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WELCOME TO THE MEN'S CLUB

Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity

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This study focuses on multiple masculinities conceptualized in terms of sociality, a concept used to refer to nonsexual interpersonal attractions. Through male homosocial heterosexual interactions, hegemonic masculinity is maintained as the norm to which men are held accountable despite individual conceptualizations of masculinity that depart from that norm. When it is understood among heterosexual men in homosocial circles that masculinity means being emotionally detached and competitive and that masculinity involves viewing women as sexual objects, their daily interactions help perpetuate a system that subordinates femininity and nonhegemonic masculinities. Nonhegemonic masculinities fail to influence structural gender arrangements significantly because their expression is either relegated to heterosocial settings or suppressed entirely.

To understand gender inequality, one must do more than study relations *between* genders. The nature of gender relations is such that asymmetries exist between men and women and among men and among women (Connell 1987, 1992). Recognition of masculinity as a social construct began only a couple of decades ago, and recognition of a power dynamic differentiating “normative” from “non-normative” masculinities began only a few years ago (Kimmel 1990). Investigation of the many possible types of masculinity conceptualizations has been rare (Connell 1987; Kimmel 1990). Connell’s (1992) research on homosexual masculinities and their subordination to heterosexual masculinities is a notable exception. As Connell’s work demonstrates, delineation of relations among masculinities is important because it facilitates a better understanding of how the structural order of gender is maintained. Hegemonic masculinity, or “the maintenance of practices that institutionalize men’s dominance over women” and is “constructed in relation to women and to subordinate masculinities” (Connell 1987, 185-86), shapes the

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overall framework of gender relations. By problematizing masculinity, Connell challenges typically undisputed meanings associated with male dominance.

In this study, I focus on how meanings that correspond to hegemonic masculinity are maintained and how meanings that do not correspond to hegemonic masculinity are suppressed. Within the existing gender order, meanings associated with behaviors that challenge hegemonic masculinity are denied legitimation as *masculine*; such meanings are marginalized, if not suppressed entirely. Contradictions to hegemonic masculinity posed by male homosexuality, for example, are suppressed when homosexual masculinity is consistently rendered "effeminate" (Connell 1992).

The maintenance of hegemonic masculinity is explored here through investigation of male homosocial interactions. *Homosociality* refers specifically to the nonsexual attractions held by men (or women) for members of their own sex (Lipman-Blumen 1976). Homosociality, according to Lipman-Blumen, promotes clear distinctions between women and men through segregation in social institutions. I add, further, that homosociality promotes clear distinctions between hegemonic masculinities and nonhegemonic masculinities by the segregation of social groups. *Heterosociality*, a concept left untheorized by Lipman-Blumen, refers to nonsexual attractions held by men (or women) for members of the other sex.

Also critical to this analysis is an investigation of the relationship between sociality and the self-conceptualization of masculinity. As I argue here, homosocial interaction, among heterosexual men, contributes to the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity norms by supporting meanings associated with identities that fit hegemonic ideals while suppressing meanings associated with nonhegemonic masculinity identities. I focus specifically on the connection between individual masculinity and gender norms in small group interactions to capture subtle mechanisms of control. When personal conflicts with ideal masculinity are suppressed both in the homosocial group and by individual men, the cultural imposition of hegemonic masculinity goes uncontested (see Kaufman 1994).

The following meanings are crucial to our understanding of how homosociality contributes to the perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity: (1) *emotional detachment*, a meaning constructed through relationships within families whereby young men detach themselves from mothers and develop gender identities in relation to that which they are not (Chodorow 1978); (2) *competitiveness*, a meaning constructed and maintained through relationships with other men whereby simple individuality becomes competitive individuality (Gilligan 1982); and (3) *sexual objectification of women*, a meaning constructed and maintained through relationships with other men whereby male individuality is conceptualized not only as *different from female* but as *better than female* (Johnson 1988).

CONCEPTUALIZING MASCULINITIES

Gender identity is distinguished from the heavily criticized concept of gender *role* in that the latter is used to refer to behavioral expectations associated with more

or less static social positions, whereas the former refers to a continual *process* whereby meanings are attributed by and to individuals through social interaction. Gender, in other words, is relational. Gender identity originates in early interactions, becoming more stable through the accumulation of meanings attributed by and to the self over time (see Burke 1980; Burke and Reitzes 1981). Information received through interactions may be used either to reinforce existing self-notions of gender meanings or to weaken them. That is, mere socialization does not sufficiently explain how individuals conceptualize identity. Socialization provides the terms of social interaction but does not determine how individuals incorporate interactional meanings into their own conceptualizations of gender (Connell 1987).

The unique experiences of men, embedded within particular social institutions and subject to varying historical contexts, facilitate conceptualizations of masculinities that may differ considerably. Each male incorporates a variety of meanings into his gender identity, some of which are consistent with hegemonic masculinity and others of which are not (e.g., Connell 1992; Messner 1992b). The social ideal for masculinity, which in itself is a nonstatic notion, may be internalized (i.e., central to one's core self [see Chodorow 1980]) or simply interiorized (i.e., acknowledged by the self), enabling individuals to understand the gender norms to which they are held accountable. In either case, each male comes to understand both socially shared meanings of masculinity and the idiosyncratic meanings that comprise his unique gender identity. Internalization of hegemonic meanings provides a base of shared meanings for social interaction but also quells the expression of nonhegemonic meanings. The presumption that hegemonic masculinity meanings are the only mutually accepted and legitimate masculinity meanings helps to reify hegemonic norms while suppressing meanings that might otherwise create a foundation for the subversion of the existing hegemony. This presumption is especially prevalent in male homosocial interactions, which are critical to both the conceptualization of masculinity identity and the maintenance of gender norms.

MALE HOMOSOCIAL INTERACTIONS: EMOTIONAL DETACHMENT, COMPETITIVENESS, AND SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION OF WOMEN

Three of the shared meanings that are perpetuated via male homosociality are emotional detachment, competition, and the sexual objectification of women. These meanings characterize hegemonic masculinity but are not always internalized as central to individual identity. First, emotional detachment (i.e., withholding expressions of intimacy) maintains both clear individual identity boundaries (Chodorow 1978) and the norms of hegemonic masculinity. To express feelings is to reveal vulnerabilities and weaknesses; to withhold such expressions is to maintain control (Cancian 1987). Second, competition in the male homosocial group supports an identity that depends not on likeness and cooperation but on separation and distinction (Gilligan 1982). Competition facilitates hierarchy in relationships, whereas cooperation suggests symmetry of relationships

(Messner 1992a). Finally, the sexual objectification of women facilitates self-conceptualization as positively male by distancing the self from all that is associated with being female. The objectification of women provides a base on which male superiority is maintained (Johnson 1988), whereas identification with women (and what it means to be female) helps remove the symbolic distance that enables men to depersonalize the oppression of women.

Individual conceptualizations vary in the extent to which these meanings characterize one's masculinity. Masculinities that differ from the norm of hegemonic masculinity, however, are generally experienced as "private dissatisfactions" rather than foundations for questioning the social construction of gender (Thomas 1990; see also Kaufman 1994). Hegemonic masculinity persists, therefore, despite individual departures from the hegemonic form.

METHOD

The data collected for this study were gathered through personal interviews and field observations. Eight in-depth interviews were conducted in the fall of 1992 in a small northwestern city in the United States. Later, additional follow-up interviews were conducted with four new respondents to clarify how male homosocial and heterosexual interactions facilitate the perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity, on the one hand, but suppress nonhegemonic masculinity, on the other.

The men who participated in the interviews for this study were all selected from within the academic community of the city in which the study took place. Responses to questions, therefore, may reflect a level of education higher than that of the general population. The findings of this study, however, are consistent with findings of previous studies regarding the meanings associated with masculinity (e.g., Lehn 1992; Messner 1992a, 1992b; Phillips 1986). The men's educational level ranged from three years of undergraduate study to graduate level and post-Ph.D. The men ranged in age from 23 to 50 years. All but one of the interviewees were native-born Americans from various geographical regions of the country. The other male, a native of East Africa, had maintained residence in the United States for approximately two years before the time of the interview. Although the data received through the interview with this respondent were consistent with accounts offered by the respondents from the United States, this information was excluded from the analysis because of cultural differences that could contribute to misleading conclusions. Most of the men reported middle-class family origins, although three reported working-class backgrounds. Two of the men interviewed were Black, and the other nine were white. All of the men were raised primarily by female caretakers, and all were heterosexual.

The primary focus of the interviews was on the development of perceived consensual masculinity and the corresponding relationship between self-conceptualizations and hegemonic masculinity. Respondents were first asked questions about childhood. Each was asked to describe childhood memories of time spent with playmates, with siblings, and with parents. Responses to these questions

provided general information from which more specific inquiries could be made regarding the meanings associated both with masculinity personally (i.e., identity) and with masculinity more generally (i.e., the beliefs, attitudes, and expectations of the group and of society).

To establish the parameters for the discussion during the interviews, each man was asked to consider the kinds of relationships he would find most desirable given non-work-related situations.¹ Each was then prompted to elaborate on his experiences within groups, especially those experiences within the male homosocial group. Although the men varied in how much they desired male homosocial group interaction, each explained that such groups have had a significant impact on their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The men were asked to elaborate on what exactly would be considered appropriate or inappropriate, desirable or undesirable, for conversation among men and what interests were commonly or not commonly shared within their homosocial groups. The topics of sports, women, business, politics, and drinking were most commonly specified as desirable for conversation, while the topics of feelings and gossip were most frequently mentioned as undesirable. Each man was then asked to explain his views on the degree to which his personal interests corresponded to interests more generally shared by the group. I also made inquiries about why certain interests and topics are so prevalent among men in homosocial groups and whether they had experienced any repercussions when norms for male homosocial interaction were disregarded.

Additional data were collected during the fall of 1992 through field observations of male homosocial interactions in small-group contexts. Observations and interviews were conducted within the same academic community, but the men *observed* were not the same as the men *interviewed*. Approximately 25 hours of observations were conducted. The majority of the observations were made at a single location: a deli/bar frequented by men associated with the university but also visited regularly by men not associated with academia. Remaining observations were conducted at two coffee shops and three taverns, all located in the same academic community. The focus of the observations was on the interactions among male customers, including their conversations. Field notes were taken in one- to two-hour time periods at various times of the day and/or night and on various days of the week. Because the locations in which observations were made are consistently patronized by students and university faculty, the recording of observations went unnoticed. A running description was kept of interactions that transpired between men seated within hearing distance of the researcher (usually only a few feet away). Observations were made of groups ranging in size from two to eight men. Observations were also made of groups that were initially all male but were temporarily interrupted by a woman. Most of the conversations were recorded verbatim. Gestures, facial expressions, and the physical location of each group member were also noted.

The meanings described in the interviews and that emerged from the observations have been organized under the following subtopics: (1) emotional detachment, (2) competition, and (3) sexual objectification of women. The remainder of this article focuses on the processes through which these meanings are sustained

and the processes through which alternative meanings are suppressed in male homosocial interaction.

**EMOTIONAL DETACHMENT:
“WE WERE MASCULINE LITTLE KIDS!”**

The rules that apply to homosocial friendships and to masculinity are so familiar that they are typically taken for granted by men and women alike. Rarely does anyone (other than the social scientist) seriously question the expectations associated with gender identity or gender norms. Instead, it is assumed that “boys will be boys” and will just naturally do “boy things.” By the same token, “men will be men” and will continue to do “men things.” Doing men things or “doing masculinity” is simply the commonplace activity of men’s daily lives, recreated over and over again, maintaining the norms of social behavior (West and Zimmerman 1987).

The men interviewed and those observed explained that being “one of the boys” is a key principle of symbolic and, in some cases, physical separation of “the boys” from “the girls.” One man, for example, explained how, as a youngster, he and his pals “were rough and rugged . . . masculine little kids.” He said,

When you’re a little boy, you hang out with other little boys and you do little boy things. You know, you burn ants and things like that. You just don’t hang out with females because you don’t want to be a wuss, you don’t play with dolls, you don’t whine, you don’t cry . . . you do boy things, you know, guy stuff.

Being masculine, in other words, means being not-female. The masculinity ideal involves detachment and independence. The men interviewed indicated that emotions and behaviors typically associated with women were inappropriate within the male homosocial group. Among the emotions and behaviors considered most inappropriate, and most highly stigmatized, were those associated with feminine expressions of intimacy (e.g., talking “feelings”). As one of the men interviewed explained, “I usually talk about ‘things’ rather than getting into your head and asking, you know, that real intimate stuff.”

This suppression of feminine emotions is more than merely a means of establishing individual masculinity. Emotional detachment is one way in which gender hierarchies are maintained. Expressing emotions signifies weakness and is devalued, whereas emotional detachment signifies strength and is valued (Cancian 1987).

In their discussions of feelings, the men hesitated; none of them made consistent use of the word *feelings*. Instead of feelings, they referred to “personal stuff,” “those things,” and “those matters,” and when asked, many indicated that “ultimately you’re doing it alone.” The expectation is that “because you’re going to be in situations where you’re away from any support system . . . you’re going to have to handle your stuff alone.”

What these men explained was that within the male homosocial group, emotional detachment is viewed not only as desirable but as imperative. Those who do express their intimate emotions are excluded. On this point, the interviewees were

quite clear: "If I was having a beer with a friend and they started crying, I would suspect that that person, if it were a male . . . I'd suspect that that person didn't have a very good definition of the social situation." If a guy did start crying, this interviewee was asked, where would that put him in relation to other guys? "Hmm, well, since . . . actually that would put him on the outs." The repercussion for violating the hegemonic meaning of emotional detachment, in other words, is to be "put on the outs," that is, to be ostracized from one's male homosocial group. Interviewees explained that violations of the norm of emotional detachment do not result in an alteration of the norm but instead result in the exclusion of the violator (see Schur 1984).

Data collected through observations clearly supported the pattern described by the men interviewed. Emotional detachment was exercised in even the most sensitive of topics. Two men observed, for example, appeared rather matter-of-fact as they discussed the marital problems that one of the men was experiencing: "Think of it this way, ya got a toothache. . . . You've got to have it taken out or you're gonna live with the bitch. Unless you bite the bullet and get the goddamn thing pulled out, you're gonna live with the pain." Feelings, as discussed by these two men, were something to "get over," not to experience—much less express. One man, when questioned about the possible repercussions for expressing feelings in the context of the male homosocial group, explained that feelings are "something for us all to joke about" because

you certainly don't want to take things too seriously and have to deal with the heavy side, the heavy emotional side to it. . . . Tears are a very extreme thing in these male circles, partly because it's messy. . . . It has a lot to do with not looking soft and weak because if you do . . . it makes it difficult for men to have relationships with each other.

He explained that "developing emotional types of relationships with each other" is something men stereotypically do not do. Hegemonic masculinity is not expressed and maintained through excessive emotionality. This distinction separates the boys from the girls as well as the men who fit the hegemonic norm from those who do not. Through emotional detachment, the meanings formed in regard to masculinity are exaggerated so as to distinguish clearly that which all men are not, that is, female. The burden for demonstrating difference is on those trying to avoid the default meanings. Difference becomes an aspect of self in which men have a valued investment.

Departures from the norm of emotional detachment, however, do exist. Individual departures reflect an understanding of the dominant meanings but not necessarily an incorporation of them into one's self-concept. One man explained that although most men "do what the culture says and hide it" (i.e., hide their feelings), he had hoped to be able to express his feelings with other men: "A couple of times when I was hurting, uhm, I did kind of seek out a couple of male friends and I was really disappointed. . . . It was like they were embarrassed, you know, to talk about that shit, and so, uh, fuck it!" Five of the men who participated in the in-depth interviews and three of the four who participated in the follow-up interviews

expressed discrepancies between hegemonic masculinity and their own masculinity. Each explained that although they knew they were *supposed* to separate themselves from things considered feminine, they did not assess their own identities to be as polarized as the hegemonic form would suggest.

It was really unfortunate. As I grew older, I really wished that I wasn't so detached from my mom. I'm not that way now, though. After a while, I stopped caring about what everybody else thought. I mean, the intimate side got pushed aside for so long because that's not what "real" men are supposed to do. I got over it, though. . . . I guess I'm not what "real" men are supposed to be.

The degree to which the masculinity meanings individuals hold for themselves correspond to the meanings of hegemonic masculinity may vary over time and from person to person. The point, however, is that although individual conceptualizations of masculinity depart from the hegemonic norm, nonhegemonic meanings are suppressed due to perceptions of "appropriate" masculinity. Even in a community where notions of the "new man" are common and where antisexist attitudes are often expected, hegemonic patterns of masculinity prevail. One whose masculinity conceptualization is nonhegemonic still understands himself as "not what 'real' men are *supposed* to be" (emphasis added).

The men who made the distinction between self-masculinity and hegemonic masculinity made three things clear. First, they explained that hegemonic masculinity was the form that prevailed in their interactions with other men throughout childhood and adolescence. Second, they asserted that when they found themselves in homosocial situations in the present, the expectation of emotional detachment continued to prevail. Third, they described themselves in the present as more heterosocially than homosocially oriented. These men explained that they did not *prefer* exclusively male social interaction groups. In sum, homosocial and heterosocial masculinity meanings are clearly differentiated. For these men, homosocial masculinity was characterized by emotional detachment, whereas heterosocial masculinity downplayed these factors.

COMPETITION: "IT'S A PECKING ORDER BETWEEN MALES"

Competition with other men provides a stage for establishing self both as an individual and as appropriately masculine. Competition also contributes to the perpetuation of male dominance. When asked to explain what competition meant to him, one interviewee replied,

By nature I'm terribly competitive. I suppose one's ego gets wrapped around the things that you do. Its pretty important for me to win because I do have my ego wrapped up in that [games] and so, uhm, you know when I play a game at a party or whatever I kind of expect to win and play pretty fiercely.

To establish self as not female, young men seek out other men with whom to display "non-femaleness" (Johnson 1988). Homosocial group interactions provide

feedback and support for masculinity self-conceptualization. In this sense, masculinity conceptualization is itself a form of competition. Four men described competition as a critical part of their self-conceptualizations and stressed that the competitions they preferred were those with men. Men, they believed, could understand the intensity and importance of competition, whereas women seemed less accepting and less understanding. When asked about participating in athletics with women, one interviewee responded that "women start getting angry at you and it gets ugly" when "you start getting really intense." Another added that "women typically don't want to play [basketball] or sort of want to but feel they'll be intimidated or whatever."

The men who described themselves as less competitive (or noncompetitive), on the other hand, explained that they considered the intensity with which other men engaged in competitions (especially sports) as relatively unimportant for themselves. At the same time, however, these men recognized the *expectations* of masculinity to be competitive. One man explained,

Guys don't know what it means not to be competitive. Even those men who tell you that competition is silly know they have to [compete]. It's like otherwise you're gonna get walked on. Nobody appreciates that. I'm not as aggressive as most guys, but I can sure act it.

Again, the norms and expectations of hegemonic masculinity and individual conceptualizations do not necessarily fit; further, among the less competitive men, nonhegemonic masculinity and hegemonic masculinity meanings differ by sociality. Men whose conceptualizations of masculinity were nonhegemonic specified their lack of preference for homosocial interactions in both sporting and nonsporting activities. Men whose conceptualizations of masculinity were consistent with the hegemonic form specified a clear preference for homosocial interactions in sports. Homosociality corresponded with a focus on competitiveness, whereas heterosociality deemphasized competition. Homosocial and heterosocial meanings were clearly differentiated. In male homosocial groups, a man risks loss of status and self-esteem unless he competes. The meaning of competition is assumed under male homosocial circumstances, and violators of this norm are disadvantaged.

SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION: "YOU KNOW, WOMEN WERE 'OTHERED' EARLY"

The competitions that support hegemonic masculinity continue throughout life in a variety of forms. Among the forms of competitions in which men engage are those that involve the objectification of women. Men often compete with one another in efforts to gain the attention and affections of women and in boasting about their sexual exploits. Observations revealed numerous stories about sexual objectification of women. In male homosocial conversations, references were made to women as "them," as clearly "other," as the nonthreatening "girl," and/or as objects to be used for sexual pleasure. While the use of these terms may or may not

imply a conscious effort on the part of the speaker to objectify, they promote meanings that support hegemonic masculinity nonetheless.

The men not only explicated the objectification of women, they also explained and demonstrated the competition for objectified women. These competitions illustrate the interconnectedness of the meanings of emotional detachment, competition, and objectification. Conversations overheard at the deli/lounge, for example, shifted frequently from “shop talk” to competitive sex talk. Bantering sessions, in which one-upsmanship on stories of sexual exploits was the name of the game, were frequently overheard. For example, one man began,

I’ve run across those kind. . . . I’ll tell ’em, “I’ll buy ya a beer.” [And the hypothetical woman replies,] “Na, I’ll buy you a beer.” Then I’m thinkin’ she’s ready to get outa there with me. I just want one I can step out with, shoot up her, and get back in the bar in 5 or 10 minutes.

Another man then added his own story:

Aw, shit, I had one down near Vegas. . . . Well, to make a long story short, when it was time to hit the rack we went back to her room. . . . We found a bucket of ice and a bottle of liquor at the door with a note from some other guy attached to it. . . . I just went ahead and drank the stuff and screwed her!

Not to be outdone, the remaining participant in the discussion followed with an account of his own:

Yeah, one night I had a couple of beers, then went out to that country and western bar. . . . She was a bartender there. I’m tellin’ ya, she was hanging all over me so much that the other bartender had to get on to her. Then later, she came knockin’ on my trailer door. I thought, “What the hell, Judy won’t find out, let’s hop to it.” She was a wicked thing.

Such conversations, according to the men interviewed, occur frequently but are less likely to be carried out with verbal explicitness when a woman or women actually join the interaction. In this case, the conversation will likely shift; but, as my interviewees explained, the competition will continue. The question, “What happens if a woman enters the scene where you are engaging in a conversation with another man or men?” prompted the following response: “Weird. Weird setup . . . because everybody is checking everybody else out . . . it’s uncomfortable for everybody. You know, people are checking each other out. We’d see her as an issue of conquest.” The men interviewed explained that men in homosocial groups both objectify and compete for women. When asked to describe the nature of interactions between men when an “available” woman is present among the group, one man explained, “It’s competitive, you see, and it’s a pecking order between men. If you do not peck, you get pecked. And so, one of the things over which there is a great deal of pecking is women.”

To be “pecked” is an undesirable experience—one to be avoided if a man wishes to maintain status within the male homosocial group. Objectification of women and men’s competitiveness over objectified women constitute the very essence of what hegemonic masculinity means in this society (Connell 1992). Not all men view

themselves in accordance with hegemonic masculinity, however, when it comes to objectifying women. Even so, men often go along with hegemonic norms to avoid being pecked. All of the men interviewed, when asked how an individual man avoids being pecked by other members of the group, explained that, on the one hand, they knew what the rules of the game were because

there's always an assessment going on in the group. Always. . . . Some guys will go along but wouldn't make a degrading comment about women themselves. But when some guy says something, because you want to be a member of the group, it becomes, "Yeah." You follow the lead.

Some men argued, however, that these hegemonic rules did not fit their own identities:

That stuff [sexual objectification of women] doesn't interest me terribly much because for the most part I don't really talk about those things and I don't hang out with men who do. It's a very nasty type of chat, and the goal seems to be to hurt somebody anyway.

Although the rules of hegemonic masculinity included sexual objectification, some individual conceptualizations minimized and/or disregarded its importance. Even among those men who rejected hegemonic masculinity for themselves, however, the hegemonic norm for sexual objectification prevailed in male homosocial groups. In fact, none of the men in the study, for example, mentioned ever verbally rejecting these hegemonic meanings in their all-male groups. The meanings of emotional detachment, competitiveness, and sexual objectification all were understood and behaviorally followed. Hegemonic masculinity was maintained despite individual departures from the norm, as individual departures were suppressed in homosocial settings. Nonhegemonic masculinity was subordinated through relegation to heterosocial settings. Emotional detachment, competitiveness, and the sexual objectification of women remained as the criteria to which men are held accountable, especially in all-male interactions.

CONCLUSIONS: HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND THE GENDER ORDER

Hegemonic masculinity is consistently and continually recreated despite individual conceptualizations that contradict hegemonic meanings. Violations of the norms of hegemonic masculinity typically fail to produce alterations in the gender order; instead, they result in penalties to violators. With particular attention to the meanings that help sustain a pecking order among men, I have outlined some of the processes that pose barriers to gender equality in the United States, that is, the devaluation of meanings considered feminine, the suppression of these meanings in male heterosexual homosocial settings, and the relegation of nonhegemonic masculinity to heterosocial settings. Hegemonic masculinity, as demonstrated here, prevailed even in an academic community where ideals of gender equality are generally promoted. Reification of existing gender arrangements continues despite

individual conflicts with hegemonic masculinity. The contradictions that non-hegemonic masculinity meanings (e.g., expression of intimate emotions, cooperation, and identification with women) potentially pose to dominant masculinity patterns are suppressed in male homosocial heterosexual interactions, inhibiting change. When individual departures from dominant masculinity are experienced as private dissatisfactions rather than as reason for contesting the social construction of masculinity, hegemonic patterns persist.

Because the barriers that distinguish appropriate from inappropriate masculinity generally are not accomplished through reconceptualization of individual masculinity alone, recasting the gender order in more favorable terms must also involve changes instigated at levels of social organization beyond that of social interaction. Subversion of widely accepted gender beliefs, attitudes, and expectations requires special attention to the processes that facilitate their *institutionalization*. That which must be continually challenged and ultimately eradicated in terms of masculinity, therefore, is the taken-for-granted assumption that being male means being emotionally detached, competitive, and supportive of the sexual objectification of women as well as the assumption that men whose identities do not embody these meanings are not true men. These changes must take place not only within heterosocial contexts but also within homosocial contexts and throughout all social institutions. In even broader terms, the goal yet to be accomplished is the *degenderization* of meanings. In other words, emotional detachment, competitiveness, and the sexual objectification of women must cease to exist as criteria by which being a man is measured. Indeed, the beliefs, attitudes, and expectations that decree the valuation and/or devaluation of distinctive masculine and feminine meanings in the first place must be deconstructed.

NOTE

1. Leisure situations, rather than work-related situations, were focused on to specifically highlight social interaction preferences.

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