent after years of rating him as competent. Mack does little 'real work' and refuses to help her and Fran even when they need his assistance, Andrea says.

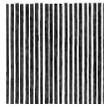
If Bob suddenly started saying he [Mack] was incompetent, someone would say, 'Well, why didn't you do something years ago? Is this something new?' Mack is lazy too. He almost never does anything. And he doesn't really know his job so he makes Fran [Andrea's supervisor] check everything I do to make sure she has signed off on it. And he won't pitch in and help us when we are overloaded. Fran and I, we'll pitch in and help each other; we understand how sometimes you have more to do than you can get done. But Mack, he's into being boss and never offers to help when we need it.

Men Expect Women to be 'Gregarious'? Aggressive? Social? Valerie Parks, a 32-year-old engineer, has worked for a scientific research company for three years. With seven years' experience in an architectural firm and a degree in engineering, Valerie likes working on engineering research teams. Compared to men at her career stage, she 'doesn't seem to be going anywhere' and is trying to understand why.

They're younger than me too . . . I have more experience so I feel I should be doing at least as well as they are, probably better. But I'm not. They're getting all kinds of assignments that I'm not getting . . . I'm thinking I'm in the wrong line of work. [/Why not change companies?] Well, there aren't many companies that do research and I really like research. I think it would be boring to do regular engineering projects.

Valerie's annual performance evaluation showed that she complained, as she had done the year before, that her supervisor was not giving her good assignments or enough responsibility.

He [her boss] said to me, 'You're not gregarious enough.' [/What does that mean?] I'm not aggressive, I guess. I see some of these people [men at the company], they spend half the day going around talking to people. I'm trying to change my views on that; I try to see it as important. I just want to come in and get my work done and go home. I guess I see sitting around talking as a waste of time . . . they [men] apparently don't see it as wasted time. But it's just not me to do that; I can't go tell people how wonderful I am or get in their face. But that's what my boss tells me I've got to do. He said, '*I'll never think of you* [emphasis the author's] when there's a project. I'm not going to assign you. *You* have to do it.' [/What does that mean?] I don't know. But it's discouraging. I thought your supervisor would look



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for ways to help you, give you good assignments. I talk to my husband . . . [and] he says some supervisors are just real passive; they just sit back and let everyone go and intervene as little as possible. [/Have any of your experiences been good?] Well, yes, there was one guy; I went to him and he gave me a lot of responsibility and it went really well. But when we got nearly through, he would take it back over and put his stamp on it and then he would be first author on the papers. I told my supervisor and he said, 'Well, you should have brought that up at the time.' I just have a bachelor's degree but so do lots of others. And the guys with bachelors are getting lots more responsibility than I am. [/How is that happening?] I don't know; I guess they are just more aggressive.

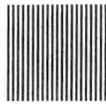
Another scientist in Christine Jones' company, Dr Sara Daniels, works in a remarkably gender-skewed unit. One woman among nearly 100 men, Sara's men colleagues talk to her about their children, wives, families and personal lives. They use her as a sounding board and ask her to sympathize about a seriously ill child or to explain their wives to them, she says.

[T]hey try to make me their counselor, sister, or friend, I guess. I want to talk about chemistry. But I have trouble keeping them on topic . . . They talk family, I reintroduce chemistry. It's a constant struggle . . . wearing and crazy. They never let me forget I'm a woman. [/Are they hitting on you, trying to start something romantic?] No . . . [pause] I honestly don't think so.

When a man talks to Sara about his personal life, he may lose 30 minutes of time and so does she, but the topic is *himself*, not her (see Calvert and Ramsey, 1996 for a similar point). Such behavior has an emotional cost for Sara also, challenging her self-confidence. Sara graduated with a PhD at age 25 from an elite US university, does cutting-edge work that produces patents, has federal grants to support her research and publishes extensively. Yet, she has trouble 'maintaining my self-esteem' at work, she says, because the men fail to treat her as a true scientist.

Men Dominate the Relationships. Dr Maria Gutierrez recommended that her company, a computer manufacturing company, drop a paying customer company because of its representative's behavior. Maria, born and raised in the Caribbean, was 35 years old with a PhD from a prestigious university. She had worked as a design engineer for the company for five years. Staff in her division worked on projects directly with customers to develop equipment and services they needed. With a technical assistant, Maria had carried the ball on a project since it began. Maria respects her boss, Arnie, and knows he will not like her recommendation to terminate the project because it will cost the company money. Maria and her assistants have invested many uncompensated hours in the project, she said.

Bill Crown, the customer-company representative, played games from the start. According to Maria, he pushed to remove her technical assistant early in the project.



[My first technical assistant was] . . . an older guy, a big man with a bit of a big mouth. He was uncomfortable with me as project leader. The guy we worked with from the customer company [Bill Crown] is a horse's ass and he and his assistant [a woman] were not very nice from the start. They acted like they thought we [Maria's company] were trying to rip them off . . . wouldn't give them fair value for their money. The customer didn't like my technical assistant and he [Bill] asked for him [Maria's assistant] to be taken off the project team. [/Why did Bill object to your assistant?] I think it was because he [the assistant] was older and not easy to control. The customer thought he could get more from our company with someone easier to control. So they wanted him off. [/Did you mind?] Not really. I didn't like the guy all that much and he treated me like a little girl and wasn't very subtle about it.

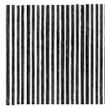
Maria's new assistant, a 22-year-old woman named Betty, was also unable to gain Bill's cooperation. After he failed to provide Maria and Betty with promised data for their work, Maria asked her boss, Arnie, to invite Bill and Bill's boss, a customer-company vice-president, to a meeting. Bill was polite in the meeting and, according to Maria, 'behaved himself and didn't shout or threaten or accuse us of ripping him off'. Arnie and the customer-company vice-president liked each other very much and enjoyed the meeting, Maria said. I asked if the meeting would affect her project; Maria said Bill would go on being uncooperative. She said her boss and the customer-company VP 'really hit it off' in the meeting; she was concerned that their mutual liking would affect their assessment of Bill and the situation.

He [the customer-company VP] liked me; he liked Arnie. But *they* [Arnie and the VP] really got along great. I told Arnie after the meeting, you are smiling too much; don't smile so much. I tried to explain that he should not read too much into that meeting. I know this guy [Bill]. When the VP and Arnie aren't there, he'll go back to his games of withholding data, saying he will cooperate, pitching fits, and accusing us of cheating.

When I asked why the customer-company vice-president did not remove Bill from the project, Maria said he had 'beat out Bill' for the vice-presidency and would not 'subject Bill to further humiliation'. Stuck with Bill as customer-company representative, Maria recommended calling it quits.

Theorizing Men's Mobilizing of Masculinities

Working inductively from the women's accounts, I identified three features of men's masculinities mobilizing practices: (1) the type of masculinities they mobilized; (2) the audience(s) for their mobilizing work; and (3) the dynamic of conflation. In the interest of space, I list, define and illustrate 10 types of masculinities that men mobilized in Tables 1 and 2. I grouped these masculinities into two categories based on whether they emphasized distancing and separation: *contesting* (Table 1) or aligning



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Table 1. Definitions, Primary Audience and Evidence for Four Varieties of *Contesting Masculinities*

Peacocking. When men vie with each other for attention, time, the chance to talk in meetings, acknowledgement of superior status or skill, and so on, they practice contesting masculinities that Christine Jones called 'peacocking'.

Primary audience: men. Christine believed her colleagues prolonged meetings to assert equal or better knowledge or skill relative to each other. Their jockeying for time and attention in work meetings *conflated* peacocking with work relations and practices, a dynamic that left Christine feeling 'exhausted' and different (like an outsider) at the end of the day.

Self-promoting concerns men's assertions that their talents, skills, or accomplishments are exceptional, valuable, or necessary. *Primary audience: men.* When her boss told her to be more 'gregarious', Valerie (engineer, construction) believed he was saying she had to tell group leaders how 'valuable' she is, like her men colleagues did. Men engineers who spent afternoons promoting themselves to men group leaders mobilized self-promoting masculinities and *conflated* masculinities with work relations. Valerie viewed her supervisor's instruction to do the same or risk losing his support as directing her to display a masculine interactional style, or 'do' masculinity, which she found discomfiting and inappropriate.

Dominating concerns an attempt to control or exercise dominion over another. *Primary audience: women (but also men).* Bill Crown sought to control his relationship with Maria (and her assistants) and her company by withholding data, accusing Maria (computer engineer in the computer industry) of cheating, and making unreasonable demands. He was supported in these practices by his boss who refused to remove, stop, or reprimand him. Bill and his boss thus mobilized dominating masculinity and *conflated* it with their work relations with Maria and her company in a way that influenced Maria to become discouraged and recommend termination of the project.

Expropriating others' labor refers to a transfer of others' labor or contributions to oneself. *Primary audience: women (but also men).* (Labor and contributions can be transferred from men or women but I focus here on women.) The primary dynamic of expropriating masculinities is processual power, which expropriates others' labor without their consent or without acknowledging a transfer occurred. Expropriating masculinities in the stories had two forms: (a) Using others' labor for one's benefit or the benefit of one's unit, e.g. team, program, organization; and (b) taking credit for work done by others. Valerie (engineer) and Sara (PhD chemist) experienced the first dynamic and Andrea (accountant, insurance industry) experienced both. Valerie's labor was expropriated when the team leader made himself first author on publications that Valerie had produced and other men on the team went along with it. Sara's time and energy were expropriated by men colleagues who told her about their personal problems, failed to treat her foremost as a chemist, and treated men colleagues as chemists rather than personal confidants. If 10 men each talk to Sara for 30 minutes, she loses five hours of time to their half-hour. Bob expropriated Andrea's labor when he loaded her with work and required Mack to do less and Mack went along with the arrangement. Bob and Mack's cooperation *conflated* expropriating masculinities with Andrea's work duties. Besides expropriating Andrea's labor directly, Bob took credit for it also. As members of the unit, Bob and Mack reaped rewards (e.g. praise, continued employment, salary) for work that Andrea (and Fran) did by mobilizing expropriating masculinity.



Table 2. Definitions, Primary Audience and Evidence for Six Varieties of *Affiliating Masculinities*

Visiting. Men mobilized affiliating masculinities in 'visiting' with each other informally in the halls, at lunch and in meetings. Visiting includes talking, discussing, chatting, joking, kidding around and so on about non-work topics like sports, corporate politics, or current events. *Primary audience: men.* On the surface, visiting is an end in itself, a recreational endeavor. Yet, the women saw instrumental elements in men's visiting behavior such as making requests for (and often obtaining) support, access, inclusion and opportunities. Interpretations by Jennifer, Andrea, Valerie and Maria show that they saw men mobilize visiting masculinity and *conflate* it with work dynamics in ways that spelt disadvantage for themselves.

'Sucking up'. When men align with other men by deferring, assuming a subordinate role, being solicitous and/or subservient, they mobilize 'sucking up' masculinity (the target of sucking up must cooperate for the definition of mobilization to apply). *Primary audience: men.* Andrea, Marie, and Valerie observed these dynamics. Bob and Mack listened to Tom's 'boring' talk at lunch, 'sucking up' to Tom – so he would help them, Andrea supposed. Mack sucked up to Bob because Bob would 'protect him [Mack] as the only other man in the unit'. Bill sucked up to his boss during the meeting with Maria (computer engineer) and was protected by him, Maria believed. Valerie (engineer) saw young men engineers suck up to older men group leaders to obtain a place on a project (which they did) thus constituting a *conflation* of 'sucking up' masculinities with work relations.

Protecting. Men who prevent other men from suffering the negative consequences of poor job performance or incompetence mobilize protecting masculinities. *Primary audience: men.* Bob's failure to make Mack work harder or more competently while requiring Andrea (and Fran) to be productive and competent is an example. The Webster Company vice-president who supervised Bill Crown and refused to remove him from Maria's project because it would humiliate him is another. Such actions *conflated* work relations with masculinities in ways that both Andrea and Maria experienced as negative for themselves.

Supporting. When men assist or help each other in ways that do not advance work-related goals, they mobilize supporting masculinities. *Primary audience: men.* An example is Bob's support of George's lateral move so George could earn more money, even though his departure cost the unit a position and placed a heavy burden on those left behind. This action helped George fulfill the family breadwinner role. Knowing that Bob helped George transfer, but refused to adopt flextime or raise her salary, influenced Andrea to perceive that men support other men at work with their special (non-work specific) needs but do not support women similarly. Bob's assistance to George *conflated* supporting masculinities with work relations in a way that Andrea interpreted as unfair to her.

Deciding based on liking or disliking. When men base formal decisions on interpersonal sentiments, rather than official/organizational criteria, they mobilize masculinities based on liking or disliking. *Primary audience: men.* Maria (computer engineer) thought her boss Arnie 'smiled too much' during the meeting with the customer-company vice-president because Arnie liked the vice-president who in turn liked Arnie and their mutual liking influenced them to tolerate Bill Crown's disruptive behavior. Their decision to continue the project was thus *conflated* with a masculinities dynamic based on liking

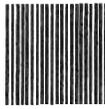


Table 2. *continued*

(positive affect) between Arnie and the customer-company VP, rather than on 'hard data', logic, or the project's likely potential.

Expressing fondness. Men mobilize masculinity by communicating fondness as emotional resonance with or affection for each other. *Primary audience: men.* Men at Jennifer's bank (vice-president, banking) talked about sports during work meetings because it made them feel close to each other, she believed. Arnie of the computer company and his VP peer at the customer company expressed fondness for each other during and after the meeting that Maria called by openly showing enjoyment of each other's company. In both examples, men *conflated* masculinities that expressed fondness with work relations and/or activities.

and connection: *affiliating* (Table 2). I discuss them only generally in the text.

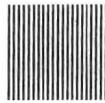
The tables also indicate how the two categories of masculinities, *contesting* and *affiliating*, relate to the audience for whom they are intended. According to the women's perception, two of the four *contesting* masculinities and all six *affiliating* masculinities were, as the women told it, directed primarily to men. The *conflation* dynamic, or 'fusing' of masculinities with working processes, is explained narratively in the text and indicated by italics in the tables.

Liminality, not noted in Tables 1 and 2, is not a defining feature of men's masculinities mobilizing but a condition that I identified in doing the analysis. Some of the women's accounts suggest that men are at times only liminally aware of the masculinities they mobilize, thus I explore the utility of this concept for making visible otherwise invisible masculinity/ies practices and for understanding men's failure to view their behavior as about masculinity even if women do.

The Masculinities Men Mobilized

Contesting Masculinities. Men mobilize *contesting masculinities* when they act in concert to distance – differentiate, separate – themselves from others by showing superior rank or status, obtaining control over others, or obtaining benefits from work that others do. In the women's eyes, men mobilized *contesting masculinities* to set themselves apart from (and above) others, both women and men. For example, the women saw some men peacock or 'show off' to each other apparently to demonstrate superiority or at least equal knowledge or skill; they saw men act concertedly to expropriate the labor of women in order to take credit for the work women did.

Practices like these are self-serving for (some) men and often exploitative for those with less power or status, woman or man. Men who mobilize *contesting masculinities* are, from women's standpoint, pursuing advantages in terms of whatever is valued at work, such as skill,



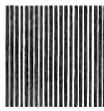
honor, opportunities, competence, knowledge, promotions, or recognition, in ways that take away from or win out over others (cf. Martin, 1996). Men mobilize contesting masculinities by participating collectively, though not necessarily in a friendly way, in a kind of 'game' that produces winners and losers. Table 1 shows four examples of contesting masculinities that men mobilized, based on my analysis of the women's accounts.

Affiliating Masculinities. Men mobilized *affiliating masculinities* when they aligned – connected, linked – with others in ways that benefitted self, others, or both (see Table 2). Connecting is key in these practices. Affiliating masculinities involve relating to, or connecting with, rather than distancing, or separating, from others. An individual man may grovel, flatter, or manipulate in order to obtain resources from another (e.g. by visiting or 'sucking up'; see Table 2) and the provider of support or protection may comply in order to feel superior, to obtain the recipient's gratitude, or just to be helpful. Affiliating practices may be self-serving, as when self affiliates to obtain benefits for self, or other-serving, as when self affiliates in the interests of another. Affiliating masculinities should not be viewed as motivationally pure since they may be self-aggrandizing and/or self-promoting, in both intention and outcome. I identified six varieties of affiliating masculinities in the women's accounts, as shown in Table 2.

A man who aligns with others to obtain benefits may have only self-interest in mind but, when the sought-after man cooperates, together they mobilize affiliating masculinities. The women's accounts indicate that some men participate in these dynamics to obtain favor or resources and others participate to offer support, protection, or favors or to express sentiments such as approbation or liking. Among the six kinds identified (Table 2), 'sucking up' involves dynamics similar to flattery or 'brown nosing' while making decisions based on whether the person in question is 'liked' is an oft-reported dynamic in literature on men in sales occupations (e.g. Dorsey, 1994).

Audience

Noting the *audience* for men's mobilizing masculinities helps us assess whether the targets of men's action were women, men, or both (see Tables 1 and 2). It also facilitates comparison of whether men mobilized both kinds of masculinities *for* women, *for* men or *for* both genders. Men targeted some contesting masculinities at both men and women, with peacocking and self-promoting oriented only to men, perhaps because men have control of more resources (Kanter, 1977; Reskin and Ross, 1995). The mobilizers directed dominating and expropriating masculinities at both women and men, an example being Maria's account of Bill



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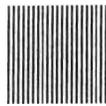
Crown who tried to remove her assistants from the project, both male and female, so he would have more control.

From the women's standpoint(s), men's targets for affiliating masculinities were other men. The women's accounts fail to show men visiting with women in search of resources or help, sucking up to women, protecting or supporting women, and so on. Rather, women saw men who mobilize affiliating masculinities as communicating messages of inclusion to each other, saying that they view each other as 'members of the club' or the 'community of work' (Weiss, 1990; cf. Conley, 1998 on such dynamics among physicians). To be asked for help is flattering; to give help or approval can be gratifying. By leaving women out of these dynamics, men (perhaps unwittingly) convey messages of unimportance and exclusion to women. In support of this interpretation, Christine, Jennifer, Andrea, Maria and Valerie all found their experiences with affiliating masculinities tiresome, alienating, or undermining of their confidence, commitment, or energy, despite the fact that men did not treat women as the primary audience for their actions.

Conflating Masculinities and Working

When men mobilize masculinity/ies in meetings or interactions at or in work, they conflate masculinity/ies processes with working processes. Conflation consists of a *fusing* of masculinities and working, with the result that *work fosters masculinity/ies*. When this occurs, women are more or less trapped into serving as audience for men's masculinity enactments. Women may find the conflation aspect of mobilizing more troublesome than simple mobilizing per se. Their inability to leave meetings where men mobilize masculinity, e.g. where Christine Jones saw colleagues 'peacock,' is perhaps more noxious than simply seeing men mobilize masculinity, for example, at the coffee machine discussing a football game. In all probability, Christine Jones could walk away from a hallway football discussion without being penalized except to feel different or indifferent. But, she noted, she feels she *cannot* leave work meetings when men conflate peacocking and working because her colleagues would disapprove – perhaps because her leaving would signal a judgment that they were wasting time and perhaps because she interpreted them as believing they were truly 'working'.

The women's accounts indicate that conflated work and masculinity dynamics sap energy and waste time; communicate that men are concerned with something other than work; show that men and women are 'different'; and make them feel excluded. It is perhaps noteworthy that men are able to conflate working and masculinities because they predominate in the powerful positions and because men and masculinity have more legitimacy (than do women and femininity) in work contexts, a point to which I return in the discussion (Martin, 1994; Martin and Knopoff, 1997; Prokos and Padavic, forthcoming, 2002).



The Liminality Issue

The women's accounts suggest that some men mobilize masculinities at work without being fully aware of doing so. I call this condition liminal. Liminal awareness means less than full consciousness. In psychology, liminal refers to a limit below which a phenomenon is imperceptible or a state of consciousness that is supposed to exist but is not strong enough to be recognized. Liminal also refers to a threshold or line that one crosses upon entering. It seems to me that some men in the women's accounts stood just behind the line of full awareness, short of fully knowing the masculinity/ies in/of their behavior. As a result of this condition, they were 'free' to engage in the behavior without concern for its gendered (masculine) aspects.

To say that men are liminally aware of mobilizing masculinity/ies means they engage in an activity without full awareness that their actions *are* being viewed as masculine, e.g. based on stereotypes, norms or empirical associations of masculinity that their observers take for granted (see above; and Martin, 1998b). Men need not *consciously intend* their actions to be about masculinity/ies for women to perceive and experience them as such. This point confirms the claim that gender is actively constituted within a system of social and cultural relations that fosters or discourages interpretations about gender, depending on the standpoints of the initiators and their observers/recipients (see Sinclair, 1994; Quadagno and Fobes, 1995; Schwalbe et al., 2000). Women in this study view men who subordinate themselves to each other as enacting masculinities, despite cultural stereotypes that say men do not and will not accede to subordination (see 'sucking up' below; Tannen, 1990 describes this stereotype of men). In my view, women's interpretation that men who subordinate themselves to other men are doing masculinity, rather than femininity, supports Connell's (1995) claim that behavior is gendered only *when* interpreted within a system of gender relations that gives meaning to it. I return to this point in the discussion.

In one sense, the men whom the women observed were *innocent* of the masculinities they mobilized (or, as Whitehead, 1998 says, unreflexive about it). An innocent is one who does not know or is unaware. Yet innocent people, or behavior informed by innocence, can have disastrous effects if the perpetrators fail to comprehend the 'true' consequences of their actions. Innocence is thus a condition, not a virtue. One implication of this point is that men will go on acting 'like men' if they do not know that their actions embody (or are interpreted as) masculinities that, in some respects, produce harm.

Discussion and Conclusions

This analytical exercise shows the utility of feminist standpoint theory for producing new knowledge about men, masculinities and the gender institution. The women's accounts reveal their experiences of men in

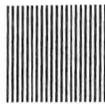


organizations. Situated in women's standpoint(s) in the gender institution, their accounts show masculinities in action, making visible and subject to critique practices that are normally invisible, unacknowledged, or denied, offering knowledge that otherwise is unavailable. If men are only liminally aware of (some) masculinity practices, they may not consciously know how gender 'works', although they enjoy its institutional privileges. The women's accounts offer insights into this possibility. Perhaps men know how gender works in a tacit way but have difficulty reflecting critically on its processes or meanings (Strati, 1999). To the extent that privilege is enjoyable or beneficial, the privileged are unlikely to question it unless forced to by fate or circumstance. Women's deficits of power at work (and elsewhere) are unlikely to force men to question gender privilege, unless conditions change.

Other insights are offered by this exercise.

- 1 It illustrates the usefulness of conceptualizing masculinities as practice(s), encouraging analysis of what people do, rather than what they are (i.e. women or men), and promoting a view of gender as relational, interactional, social, and processual rather than individual, biological, 'natural' and static.
- 2 Differentiating the performance of masculinities by individual men from men's collective mobilization of masculinities is useful for understanding men's and women's behaviors in organizations as well as the formation of certain structural organizational conditions. For instance, women in organizations may be harmed primarily when groups of men mobilize masculinities rather than when any particular man performs masculinity.
- 3 The accounts indicate that men practice many masculinities in organizations, not only the kinds said to be hegemonic. Of 10 types identified, only four are the dominating, controlling kinds of masculinities claimed to be hegemonic in US society (Messner, 1992). That is, only four concerned distancing or competition, winning, being in control, or dominating, while six entailed affiliating or aligning with other men. I was surprised that eight of the 10 masculinities identified were directed primarily to men, not women, as target audience. This suggests that it is not only what men 'do to women' but what men 'leave women out of' that women experience as harmful.

The present accounts also contradict depictions of men's behavior in organizations in both popular and academic literatures. These sources mostly portray organizational members relating to each other based on office rather than affect, making decisions based on rational-technical-legal logic not sentiment, and prioritizing formal organizational goals over the exploitation of organizational resources for personal gain (e.g. to support or protect friends, or punish or overpower enemies; but see Lewis, 1989; Jackall, 1988). Since men often hold the most powerful positions and are implicitly the 'ideal' worker in bureaucratic contexts



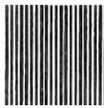
(Acker, 1990), *men and men's behaviors* in organizations become prototypical in this way, regardless of what our theories say.

Yet, the women's accounts show men much more concerned with each other than prevailing theories of organizations, management, gender, or masculinities suggest. While these accounts are not a census (or survey) of men's practices, they can be read as casting doubt on claims that men are concerned primarily with formal organizational aims. In the women's accounts, men are pervasively concerned with each other – whether contesting each other's standing or affiliating with each other for various ends. In short, the women saw men using organizational resources in ways that reflected concern with each other and masculinity/ies, not formal organizational goals.

The men's *affiliating masculinities* also belie claims that women, but not men, focus on 'interpersonal' social relations more than 'instrumental' tasks at work. The accounts suggest that stereotypes depicting men as concerned with formal work and women with informal friends or associates are flawed. In fact, men's concern with each other may be an important survival strategy, given that some men (but not all) control most organizational resources and opportunities, and that work is key to men's identities and selves (cf. Weiss, 1990; Collinson and Hearn, 1994; Kerfoot and Knights, 1998; Kerfoot and Whitehead, 1998; Whitehead, 1998). Participation in masculinity politics may be considered necessary for men to secure a place in a bureaucratic, capitalist, high-pressure 'community of work' (cf. Weiss, 1990; Collinson and Hearn, 1996).

Further, *contesting masculinities* are in good company in for-profit settings because their practices are compatible with the discourses and practices of bureaucracy, market capitalism and science. For example, bureaucracy valorizes hierarchy and power; capitalism valorizes competition (survival of the fittest), expropriation (of resources, rights) and domination (of markets); and science values control and subordination (e.g. of nature to 'man's' instructions or wishes; cf. Traweek, 1988). Because of this compatibility, men performing *contesting masculinities* can invoke these discourses to justify their actions by claiming to be 'doing' bureaucracy, capitalism or science rather than masculinity/ies.

The overlap of the discourses and practices of bureaucracy, market capitalism and science with culturally hegemonic kinds of masculinities means that men, and certain masculinities, are valorized over women and femininities, in organizations (Calás and Smircich, 1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1997; Collinson et al., 1990; J. Martin, 1990; Ferguson, 1997). Concurrently, the cultural association of women and/or femininities with lower status (Hall, 1993a, 1993b), soft emotions (Pierce, 1995), sexuality (DiTomaso, 1989; Williams et al., 1999), or the dirty or distasteful (Britton, 1999) means that women must spend energy and time neutralizing the handicaps placed on them by these stereotypes while embedded in the domains of bureaucracy, market capitalism and science.



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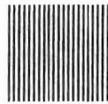
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As noted earlier, women may be harmed most by men's mobilization of masculinities that conflate them with *working* because they cannot readily escape the negative effects of fusing formal work with informal masculinity dynamics. These dynamics were easily observed in the women's accounts. The women quoted here experienced men's mobilizing masculinities, in general, as costly, causing them to lose time, waste energy, lose self-confidence and self-esteem, feel frustration, become disillusioned, feel confused and question themselves to the point of considering quitting or changing professions (cf. Marshall, 1995). Despite their being directed only to men, it appears that men's mobilizing of affiliating masculinities hurt women as much as their mobilization of contesting masculinities did. Perhaps, when men mobilize masculinities, including affiliating, they communicate a message to women of irrelevance or disrespect. Since men predominate in positions of power, such a message can be hurtful.

This analysis also serves to confirm the conception of gender as fluid, shifting and plastic in character, intersecting material conditions with social practices whose interpretations depend on cultural meanings provided by the gender institution. This fluidity has particular implications when it comes to associating possibly identical behaviors with the sex of those enacting them. To illustrate, the women interpreted men as practicing masculinity/ies regardless of what they did. For example, when men supported or protected each other, and visited or expressed fondness for each other, women interpreted them as signifying masculinity/ies, not femininity/ies, despite cultural stereotypes that frame these behaviors – support, protection, visiting, expressing positive affect – as feminine (cf. Martin, 1998b; Fletcher, 1999; Martin et al., 2002, forthcoming).

This example shows how gender serves as both symbol and cultural resource (Gherardi, 1995; Fobes, 2001). When women saw men act in concert, they interpreted whatever men did as having masculinity significations but also as associated with *work* and thus difficult to question or challenge. This suggests that gender ideological frames (i.e. masculinity vs. femininity) may discourage those embedded within lesser power (e.g. feminine) ideologies to critically question the words and/or deeds of those embedded within higher power (e.g. masculine) ideologies.

Further reflections are nonetheless in order. Regarding research, my distinction between individual doings of masculinities and *collective mobilizing of masculinities* needs additional development. For instance, can this concept inform us also about behavior that men *intentionally* orient to women, including how men interpret each others' masculinity practices? Is this distinction useful for studying femininities as well as masculinities? Do women mobilize femininities? Can women 'do masculinities' or 'mobilize masculinities'? Can men 'do femininities' or 'mobilize femininities'? We need more work on femininities relative to masculinities as practiced by both women and men in organizations.



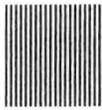
What would be the implications of such understandings for home/family, recreational/leisure contexts, halls of government, church, schools and military, as well as for-profit corporations?

Also, the border between liminal and full awareness of gender needs attention (Reskin, 2000; Ridgeway and Correll, 2000). Studying gender processes from the standpoint of actor and observer at once may show how gender is simultaneously enacted and interpreted, individually and collectively, and reveal contradictions that can produce new insights (cf. Smith, 1987). However, if men were more aware of women's accounts, especially the costs that their mobilizing exacts, would it matter? Would men become more reflexive about their behavior and/or change? Can men lose their innocence about masculinity of/in their behavior by crossing the threshold of awareness? Would awareness contribute to (positive) changes in the gender institution? (On some of these points, see Ely and Meyerson, 2000b; Meyerson and Kolb, 2000; Meyerson and Fletcher, 2000.)

The women's movement of the past 30 years suggests that the answers may be yes, and I agree with Collinson and Hearn (1994), Scott (1997), and J. Martin (2001), among others, that awareness is a positive step. As a result of 'consciousness raising' about gender (Mueller, 1987), some men now recognize their behavior as gendered and feel pressured to be careful and reflect on their actions in ways they were free of before (cf. Lorber, 2000). Yet, men's loss of innocence can feel like a loss of privilege. Previously, men could 'just be'. Now they must think about their actions, especially how women will react. Will this produce a 'backlash'?

Some disclaimers are also in order. First, I restricted attention to men's behavior that women interpreted as intending no harm *to them as women* in order to focus on masculinities that are more intricate, recondite and complex rather than blatant, obvious and unsubtle. As I noted at the start of the paper, I hoped to make visible, as in expose, gender processes that are often invisible and unacknowledged as aspects of organizational reality. In taking this course, I do not imply that no men intentionally harm women at work. Some men do intentionally embarrass women, leave them out, make fun of them, ignore them, withhold information from them, urge them to change jobs, and worse. Many studies of the past 20 years document these dynamics, e.g. Schneider (1993), Marshall (1995), Collinson and Collinson (1996) and Conley (1998) for an individual account.

Second, I do not assume that this exercise reflects the experience of all women 'universally' nor do I encourage readers to generalize beyond the six (seven counting me) women whose accounts are reported here. The women I quoted offered accounts of experience that I, as sociologist, interpreted in search of discovering recondite masculinities. In focusing on a gender standpoint, furthermore, I did not assume that age, ethnicity, sexuality and other social categories that intersect with women's standpoints are either absent or irrelevant for my interpretations. Rather, my



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decision to focus solely on gender standpoints was based in my interest to highlight in this paper specific gender dynamics.

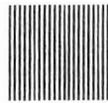
In summary, this paper should be considered as a work in progress, which nonetheless adds to research and theory on gender as an institution. First, it undermines essentialist conceptions of masculinities by showing the context-dependent nature of gendered interpretations. The meanings that women attached to men's masculinity enactments depended on the material, social and cultural relations in which they were embedded, including how power was distributed among men and women. Second, it shows that the dynamic of mobilizing masculinities entails men's dedication to *being men together*. This dynamic consists of relational work to which men devote time and energy in sometimes cooperative and other times competitive ways. Third, the ease with which men mobilized these masculinities at work may be due to a resonance between some forms of masculinity and bureaucracy, market capitalism and western conceptions of science

Finally, I do not claim that, from their own perspective, the men whom the women observed actually behaved as the women said, nor that the quoted material reflects women's total experiences with or views of men. Other accounts from these women (and other women and men whom I interviewed) show a range of experiences with and interpretations of men. However, by focusing on women's standpoints, this paper shows how women see men doing aspects of gender at work in ways that both masculinize the workplace and harm women. It reveals the fluid, shifting character and richness of gender as a cultural resource, thereby enhancing understanding of dynamics associated with the production and maintenance of the gender institution in organizations. Organizations have immense potential for doing good as well as ill (Lukes, 1974; P. Martin, 1990, 1993; Reskin et al., 1999; Ely and Meyerson, 2000a; J. Martin, 2001). To subvert gender practices that harm people we need more research on how they are mobilized and conflated with work relations and on how women and men resist harmful practices and create beneficial ones.

Notes

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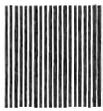
- 1 For instance, I read vignettes (ranging from six to 20 lines of text) about an incident involving gender that the interviewees were asked to interpret. This



- approach avoided leading the interviewees and revealed diverse interpretations by gender and race, among other variations (P. Martin, 2001).
- 2 All identities have been disguised to maintain confidentiality.

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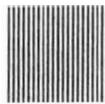
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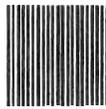
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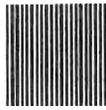
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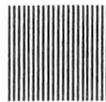
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Patricia Yancey Martin is Daisy Parker Flory Professor of Sociology at Florida State University, Tallahassee, USA. She studies gender in organizations, feminist organizations and the contemporary women's movement. She is completing a book about how communities, organizations, and professions treat rape victims with a focus on gender and emotions in these dynamics. **Address:** Department of Sociology, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2270, USA. [email: pmartin@garnet.acns.fsu.edu]