LATENT NETWORK CONSTRUCTION OF MEN'S MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS ONLINE

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ABSTRACT

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In literature related to new social movements, little has been presented about movements focusing on issues and concerns pertaining to men as a group. The reason for this may have to do with the "dominant" position all men are believed to hold in most societies. Despite this view, movement organizations have been established to challenge social constructs of masculinity and expose how such constructs act as barriers to forming a dialogue that fully include men into discussions regarding gender politics. This analysis seeks to address these discussions among men's movement organizations by providing a way of conceptualizing network formation of men's movement organizations online. Using Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical base, a qualitative content analysis of fifteen men's movement organization websites between April and June of 2012 is carried out to understand how network formation can take place among these organizations despite different perspectives to the degree in which men are benefactors of current social conditions. The analysis shows that two major factions exist in categorizing men's movement organizations: Pro-feminist men who primarily focus on how men can change to benefit women, and anti-feminist men who suggest that men are harmed as much as women due to socio-economic structures. Regardless of this chasm, thematic intersections do exist between organizations in both factions that rhetorically connect them to each other in such a way that suggest a unifying desire to challenge hegemonic masculine norms and promote a progressive form of masculinity. This potential conciliation of movement organizations is complicated by the way pro-feminist and anti-feminist groups challenge ideographs. The tactics utilized in online forums where ideographs are challenged reveal a different type of social

movement strategy, negotiated mobilization, that suggests organization leaders and members act in such a way that indicates awareness of how those both within and outside the organization perceive the messages they produce. This new strategy, negotiated mobilization, can provide further insight on how new social movement's use of alternative media impacts networked activism.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The campus of Mississippi State University was the setting of an increasingly common event in the United States and Canada on March 5th, 2012. It was here that over four hundred male students donned high heel shoes and walked four laps of a quarter-mile loop on the campus. The purpose of this walk was to bring awareness to the problem of sexual assault and rape women face on and off of college campuses around the country. While navigating the walk in women's shoes, the male students carried signs with such slogans as "Rape Hurts Us All" and "I am Man Enough to Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" and concluded with the reciting of a "Pledge to End Sexual Violence." The event was sponsored by Mississippi State University's Sexual Assault Services Office and funded through a large grant under the Violence Against Women Act (O'Hara, 2012). This was not the first time men took to the walkways of this campus in high heels, now an annual event, or other campuses and communities for that matter. Such walks are now known as "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes", which is sponsored by a group called Venture Humanity, Inc. (Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, 2012). Starting with their first walk in 2001 through the efforts of creator Frank Baird, Walk a Mile In Her Shoes is touted as a "playful opportunity for men to raise awareness in their community about the serious causes, effects and remediation's to sexualized violence" for the purpose of helping "men better understand and appreciate women's experiences, thus changing perspectives, helping improve gender relationships and decreasing the potential for violence" (Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, 2012). The ultimate stated mission of Venture Humanity, Inc. is "(c)o-creating a United Gender Movement" where "men will be a part of the solution to ending sexualized violence" (Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, 2012).

As innocuous as the walk on the Mississippi State University campus may have seemed, some take exception to the way the event was organized. Many of the student participants were members of campus fraternities who may have been forced to march. The campus Intra Fraternity council mandated there be at least an 80% participation rate among fraternity members who were otherwise threatened with the revocation of their fraternity's charter (O'Hara, 2012). This awareness raising effort of sexualized violence against women then becomes reinterpreted by some other men's movement groups as the "administrative and social coercion of male students" (A Voice for Men, para. 4, 2012). The event was considered problematic with the report that female onlookers shouted slurs at the marchers on display accusing the men of being indifferent to the topic of rape and sexual violence (O'Hara, 2012). These accounts of the "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" event at Mississippi State University portray the "playful" intention of the organizers quite differently.

The two views of an event like Walk a Mile in Her Shoes points directly to a tension that is at the heart of a complex set of social movements that focus on men and masculinity. The first account stresses the culpability of males as perpetrators of sexualized violence and taking an active role in the preventing sexualized violence. Bringing attention to this issue requires the male participants to challenge masculine norms through both the performance in the wearing of high heels and altering social attitudes of men as they relate to women. The second account focuses on the attack on masculinity through coercion and emphasizes that men may be wrongfully labeled as a group because of social assumptions related to masculinity. The position men place themselves in relation to these differing viewpoints, form a broad ideologically and seemingly incommensurable set of men's movements. It is the reconciliation of this division among men's movements that is of concern in this dissertation.

When discussions of social movements arise, the focus is typically on groups that are oppressed or marginalized. The civil rights movement, women's liberation, or those related to worker's rights are examples. These movements arise from groups and individuals who are outside of the dominant political decision making framework. The conditions they come to suffer from as a result of this lack of power encourages them to band together and seek social change. Past research has focused primarily on how marginalized groups have joined together to challenge social structures and ideologies that led to their oppression.

This research project is different in that it explores how a group is considered to be in a position of power, men, mobilizes for similar purposes. More, specifically, I am interested in how a dominant group utilizes online rhetoric in order to create a network that contests ideographs in similar ways. When referring to what is meant by "online rhetoric", Warnick (2007) points to the persuasive attempts by authors to "attract and retain audiences" through "interactive Web-based environments" (p. 26). Online rhetoric can be analyzed through site design, structure, the way they address users or readers, the extent to which they are interactive, and their use of intertextuality (Warnick, 2007). In order to further explore online rhetoric and how it relates to social movements, I intend to concentrate on the online rhetoric of movements that focus on men and masculinity. Accordingly, I will examine how social movement actors and organizations negotiate tensions and build networks.

How men's movement organization activists take part network construction and negotiate issues and topics salient to them are best found in their use of alternative media. This analysis views men's movement organization sites online as alternative media outlets. Alternative media are essential to our understanding of social movement network construction because of their ability to allow for discourse construction that are free of the filters present within mainstream

media outlets and potentially distort the messages or strategies of any given movement. Despite the spike in social media use within the past decade, the primary sites of men's movement organizations are preferred for a couple reasons. First, it is not necessarily clear to social movement researchers the role social media plays. Although social media allows for the dissemination of information and raising awareness, it may do little by way of promoting any true form of participation (Harlow & Guo, 2014). Second, websites are more likely to act as spaces where the voice of the movement organization as a whole can be recognized (Fenton & Barassi, 2011). Focusing on activists participation on social media pages may lend itself to incorrectly focusing on what Fenton and Barassi (2011) call "self-centered participation."

Movements that focus on the single issue of men and masculinity make an excellent site of investigation, as scholars pay little attention to men's movements. Many make only superficial references to what these movements represent and how they seek change (Connell, 2005; Kimmel, Hearn, & Connell, 2005; Wood, 1994), focus only on a single faction of a movement such as the straight edge movement (Haenfler, 2004) and mythopoetic men (Schwalbe, 1995), and look at only familiar men's groups (Fox, 2004), or dismiss movements altogether (Connell, 2005). The most comprehensive analysis of men's movements is provided by Messner (1997) who illustrates what he calls, "the terrain of the politics of masculinities" and how various movements relate to each other ideologically. Although Messner's "terrain" is useful, he relies on previous research to construct possible relationships between the different movements. This dissertation will contribute to the literature by examining how networks are established online in order to help bridge ideologically divergent movements. Men's movements, as described by Messner, afford an opportunity to explore how this is done. The Internet is ideal for understanding the construction of a network due to it being a platform that is shared among

members of different men's movements. Furthermore, I intend to explore how such online networks seek to include women in men's movements. Although some pro-feminist men's groups incorporate the views of women in their discourse, the relationship between men and women is often viewed as being contentious. Again, understanding the shared discourses between men and women can help in understanding network construction between social movements.

For the purposes of this analysis, social movements are not understood as the actions or discourse of single groups or individuals, but as shifts in meaning over time. To view movements in this manner requires a broader view of how they identify and position themselves in relation to a social construct or condition, in this case, masculinity. This is done by analyzing how activists engage in individual movement organizations through the use of alternative media. These movement organizations act as nodes in a network that influences, and are influenced by, the larger social movement. Piecing together the way the individual organizations are connected via how they address masculinity, is what is meant by network construction. What is done here is to provide a snapshot of where a social movement focused on masculinity is, at present.

I will commence here by briefly examining four important concepts related to this research, hegemonic masculinity, social movements, men's movements, and the ideograph. I then discuss three research questions and explore how members of different men's groups identify with one another in forming an online network, how they challenge ideographs online, and how women are incorporated into online men's movement networks.

Social Movements

When discussing what is meant by a social movement, there is a distinction between those which are *historical* and those which are considered *new.* Griffin's (1952) notion of a

"historical movement" requires looking in the past and identifying some undesirable aspect of the environment, discovering if change is desired with an effort to do so, and that effort experiencing some degree of success or failure. These actions are not to be taken by an individual orator, but rather by multiple orators. Griffin (1952) views movements as having a cycle consisting of a beginning, a progression, and a termination. Movements, then, exist in a very linear state that seems to be easily traceable. This linear way of viewing movements is criticized by Sillars (1980) for inhibiting researchers from truly studying movements in their entirety. Larger movements usually see factions emerge from within which could go through a similar cycle described by Griffin. When this occurs, Sillars argues it could lead us to mistakenly study the emerging factions as movements of their own. This possibility is eventually acknowledged by Griffin (1980), who raised similar concerns of counter-movements which could arise out of larger movements and thus terminate them. These factions or "wings" as Sillars' refers to them, can lead to confusion as they relate to the study of social movements. When smaller groups take part in behavior that is disruptive and catches the attention of mainstream media and the larger public, attention may be given to smaller factions that are not necessarily representative of the views held by the movement as a whole. McGee (1980) also questions the approach of studying social movements as historical movements. Instead, McGee prefers to look at social movements as being "a set of meanings and not a phenomenon" (McGee, 1980, p. 256).

This is where the new social movement emerges. As opposed to focusing on rights and legislation, as was the case with historical movements, these new social movements are more concerned with shaping identity. Touraine (1981) warns that this "is not to be equated with the formation of new public causes, demands and disputes" (p. 22). Instead, we see an added

emphasis on challenging the logic which governs the system (DeLuca, 1999), or hegemony. In more traditional, historical, movements the push for political or workers' rights in what Touraine (1981) refers to as the industrial society allowed for the movements themselves to have a more prominent identity. What makes new movements "new", according to Huesca (2001), is that when studied there is:

> attention to identity formation as understanding what constitutes as a new social movement may sometimes be difficult due to their being somewhat invisible in the public sphere a locus coordinated action and their de-emphasis of group access to institutional resources or adherence to overarching ideologies that guided mobilization. (p. 413)

Men's Movements

The formation of men's movements is not necessarily recent. Men's movements can be traced to the 1970s when they were referred to as a singular "Men's Liberation Movement" (Connell, 2005). This was initially, and perhaps still is, viewed as a backlash to the women's liberation movement that came to experience some political power the decade prior. Connell (2005) expresses the opinion that, "the model of the liberation movement simply cannot be applied to the group that holds the position of power" as being the central obstacle for the men's liberation movement to flourish as a viable social movement (p. 235). As a result, no distinguishable success came by way of change or even attention in this early stage. Since the failure of the men's liberation movement in the 1970s, several men's groups have formed; and have consequently created what Messner describes as "the terrain of the politics of masculinities." This "terrain" consists of discourses and actions that relate to institutionalized privileges, differences/inequalities among men, and the cost of masculinity as they impact men. Differences in the approach and attitudes toward these factors result in the splitting of the

collective men's movements into eight different groups in western societies: Men's liberationists, Radical Feminist Men, Socialist Feminist Men, men of color, Gay Male Liberationists, Promise Keepers, Mythopoetic Men, and Men's Rights Advocates (Messner, 1997). The presence of these groups reflects the construction of multiple masculinities as described by Connell (2005).

As with many other new social movements, labeling the collective factions mentioned here as men's movements in no way ensures that they act in unison. Among these factions, three have become dominant: Mythopoetic men, Pro-feminist Men, and Men's Rights Advocates. Unfortunately, the attention given to these groups in prior research is the result of only passing references to the legitimacy of many men's movements. In fact, the preponderance of this attention has been given to the Mythopoetic men's movement in reaction to Robert Bly's 1991 book, Iron John: A Book About Men, which is Bly's attempt to rearticulate lessons from folklore to place men back in nature and allow boys to grow into manhood. This book has been the source of much debate as to whether or not it promotes the idea that men reclaim the masculinity behaviors that have been stripped from them (Hagan, 1992; Kimmel, 1995; Magnuson, 2007). Michael Schwalbe (1995) is among many who claim Bly has actually brought attention to the movement that has had negative consequences through his attempt to preserve hegemonic masculine ideals and promotion of adolescent behaviors. Despite the interest in regard to men as a group, there is little awareness among their members pertaining to the activities or positions held by the others among men's movements (Fox, 2004). With such confusion existing among those who associate themselves with any of these three major factions, it is likely the lack of awareness among other men's movement members and the public as a whole is even greater. How members choose to interact with one another in online forums is then of greater importance in identifying common identities and goals. With the exception of Messner (1997), there has

been little attempt to provide a larger portrait of any movement concerned with the issues of *men*. Any hope of this happening, in Messner's estimation, relies on those groups that are most disassociated with the three primary terrains of men's movements (to institutionalized privileges, differences/inequalities among men, and the cost of masculinity) and find themselves in what he calls the "terrain of progressive and coalition politics." It is here where Messner feels that the complexities of the issues as they relate to men and the lack of agreement among the various men's groups are greatest, but, yet, find themselves "in a location that maximizes the potential for forging creative coalition building aimed at progressive social change" (p. 100). This prospect speaks to the complex and confusing nature of what is the totality of men's movements.

Ideographs

Another concept of importance to social movements and this dissertation is the ideograph. McGee (1980) describes an ideograph as being a one-term summation of dominant ideological positions that can help in "explaining, justifying, or guiding policy in specific situations" (p. 13). He compares ideology to Barthe's concept of a "myth" in that ideology is expressed through the manipulation of symbols, which leads him to state that "(s)ince the clearest access to persuasion (and hence to ideology) is through the discourse used to produce it, I will suggest that ideology in practice is a political language, preserved in rhetorical documents, which the capacity to dictate decision and control public belief and behavior" (1980, p. 5). The ability to alter the way we understand some terms can be done through understanding diachronic and synchronic uses of an ideographic term. A diachronic understanding requires looking at the use of the ideograph as it has developed meaning over the course of time. To understand a term diachronically requires a historic exploration of the term's use. If we look at the term synchronically, on the other hand, we have to consider more situational conditions in which the

ideograph is used in order to understand how it becomes re-appropriated in order to fit the circumstances (McGee, 1980). Therefore, ideographs do not go uncontested. There are frequent struggles between groups in claiming the *true* meaning of an ideograph. McGee (1980) then summarizes an ideograph in this manner:

> An ideograph is an ordinary-language term found in political discourse. It is a high-order abstraction representing collective commitment to a particular but equivocal goal. It warrants the use of power, excuses behavior and belief which might otherwise be perceived as eccentric or antisocial, and guides behavior and belief into channels easily recognized by a community as acceptable and laudable. (p. 15)

Condit and Lucaites (1993) go on to note that these words or phrases are culturally biased and they "typically appear in public argumentation as the necessary motivations or justifications for action performed in the name of the public" (p. xii-xiii). Some examples of ideographs they provide include "freedom of speech", "liberty", "property", and "law and order", to name a few. Ideographs have proved to be a key concept in understanding the rhetoric of social movements. Terms such as 'equality' (Condit and Lucatis, 1993), 'family values' (Cloud, 1998a), and 'victim' (McCann, 2007) are used for such purposes. DeLuca (1999) emphasizes the importance of studying the ideograph by suggesting "we can and should study the rhetorical tactics of groups attempting to not merely to move the meaning of key ideographs but to disarticulate and rearticulate the links between ideology, the synchronic cluster or discourse" (p. 45). Ideographs are by no means similar when it comes to their use between social movements, which speak to their contestable nature. For example, we can see how the ideograph of 'rights' is able to serve dual purposes for seemingly unrelated movements. Black (2003) shows how movements promoting the right to life and animal rights, in essence, use the same means to achieve an end

that may not be recognized as having any relation. The meaning of being, according to Black, is essential for both movements. Arguing that both groups advocate for viewing those they speak for as a life as being central to their interest, Black explains that both have an interest in expanding the term 'rights' to include both the unborn and animals. Although ideographs need not be the only way in which different movements can link themselves to one another, it may, nonetheless, be a useful tool in finding these links.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Connell (2005) defines hegemonic masculinity as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p.77). This definition generally looks at the privileged position of men over women as a group. However, Connell further suggests that instead of there being a single masculinity, different types of masculinities. Among these different types are dominant, compliant, and subordinate masculinities. What is gleaned this distinction is not all men benefit in the same way from the construct of a hegemonic masculinity. In fact, most men find themselves on the outside of what is considered to be ideal masculine behavior. Among the most marginalized of these men are those who fall in the category of subordinate. Gay males are most commonly associated with this group. Placement within this subordinate group is done through the position of other males who represent a compliant masculinity (Connell, 2005). Here, men are involved in the process of marginalization not because they intend to, but rather do so through normal social interactions which in turn bolster an ideal version of masculinity. Bird (1996) focuses on these social interactions and demonstrates how meanings related to hegemonic masculinity are maintained through homosocial interactions. How men come to recognize hegemonic behaviors derive, in

part, from the interactions with other men who are like themselves. Homosociality is the non-sexual attraction held by men or women for members of the same sex (p.121). Bird (1996) suggests that hegemonic masculinity is maintained in such relationships through: emotional detachment, competitiveness, and sexual objectification of women. This does not mean that all men who associate with one another do not detach themselves from the views of the group as they relate to the norms of hegemonic masculinity. This does happen, but they are suppressed through perceptions of an 'appropriate' masculinity displayed by the group. Efforts to question the norms of hegemonic masculinity could result in exclusion. Such social interactions speak to the institutionalization of gender norms thus sustaining hegemonic behaviors. Connell (2005) does emphasize, however, that hegemonic masculinity is capable of changing and repositioning itself over time.

Although Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity has been useful in various areas of social research, it is not without limitations. Perhaps the largest limitation to the theory is that it assumes the conditions in western, predominantly white, societies valuing heterosexuality. Hegemonic masculinity cannot then be taken as a universally applicable concept (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Outside of capitalist or western societies, it is not clear if the construction of gender and the interactions within and between them are done in the same way. When the concept is applied to non-western societies, the traditional gender order requires a continuous negotiation between local history, customs and western ideals (Aboim, 2009). Similarly, Demetriou (2001) argues that, "hegemonic masculinity is not a purely white or heterosexual configuration of practice but is a hybrid bloc that unites practices from diverse masculinities in order to ensure the reproduction of patriarchy" (337). He makes a distinction between internal hegemony and external hegemony to help provide a better understanding of how the relationship

between different masculinities works. Internal hegemony focuses in the ascendency of one group of men over another, whereas, external hegemony places attention on the institutionalization of men's power over women. Demetriou criticizes Connell for only viewing hegemonic masculinity as having power over subordinate masculinities and not exploring a reciprocal relationship between the two if hegemonic masculinity is capable of the change Connell says it is. For example, Dementriou explains how marketing towards gay masculinities has actually contributed to the reproduction of capitalism, which is linked to a patriarchal system. Despite the appearance of tolerance of different masculinities, what is actually happening is that the status quo of the larger social system becomes legitimized. Therefore, we see an alteration in the appearance of hegemonic masculinity from the 'bottom-up' rather than the elite version suggested by Connell that suggests dominance coming from the top.

Hearns (2004) points to a more subtle, yet important, limitation use of the theory, which has to do with the name itself. Hearns is concerned about whether hegemonic masculinity should be studied from a perspective that focuses on the social construction of power as a whole or if it should focus on the hierarchy and differences between men. If we are to take hegemonic masculinity as a "configuration of gender practices" as explained by Connell, then it is important to be able to make distinctions between groups of men (Hearns, 2004). By positioning hegemonic masculinity as type, such distinctions cannot be made between men if the characteristics of subordinate, complicit, and marginalized go into the construction of that which is hegemonic. Therefore, little is counter-hegemonic (Hearns, 2004). Hearns notes that to value the use of the term "masculinity" is to view men as a gendered group in too parochial of terms. Instead, he suggests that we rephrase "hegemonic masculinity" to the "hegemony of men." This move would allow us to "address the double complexity that men are both a *social category*

formed by the gender system and *dominant collective and individual agents of social practices*" (Hearns, 2004, p. 59). It is frequently the case that studies done in relation to 'men' or 'masculinity' incorporates use of both terms (occasionally 'male', as well). Such decisions should be made with more care since they may possibly lead researchers to different conclusions about social structures viewed through the gender lens. This complication which is brought to our attention by Hearns is evident in the fissures that are apparent among men's movements that Messner (1997) illustrates. Various men's movements view men as being in different positions of power within both the structures among men and society as a whole.

Based on this general understanding of hegemonic masculinity, social movements, men's movements, and ideographs, it is possible to begin to explore men's movements online. More specifically, how different men's movements create online networks, their use of ideographs, and how they broaden the scope of the movement to include women, is of interest. These interests, then, have formed the three research questions that follow.

Research Questions

Using the concepts described above, two central research questions and one sub-question are posited here. These research questions are constructed for the purpose of utilizing men's movements online in order to further understand online network creation of ideologically diverse social movements.

RQ1a: Can networks bridge multiple movement organizations that focus on masculinities?

RQ1b: If so, can those networks also bridge men's and women's movement groups that focus on masculinities?

Both of these research questions focus on online network construction through the use of websites and other forms of alternative media that can be accessed online. Research question 1a

explores the larger issue of network construction. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, men's movements are primarily divided on positions held about or perceptions related to masculinity. These men's movement organizations can be categorized as either holding pro-feminist beliefs or taking part in feminist 'backlash' politics. Despite this division, the analysis here seeks to explore if and how networks can form across an ideologically diverse set of movements when a single common factor, dealing with men, is present. Warnick (2007) views the interactive qualities of Internet sites as being essential to individuals who seek to identify with those with similar interests and worldviews. As a networking tool for social movements, the ability to interact with other individuals and sites (by way of message boards, for example) may provide a greater sense of belonging to a particular community and push for common goals. Through analyzing user comments and linking, it will be possible to discover more areas of overlap that would provide for a cohesive movement.

Research question 1b incorporates women into men's movements. The way many of the groups involved in men's movements is understood, is the relationship with women or women's groups is naturally antagonistic. What this assumption does not take into consideration is the breadth of ideological positions that women have in respect to the gender order. If we were to assume all women endorse social feminist positions (a distinction that is not well made in literature related to hegemonic masculinity or men's movements), then only the association between women and Radical Feminist or Social Feminist men would make sense. As Messner (1997) explains, however, women are also found to endorse men's groups that are considered to be extremely socially conservative, such as Promise Keepers. Therefore, it is possible that women are incorporated into the overall strategy of men's groups regardless of where they are positioned ideologically. How this is accomplished in online communities is of interest here.

This question is meant to explore whether women actually participate in online communities concerned with men's issues or if men use the discourse of women in order to position themselves in either accommodating or antagonistic relationships. The way in which this is done can also have implications on network building within and outside of men's groups online.

RQ2: Do such pan-movement networks shape the rhetorical strategies to challenge ideographs by online men's movement groups and if so, how?

The second research question explores if network creation between networks impacts the ways ideographs are challenged by online men's movement groups. Ideographs are one-term summations constructed to help explain, justify, and guide policy which help define a collective or group (McGee, 1980), understanding how ideographs are shaped can aid in understanding the ways men's movement organizations converge or diverge on issues related to masculinity. If connections are made to help bridge movement organizations, it may very well have to do with the shared understanding of a particular ideograph. This second research question is concerned with the way connections between men's movements that are of interest in research question #1 impact the challenging of ideographs. In other words, the interest here focuses on how the connection between one movement and another aids in the challenging of an ideograph rather than a single movement challenging an ideograph in an autonomous fashion.

By addressing these research questions, we should get a better understanding of the strategies that a social movement can utilize in creating an online network. What makes men's movements particularly interesting to study in relation to online network construction is their ideological breadth. Messner (1997) explores the areas of differences and agreement between various men's groups. This research will attempt to show how these differences are reconciled or

emphasized online and where points of agreement are acknowledged. Studying the use of ideographs by groups and those who identify with them, will provide some insight as to how the connections between groups are made. These groups can move beyond those comprised solely of men to include women. By incorporating women into the study of men's movements online we can further understand how groups that are assumed to be antagonistic can form alliances. Furthermore, this research will provide greater insight on how women come to adopt the issues that are of concern to men, a group that is generally considered to hold a position of power.

These research questions and this work, in general, stems from an interest I have in how men use the Internet to promote causes important to them. Through all of my years as a student, I have been interested in men's inability to articulate or even recognize issues that may be peculiar to us. My interest in men's movements further intensified when male friends of mine had found themselves in positions where they felt powerless because of their gender. This resulted in my desire to explore the online world to see if other men share similar experiences and feelings. What I found was a discordant group of authors who lacked the focus and language of women's movements. The "Walk a mile in Her Shoes" event outlined at the beginning of this chapter illustrates the complex nature of how men's role's in society can be understood. This study will explore ways in which an ideologically broad set of men's social movements can navigate such complexities online. By exploring networks related to masculinity online, I intend to find a harmony among men's movements that was not obvious in my initial inquiry.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to address the three research questions that were posed in the introduction, it is necessary to provide a more in-depth description of the central concepts. In this chapter, I turn to the scholarly discussions involving alternative media, the rhetoric of social movements, networked activism, and hegemonic masculinity. My review of the literature reveals a notion that connections exist between these concepts in such a way that it makes sense for them to be applied to studying men's movements online. After explaining each of these concepts individually, I will then make connections between each of them as they relate to this study.

Alternative Media

The practice of individuals or groups creating texts outside those produced by mainstream media outlets has generated a good deal of scholarly attention in recent decades. In exploring these types of texts, researchers have generally focused on understanding the motivations and processes behind their production (Atton, 2002a; Curran, 2003; Downing, 1984; Pickard, 2006a; Pickard, 2006b; Rodriguez, 2001). How scholars make sense of motivation and process has led to varying ways of labeling this practice. Dagron (2004) suggests:

> *(h)orizontal, dialogic, participatory, communitarian, radical, popular,* or *alternative* are just some of the names used to refer to communication initiatives that often did not have a clear plan but were definitely the work of people finding their way out of the hegemonic media system and building their own capacity to communicate. (p. 48)

The terms "radical" and "alternative" media are primarily used as descriptors in such discussions (Downing, 1984; Atton, 2002a). In some cases, however, these terms are used interchangeably (Atton, 2002b). Despite the overlap in term use, what scholars choose to label media produced

by those outside of the mainstream media system provides a clue as to where emphasis is placed between motivation and process.

In his study of radical media, Downing (1984), explores "dissonant" media that is produced by groups in Europe and the United States that find themselves to be void of positions of power. The goal of such media, according to Downing, is to provide a platform for oppressed groups to communicate with each other in order to identify and challenge power structures and injustice. Providing such an alternative is necessary since members of marginalized groups are typically unable to present their points of view and histories by means of dominant mainstream, or as Downing calls it "official" media. As a result, there is often a lack of balance and plurality in the messages received by the larger public, thus excluding some groups from the "mass culture" (Downing, 1984). This type of simple dichotomy between the powerful (which includes the mass media) and the powerless (minorities and ordinary people) usually becomes problematic when considering who is and who is not provided a voice (Rodriguez, 2001). It is here, where the struggle over inclusion in the creation of messages that are outside of officially produced discourses, that we find the idea of radical media. Ultimately, radical media means what is focused on producing social change (Atton, 2002a) and where we find motivation to create new outlets for expression.

Atton (2002a) changes the scope of this discussion to a focus on alternative media. Here, instead of emphasizing the motivation for producing new forms of media, Atton is more concerned with the process. He explains that:

> I am less interested here in exploring the reasons for the social construction of mass media news (based on a complex of newsroom routines and rituals, conditions of production, notions of professionalism and objectivity, rehearsed standards of writing and

> editing, as well as accident and opportunity); rather I wish to emphasize the alternative press's responses to such construction as demonstrated not simply by critiques of those media but by their own construction of news, based on alternative values and frameworks of news-gathering and access. (Atton, 2002a, p. 10)

In other words, Atton still values the presence of messages produced by groups that are marginalized and excluded from the mainstream by focusing on the production process. The process is what differentiates alternative media from mainstream and removes the barriers that prevent the views of the marginalized from being presented. In this sense, the idea of radical media is incorporated into that of alternative media because the latter takes into consideration the concerns of power raised in the former. Rodriguez (2001) suggests the way we think of power as related to alternative media should shift from the larger social structure as a whole to those power structures that exist among those producing the alternative media. The terms 'radical' and 'alternative' are then not necessarily exclusive of one another, but for the purpose of this research, the term alternative is preferred based on it being more inclusive of concerns related to both motivation and process.

A precise definition of alternative media is provided by Dagron (2004), saying that *"(a)lternative media* refers to communication experiences that emerge as a need to counterbalance the state and/or commercial mass media" (p. 46). These "experiences' are usually found in the forms of community radio and television programs (Dagron, 2004), newspapers (Atton 2002a; Downing, 1984), online news sites (Pickard 2006b), and blogs (Kenix, 2009). However, such a concrete definition of alternative media does prove problematic. Dagron points to the ever evolving process of alternative media that makes it resistant to any clear definition. The very use of the term alternative produces some objection. Rodriguez (2001), for example,

prefers the term “citizens’ media” as opposed to alternative media. She feels the use of the term ‘alternative’ rests on the assumption that it is alternative to something, which returns to a binary perception of power. It is probably best then not to understand what alternative media is based on in a single definition, but by exploring characteristics that are common among alternative media. In general, Atton (2002a) suggests that alternative media should be understood through three primary characteristics: absence of excessive capital, absence of professional training, and absence of a professional setting.

The first characteristic that strongly differentiates alternative media from mainstream media is the absence of excessive capital. Reducing the flow of money and drive for profit is considered important for alternative media outlets in that it fulfills a desire to move away from the commercial interests that are said to influence commercial media (Atton, 2002b; Downing, 1984). One of the main charges against mainstream media allowing motive for profit to determine what news is covered is outlined best by Downing (1984):

> Commercial media conventionally portray themselves as virtual slaves to ‘the market,’ and thus—as providing people with exactly what they want! They quietly gloss over the power of major advertisers and corporations to define *poor* people’s media wants as irrelevant, compared to those of the more affluent sectors of the market. (pp. 5-6)

In order for the needs of ordinary people to be met, economics allow a greater amount of interactivity and participation on the part of the reader (Atton, 2002a). To have the production of any alternative media be a truly representative process, the interest of advertisers should act as an obstacle in the decision making and editing. Atton’s (2004) definition of alternative media as being “those media produced outside the forces of market economics and the state” indicates he finds this such an essential condition (p. 3).

Distancing themselves from advertisers does lead to the major problem for alternative media outlets that threaten their very existence. By incorporating policies that do not allow for the influx of capital from advertising, it becomes difficult to address issues of production and distribution (Atton, 2002a). Atton explains that luxuries that are taken for granted by larger outlets, such as printers, are expenditures that many smaller news outlets cannot afford. The inability to produce leads to problems with distribution. As a result, many alternative media rely on readers to copy and distribute information themselves in order to be provided any competing and sizeable voice. Reproduction of such material requires the waiving of any copyright protection to allow for open distribution. The rise of the Internet helps to address some issues related to production and distribution (Atton, 2004; Kenix, 2009; Pickard, 2006a), however there is still a need to deal with issues related to potentially costly intellectual property and copyright laws. The use of open source software is one way to combat such laws. Meikle (2002) emphasizes that open source software allows for a system where, "(t)here are no staff reporters as such—instead, the content is generated by anyone who decides to take part (p. 89). Open source software, as implemented by Indymedia.org, provides a platform where there is to be true interactivity between producers and readers by allowing anyone the ability to participate in the news production process providing them the ability to publish directly to the site and comment on the contributions of others (Pickard, 2006a). This power is provided to the reader at a cost that is no more than the computer they use. Conversely, information is being provided to the alternative news outlet at no cost through the work of amateur writers. This leads us to the second characteristic of alternative media, absence of professional training.

As Downing (1984) suggests, what is covered by mainstream commercial media outlets is determined by a market system that excludes the interests and concerns of those not in any

position of power. By providing the reader the ability to contribute to the news production process, alternative media allows for a "filling-in" of the gaps that are left by mainstream news (Atton, 2002a; Kenix, 2009). Such a method of production is indicative of what Downing (1984) calls organization from below. A structure that utilizes an organization from below philosophy places greater influence on the readers in shaping their own identities, communities, and an avenue for personal expression (Atton, 2002a). As a result of these more esoteric contributions, issues covered by these amateur contributors may reflect those of local versus national or global interests (Kenix, 2010; Rodriguez, 2001; Stengrim, 2005). Atton (2002b) views these writers as 'native-reporter' taking part in grassroots journalism. The value here is placed on the voice of those who are experiencing a condition of interest to others on a more continuous basis and not under the influence of newsroom practice norms that could alter the expression of those conditions (Atton, 2002b; Pickard, 2006a).

Without professional constraints placed upon mainstream news organizations, criticism may arise as to the quality of the news produced by any alternative media. Great emphasis is placed on the balance and objectivity presented in the news, particularly by commercial outlets in the United States (Downing, 1984). However, it is this balance and objectivity that excludes and creates the need for an alternative media. In the opinion of many alternative news reporters, professional news practices lead to a bias in reporting, partially as a result of mere access (Atton, 2004). This perception then legitimizes the approach that alternative media reflects a clear bias in their reporting and, in fact, have little interest in balance in their reporting (Atton, 2004). By disregarding the need for objectivity in reporting, the possibility for more in-depth reporting on the part of alternative outlets can be provided as they are more accessible to those who would otherwise not be provided a voice (Ling, 2003; Pickard, 2006a). Open source software aids this

process by making it possible for those ‘on the street’ to post news quickly (Meikle, 2002; Pickard, 2006a) and potentially pass along information more efficiently than mainstream outlets. The views of ‘movement intellectuals’ are also made available to readers or viewers who are, generally speaking, excluded from discussions that are within their areas of interests when they arise in mainstream news (Atton, 2002a). In this way, access to sites that allow for open publishing through open source software has removed the idea that there must be a geographic center from where news is produced (Meikle, 2002). So important is this ability that Meikle (2002) suggests that the increased interactive possibilities open publishing offers has created an activist movement in itself that combats the privatization of the Internet. Being able to access, alter and add to information on websites has also allowed for a faster dissemination of information that is able to outpace corporations, governments, and professional media outlets because of the lack of constraints (Meikle, 2002). The ability for alternative news contributors to be anywhere speaks to the third characteristic of alternative media, the absence of a professional setting.

When speaking of a lack of professional setting, Atton (2002a) does not necessarily mean a physical place where production and distribution occurs, but rather the operation outside of the professional corporate structure in which mainstream media operate. Emphasis here is placed more on organization and lack of structure. The organization aspect is perhaps the most important feature of alternative media that binds these characteristics together and has a direct impact on the other two. Downing (1984) first emphasizes the need for radical media to experience ‘organization from below’ in order to break free of the hierarchies that constrain commercial media. Power is then shifted from producers to readers, who themselves become producers. It is here, perhaps, that we can realize the full power of the Internet in its contribution

to our understanding of alternative media. The Internet has provided a 'place' where fan culture and a new type of journalist can operate outside of structured organizations and truly produce material that is free from economic factors and markets (Atton, 2004; Jenkins, 2006).

Deuze (2003) explores three characteristics that are unique to online journalists: multimediality, interactivity, and hypertextuality. He explains these terms succinctly as they relate to the different considerations online journalists must keep in mind in their production noting that:

> Online journalism can be functionally differentiated from other kinds of journalism by using its technological component as a determining factor in terms of a (operational) definition. The online journalist has to make decisions as to which media format or formats best convey a certain story (multimediality), consider options for the public to respond, interact or even customize certain stories (interactivity), and think about ways to connect the story to other stories, archives, resources, and so forth through hyperlinks (hypertextuality). (p. 206)

Certainly, this description of what online journalists must consider is not peculiar to those who would fit into the definition of alternative media producers. Mainstream outlets and professional journalists must take these factors into consideration when producing material for consumption, which was the subject of Deuze's study. The break towards alternative media may come in the technology employed. Thus, according to Deuze (2003), "scholars and professionals alike use the discourse of the Internet's unique characteristics as a way in which to define online journalism as something different to other journalisms—as a 'fourth' kind of journalism, next to print, radio and television" (p. 206). Online journalism is not a space reserved for only professionals. The Internet provides a way for many to access, interact with, and create

information with fairly limited technical training. We can see this power exercised by individuals on the Internet most prominently through the production of blogs.

Blogs, short for the term 'weblog', are defined by Kaye (2005) as "asynchronous, online venues that provide users with a range of online interactions; users read information and opinion, send in their own analysis and links to additional information, and interact with bloggers and other blog readers" (p. 75). Li and Walejko (2008) provide a more concise definition of a blog stating they are "frequently updated websites that display content in reverse chronological order" (p. 279). Despite the breadth of what a blog is considered to be, they generally offer links to other sources, are frequently updated with an archive of previous posts, and offer an opportunity for user feedback. This indicates there are two types of people involved in the blog equation, the blogger and the user.

Kaye (2005) identifies six motivations for using blogs: information seeking and media checking, convenience, personal fulfillment, political surveillance, social surveillance, and expression and affiliation. Political interest and involvement of users are generally stronger predictors of their tendency to read blogs. It is important to note, however, that blogs do not initiate political involvement, but rather attract those who are already engaged. This is due to blogs offering a way for like-minded individuals to affiliate with one another (Kaye, 2005). The affiliation of politically knowledgeable individuals is central to the overall importance of the blogging phenomenon. Users who are seeking, and finding, blogs with congruent ideological perspectives often become loyal to them and become habitual users (Kaye, 2005). Often, blogs are not looked upon as being fair (Johnson, Kaye, Bichard & Wong, 2008), but are rather viewed as a supplement to mainstream news coverage. Johnson et al. (2008) explain that "because blogs feature information missing from other sources and they discuss issues in more depth than do

mainstream media, users would rank blogs high for depth and information" (p. 109). This issue of credibility is especially high among heavy blog users (Johnson et al., 2008). Heavy users may view blogs as being more credible for two reasons. First, blogs generally do not operate under the same economic constraints as mainstream media. Blogs are often free from any pandering to corporate sponsorship when developed by individuals. It is primarily the case where blogs created by individuals is not done so for any economic gain. Second, blogs offer an open forum for users to communicate with one another and to the author directly. Users may view this interactive aspect to blogs as adding to the site's credibility. The interaction between blogs and the mainstream media is interesting since the nature of many blogs is somewhat contentious in respect to mainstream news outlets. Users move to blogs for alternative viewpoints and to fill in "holes" left by mainstream news. However, blogs are heavily reliant on mainstream sources for content (Kenix, 2009). This can create what Kenix calls an "echo chamber" which results in the duplication of information through hyperlinking within a given blog community. This exposes users to similar messages in a repeated fashion, even if numerous blogs are accessed. Despite this limitation, Kaye (2005) determines that blogs, "provide a unique forum where ordinary citizens take on big media by voicing criticisms, pointing out perceived biases, and catching mistakes" (p. 90).

It becomes clear in the literature that the Internet has taken a unique place in the discussion of alternative media. Blogs, in particular, can act as outlets for alternative news organizations and news aggregates in order to contest the power of the mainstream press. Given the relative ease and lack of cost of publishing online, marginalized groups are provided with a method of spreading messages that help mitigate problems associated with print publications and

distribution. Access to these messages becomes essential to the next concept that is to be discussed; the rhetoric of social movements.

The Rhetoric of Social Movements

The study of what a social movement is comprised of may not be as simple to explain as many initially believe. It is easy to focus on individuals or a "great orator" and the issue or issues that they are addressing (Griffin, 1952; Stewart, Smith, & Denton, 2007) as a shortcut or a compendium of what a given social movement stands for. What becomes lost is the complexity of the "multiplicity of speakers, speeches, audiences, and occasions" that makes up the larger movement (Griffin, 1952, p.184). By understanding the various audiences and occasions, in particular, we can see that there are various types of movements with different goals and means in which to achieve those goals. To focus on the means directs us to approaching the study of social movements from a rhetorical perspective.

Griffin (1952) suggests that focus be placed on the study of movements and a survey of public address. He starts with the idea of a historical movement, which requires looking in the past and recognizing when some undesirable aspect of the environment is identified, change is desired with an effort to create the change, and some degree of success or failure results. Studies of historical movements are, according to Griffin, typically constructed as having a cycle consisting of a beginning, a progression, and a termination. However, of concern to Griffin is how persuasion plays a role in contributing to change within this linear view of social movements. Griffin notes that it should be the goal of scholars to unveil the rhetorical movement that rest within the 'matrix' of the historical movement. This would require us to explore periods of inception (where rhetoricians generate interest in and initiate the movement), rhetorical crisis (when opposing groups of rhetoricians form and alter the discourse that is present within the

movement), and consummation (when rhetoricians abandon the movement due to its success or failure). Each of these components of the rhetorical movement coincides with stages of the historical movement. The emphasis is on a chronological construction of the movement with particular attention given to various methods of propaganda, including speeches, books, newspapers, and pamphlets. By studying the rhetoric of the historical movement, scholars can offer a more complete picture as to how discussions take place within social movements and possible rhetorical patterns that develop within them.

Sillars (1980), on the other hand, prefers to take a non-linear approach to the study of social movements and is critical of Griffins approach for preventing researchers from studying movements in their entirety. Adopting a rigid approach as suggested by Griffin, could inhibit researchers from discovering alternate patterns of discourse that exist within social movements. Sillars' offers a preliminary definition of a movement stating that movements are "a combination of events occurring over time which can be linked in such a way that the critic can make a case for treating them as a single unit" (p. 19). By looking at combinations of events, a greater degree of flexibility is provided to researchers in discovering themes, strategies, and arguments. Perhaps more importantly, a non-linear approach would allow for a more complete picture of a social movement's makeup. If researchers were to adhere to Griffin's approach, it would be possible that movements could be mistaken for a series of movements, or vice-versa. Within a larger movement, factions may form and become mistaken as being individual movements of their own (Sillars, 1980). This was later recognized by Griffin (1980) when discussing "counter-movements" that emerge and threaten the movement from which they came. These factions, or "wings" as Sillars refers to them, can lead to confusion as they relate to the study of social movements if held under Griffin's original prescription for analysis. As these 'wings' emerge,

the ability to explain their inception and positions is less probable given the rigid definitions and chronological constraints researchers place upon themselves. Instead, the way we define social movements should be altered to allow researchers to construct the movements they seek to study. This leads Sillars to create a new definition which states that:

> Movements, then, are collective actions which are perceived by a critic. They are defined by that critic in terms of the most useful rhetorical events, conflicts, or strategies which will best explain the critic's view of the movement. (p. 30)

Thus, Sillars suggests that critics 'create' movements as much as they study them. The creation of movements would possibly result in "an infinite number of acts that may be put together in an infinite number of combinations" (Sillars, 1980, p. 27).

Consistent with Sillars' approach, McGee questions the usefulness of studying social movements as "historical movements" (McGee, 1980). McGee views social movements as being "a set of meanings and not a phenomenon" (McGee, 1980, p. 235). Similarly, this also builds towards the conception of the rhetorical movement. Making connections between individual acts with meaning and a larger phenomenon was not an entirely new approach by the time Sillars and McGee made their recommendations. When we look at movements as collective behavior, more sense can be made of 'outburst' and 'mobs' which form and share characteristics of groups seeking change. For example, protest outside the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago leading to clashes with police (Bowers, Ochs, Jensen, & Schulz, 2010) and members of the British women's suffrage movement in the early part of the twentieth century taking part in acts of property damage (Kowal, 2001) are studied as being incidents that are part of larger movements. It is possible that these individual rhetorical acts become viewed as independent and

unrelated actions. However, greater cohesion among them can be formed by scholars through the creation of movements.

As much as incidents such as violent outbursts and rallies provide us with new ways of interpreting social movements, they may result in a fragmented understanding for which the larger movement stands. Lucas (1980) finds this approach limiting in that they often only equate social movements to 'persuasive campaigns'. Although persuasion is an important component of social movements, studying them as such would only offer an understanding of a particular aspect of a given movement. Movements are multidimensional and should be viewed within their historical context, but there is more to it that needs explaining. If a rhetorical approach is to be used in the study of social movements, according to Lucas (1980), it must be done giving consideration to "the interplay between discourse and the other factors that condition the process of social movements" (p. 263). This shift to focusing on the process of movements truly begins to blur the parameters set by thinking in terms of historical movements. It is at this point that movement scholars are interested in something beyond the historical movement, the new social movement.

As we move into exploring new social movements, a clear break from the work of Griffin and Sillars becomes clear. New social movements begin to take on new types of issues and implement new tactics that are distinct from the historical movements that have previously been explored. Much of this is in response to the development of a society that has emerged which emphasizes data and information over labor. Issues of identity politics have replaced issues related to legislative politics as the primary point of concern of new social movements. Despite these changes, the use of rhetoric in understanding these movements has been rather constant. What has changed are the ways rhetorical choices groups make to illustrate their points or

objections. These choices by members of new social movements provide an alternate way for researchers to understand their views and goals.

Touraine (1977) provides a description of the societal shift that has occurred and given rise to new social movements. Over time, our society has gone from primarily industrial to what Touraine refers to as programmed. The industrial society saw labor as its core issue. Struggles between classes and the reproduction of those classes were common themes of movements within that society. Issues of worker's rights and the ability to pass legislation in support of those rights were at the center of these movements. These movements, whether they were large or fragmented, were relatively well defined and had clear objectives. For the programmed society, on the other hand, investment was no longer at the level of the work organization, but on that of production management. Production of information and control are of greater value. As Touraine states, "(w)hat is crucial now is no longer the struggle between capital and labour in the factory but between the different kinds of apparatus and user—consumers or more simply the public—defined less by their specific attributes than their resistance to domination by the apparatus" (pp. 6-7). Issues of physical or tangible capital that Griffin and Sillars were mainly concerned with are no longer the focal point. In their place now is cultural capital. This shift has caused a shift in political action from workers' rights to the rights of all to realize their political potential (Touraine, 1977). A similar view of this evolution is presented by Harold (2004) when she explains how Foucault and Deleuze describe society as going from one that is disciplinary to one of control. Disciplinary in this case can be understood as industrial, whereas, control resembles the notion of a programmed society.

New social movements, then, need not have to form around new causes and demands (Touraine, 1978), but rather contest hegemonic discourse (DeLuca, 1999). Articulating

abstractions of a popular belief system, contradictions may be discovered and antagonisms formed in order to rearticulate the dominant discourse and contest social norms. DeLuca explains this process in detail as it relates to some environmental group's use of ideographs. This reworking of the beliefs held by a dominant culture regarding environmentalist activism seeks to use the very logic that was used to construct it against itself in order to promote the goals of environmental groups. The importance of such a tactic is to politicize issues that bring an intersection of community, history, and power (Pezzullo, 2003). These new movements differ from those of the past in two major ways. The first is they are extremely fragmented in nature. When we think of social movements, we think of rather cohesive, organized groups in which its parts generally move in unison. In cases such as Greenpeace, the organizational structure is flat. This rejection of an established hierarchy allows for independent actors to take part in activities that are autonomous. In this case, several different groups or individuals identifying themselves and being members of an organization or movement may act in different ways. DeLuca points out that the autonomy offered to members fit the characteristics of those who wish to join such movements. Perceptions of larger groups, such as the Sierra Club, may not be attractive to many would-be environmentalists due to the belief that it acts as if it is a large corporation (DeLuca, 1999; Pezzullo, 2003). In fact, many cite policy concessions as evidence of their fixed place within the larger corporate-government structure. The locality of issues also plays into the independent nature of many movements. In the cases of demonstrations held in West Valley and Love Canal, New York (DeLuca, 1999), and tours in New Orleans, Louisiana (Pezzullo, 2004), the issues of importance to the members of the movements addressing them may not appeal to a larger entity. Small groups of individuals may decide to take on a certain cause with varying degrees of success. As these cases illustrated, movements may be extremely informal in their

organizational structure. The second way new social movements differ is in the tactics they employ. New social movements have used methods that greatly differ from speeches and rallies. The uses of more unconventional rhetorical messages, such as tree sitting or mock funerals, have become popular because of the prominence of broadcast news (DeLuca, 1999). By performing eye-catching or unusual acts, activists for different causes can become newsworthy based on visual novelty. Visibility is valued as a way of contesting dominant values. In order to infiltrate the structure that creates such values and norms, visually appealing tactics need to be used in order to obtain time on the local or national news. There is a need for spectacle that demands and is worthy of attention. Some tactics, such as sabotage (or ecotage as used by Earth First!), tree-sitting, and confronting whaling ships are clearly understood as being used for the purpose of disrupting conventional behaviors. However, others such as mock funerals, throwing pies in the faces of celebrities and performances that are disguised as tours require more critical thought or interpretation. In the case of the former two, how such events are framed by the news media is likely to determine their success or failure. Often times, emphasis is placed on the event, not the intended message (DeLuca, 1999). When the issues that movements address attempt to rearticulate ideographs, there is an increased reliance on the media to properly interpret the event. Often, it seems that new movements favor cryptic actions or image events as DeLuca (1999) refers to them. Given that the news media is controlled by corporate interests, it is unlikely a proper interpretation of these messages will be made (DeLuca, 1999).

At the center of all rhetorical actions such as image events, according to Stewart, Smith, & Denton, Jr. (2007) is persuasion. Persuasion is, "the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols to affect audience perceptions and thus to bring about changes in thinking, feeling, and/or acting" (Stewart et al., 2007, p. 21). The use of persuasion is essential to the three types of social

movements (Stewart et al., 2007) identify: innovative social movements (seek to replace existing norms with new ones), revivalistic social movements (seek to reestablish norms from an idealized past), and resistance social movement (seek to prohibit changes and maintain the status quo). Despite the different goals of each type of movement, persuasion is necessary to legitimize a claim and gain support for creating a condition to lead to the desired change. Therefore, the definition provided by Stewart et al., (2007) describing a social movement as being "an organized, institutionalized, and large collectivity that emerges to promote or resist change in societal norms and values operating primarily through persuasion encountering opposition [in its moral struggle]" (p. 24) would seem to suffice. However, from what has been discussed about how we look at new social movements, a term such as "organize" in the definition provided by Stewart et al. may not be accurate. Organization proves to be problematic in new social movements as the issue of networked activism is addressed.

Networked Activism

One of the distinct characteristics of new social movements is the structure under which they operate or exist. Understanding these structures is essential if new social movements are to be recognized as agents of change. Much like the organizational structures of alternative media outlets, new social movements are often characterized by their lack of hierarchical organization structure. Generally, new social movement networks tend to be extremely decentralized (Best, 2005). In fact, Eriksson (2005) suggests that no structure is even implied. According to Eriksson, "(s)ociety, as a 'totality' of all communication, can no longer be conceived of either in terms of a centre or hierarchy, or in the perspective of direct competitive relationships" (2005, p. 305). Eriksson supports this position by emphasizing that other metaphors can explain the communicative process in society, the biological metaphor using the nervous system specifically,

do not adequately address the complexity of systems and structures within it. Furthermore, the ability to understand how systems and structures operate as a whole is impossible with numerous conceptual interpretations and models of communication that conflict with one another and fail individually to provide a comprehensive approach to studying them (Eriksson, 2005). When networks are discussed social movements can be conducted in more than one way. On one hand, there are the abstract and theoretical pieces that discuss how networks form and ways they should operate normatively. On the other, networks are discussed in more pragmatic ways that provide examples to explain how specific connections are made and how they work in conjunction with one another.

Eriksson (2005) provides an overview of how we should begin to think about networks. He looks at a network as being something that explains a larger communicative order by defining them as "related to a number of technical, discursive, and institutional processes, such as the development of information technology and increases in the number of communicative relations and instances" (p. 305). In short, the importance here becomes the level in which a person, group, or entity becomes connected through a structure. Eriksson explains what a network may look like metaphorically. As Eriksson explains through Castells' conceptualization, networks may be without structure and can be represented through a set of interconnected nodes. Where these nodes are in relation to one another determine their setting within the network. The degree in which they are found to be, either internal or external to the network, is determined by the distance that exists between them. If a node is internal to a network, then it is in close proximity to other nodes. Nodes that are considered external find themselves more distant from others. This may seem to initially imply a center if we are to consider distance, however, there is just a binary logic of inclusion and exclusion in Castell's conception of a network (Eriksson, 2005).

As a result of this lack of structure, the decision making within this type of network is also decentralized. Another way networks can be looked upon is through that of scale-free networks, as Eriksson explains Barabasi's concept of networks. According to Barabasi (2009), networks are also viewed as an interconnected set of nodes, however, there is a difference in that some nodes, referred to as 'hubs', are more connected than others and may link to more poorly connected ones. Barabasi calls this type of structure a scale-free network. Scale-free networks are rather dynamic and place value on some nodes in preference to others. In a sense, there is an implied power structure that produces various centers. These centers may be in a constant antagonistic state with one another, which allows for changes in the appearance of the network. What this suggests, then, is that networks may not be as random as Castells suggests. If hubs exist in a network and exert some type of power that determines the degree in which other nodes are included or excluded from that network, some type of structure and hierarchy is present. Another approach to understanding networks is actor network theory by Callon and Bruno (Eriksson, 2005). It also envisions the links and nodes Castells and Barabasi explain, however they suggest that the nodes are, in fact, active agents who place the network in a constant state of flux. In this case, the network is not a cohesive unit, but is solely made up of actors. The actors, who make up the nodes, are able to move and determine their own place within the network that best serves their purposes. Where the actor network approach differs greatly from the former two is in the understanding that there are boundaries in which a network exists. Castells and Barabasi understand networks to exist in a state where there is infinite space for a network to rest and nodes to be located (Eriksson, 2005). Callon and Bruno, on the other hand, understand actors to be limited to finding their place among pre-existing *networks* (Eriksson, 2005). A final way to look at networks is through the rhizome metaphor. The rhizome comes to view a network in its

most nebulous form. Networks viewed in this way have no order and are always meandering and expanding. No boundaries exist and nothing can be considered to be internal or external to it. In short, the rhizome seeks to address the *"*wholeness" of a network. Eriksson takes time to explain these in order to get us think about the connections between "actors, technologies, and practices" (p. 321). Although Eriksson finds the idea of a network without boundaries of little use to the researchers who study them, he does feel that the attempt by others who choose to take this approach is a positive step towards understanding the totality of communication as dynamic structures. This way of thinking leads us towards a more pragmatic application of these concepts.

One of the places the formation of networks as they relate to social movements can be seen is on the Internet. These network structures help determine their ability participate in democratic communication that is of interest to Best (2005). According to Best, democracy is "an assemblage of modes and material and discursive organizing designed to grant popular power" (p. 215). Understanding what role social movements have in their ability to provide communication paths, is as democratic as politics has become more about creating order through language is of importance here. Kavada (2005) emphasizes the strengthening of internal linkages (those between an organization's headquarters and its local groups) and external linkages (those between the organization and other groups involving governments and media) through the use of the Internet. Perhaps just as important as these linkages, are the interactive components offered on the Internet which incorporates individual users in the structure of a movement. Kavada (2005) explains that "the participatory and interactive features of the Internet, such as email lists, newsgroups or chatrooms, can be used to foster solidarity within the organization and deepen the public's involvement with its cause" (p. 209). When looking at formation of the networks of civic organizations such as Amnesty International, Oxfam, and the World Development

Movement on the Internet, the ability of individual actors to link to larger groups can prove to be somewhat problematic as Kavada (2005) explains:

> All websites have hyperlinks to their local groups and international branches. This indicates that the Internet has led to a greater decentralization of the information provision process. At the same time, it has provided a platform for local groups to speak their mind. This potential could be particularly problematic for organizations wishing to keep tight control of their message and image, since the local groups' websites may lack up-to-date-information, be poorly designed and deviate from the organization's official position. (p. 213)

As local groups begin to deviate from the central actors in any given movement and take on their own individual causes, a 'gap' begins to form (Ruiz, 2005) where there is a loss of control, as Kavada explained. This ultimately results in a type of *do it yourself* (DIY) politics for offshoot groups where an organizational structure forms a gap that sets them apart from the mainstream (Ruiz, 2005). These offshoots lack any type of structure and tend to be more "rhizomatic" according to Ruiz. However, this is not to suggest that there is no sense of cohesion in that "(t)his organizational looseness enables DIY groups to accommodate a multiplicity of contradictory voices and actions whilst maintaining a real sense of ideological unity" (Ruiz, 2005, p. 196). Perhaps the best type of movement to see how this is presented in academic literature is the globalization movement.

Best suggests that computer mediated communication is important for social movements like the globalization movement that are not clearly focused and are, in some forms, short lived. When Best speaks of the globalization movement, she admits that it is hard to define precisely because of diversity of issues and the fragmented and ephemeral nature of the activities that

globalization activists participate in. Instead, Best conceptualizes the globalization movement as being the contributions of activists on a global scale that reflect democratic practices which oppose corporate rule and Non-Governmental Organizations that focus on the "communication of popular power, through a variety of organizational strategies and processes including [and especially] those about the organizing of meaning" (p. 216). The organization of meaning or formation of a collective identity is difficult since it is subjective and easy for activists to move in and out of the movement by "checking out the odd website and forwarding the occasional activist email, actions that might not have any real impact" (Best, 2005, p. 225). Such communication methods are detrimental in that they, "intensify individualism of the democratic experience" (p. 225) and may result in individuals equating reading globalization activist websites, and other forms of discourse with actual action. This could mean that instead of change, there would be managed spectatorship (Best, 2005). Without any identifiable action, individuals only act as spectators and do not participate in the democratic process. It is possible for a condition of networked activism to exist if the Internet can be used properly for "coordination, persuasion, and representation" (Best, 2005, p. 227). The globalization movement has been able to address individual projects and protests through computer mediated communication resulting in what is known as mesomobilization. Scott and Street (2001) emphasize the role of the Internet in facilitating mesomobilization, by allowing "a high degree of co-ordination between movement networks across a broad geographical range without creating fixed hierarchical organizational forms" (p. 46). Mesomobilization can occur when a large, global network that is made up of a number of small, local subsidiaries that have a degree of autonomy. This ties in closely with the principle of nonsummativity that is described by Stewart, Smith, and Denton, Jr. (2007). The principle of nonsummativity is used to describe, "the whole

of this interdependence as something other than the simple sum of the individual parts" (Stewart, Smith, and Denton, Jr., 2007, p. 28). Here, individuals come together as groups and form their own identities and behavioral tendencies while at the same time being part of a larger movement that is made up of the interdependent network they form. Through use of the Internet, the globalization movement has been able to maintain a collective identity while still allowing for spontaneous organizing (Best, 2005). Thus, the ability for new networks to form within, and in relation to other networks is a distinct feature of mesomobilization. Despite the strength of identity building outlined by Best, it does not always translate well into actual activism. The ability for individuals or groups to identify with others does not necessarily address the issue of how they identify with each other.

Activists may begin to seek out groups of interest online that take a position on the issue then begin to interact with them, which provides the activists with a sense of belonging to that movement (Warnick, 2007). Despite this sense of belonging, this does not guarantee cohesion. When groups are linked together by a common issue, the ideologies and the way they are expressed (or performed) by individual members may clash and cause tension (Atkinson, 2009a, Best, 2005; Scott & Street, 2001). This is frequently occurs in movements associated with the issue of globalization. When activists say that they identify with the Zapatistas of Chiapas, Mexico, for example, this may be based on only a limited understanding of the roots of that movement. Atkinson (2009b) suggests that the portrayals that are present on the Internet regarding the Zapatistas dominate the views activists have of them, even when they are directly confronted with their conditions on *Truth Tours.* Activists resort to narratives that are familiar to them in order to make sense of what they encounter. It is here where there is a problem with the networks that form within new social movements as a result of alternative and interactive media.

Messages and issues of interest originally of concern to the movement get lost when placed in a larger, global context.

Atkinson and Dougherty (2006) also find similar confusion when smaller networks are linked together by larger ones that take on umbrella issues. In one case described by Atkinson and Dougherty it is not the lack of a shared ideology that can be problematic, but rather the intensity in which the resistant audiences carry out their acts. This was discovered at an anti-Iraq war rally that was primarily setup online to take place in a physical setting. In this case, tension occurred as a result of the way groups use and interpret the online forums they used to obtain information about an offline event. When interviewing participants at the rally, different types of approaches were discovered in the way which the participants felt that the rally should have been conducted. What Atkinson and Dougherty show is that, in general, there can be agreement about a larger social problem, however, the degree of resistive performance can greatly differ. The rally the participants attended was made known by a website and listserv. A stage was provided by use of an anti-war backdrop, however, themes such as human rights and democracy were issues more explicitly emphasized by online users. Although this brings individuals together who belong to the same general network, the type of online communities in which they belong indicate breaks in the level of agreement they share in the communicative performances implemented and, thus, places them in different areas within that network. Problems in this lack of coordination are likely products of mesomobilization that briefly bring disperse groups within a larger movement in contact with one another. These encounters, as short as they are in the case of rallies, tend to re-establish divides that are present in the given movement (anti-war in the case of Atkinson and Dougherty's analysis). We can see here that, as Best (2005) suggests, acts of mesomobilization are as much about meaning making and identity building as they are about the

issue at hand. Lack of agreement within a social movement network may be resolved, to an extent, through the presence of a strong central figure which binds it (Stewart et al., 2007). How activists come to understand what a movement stands for can become lost in their own interpretation based on their own experiences and what they can relate to (Atkinson, 2009a).

Some of the problems associated with the diffusion of a message are common among new social movements. New social movements shift from class and rights to issues of identity and power structures that govern a system but go unquestioned (DeLuca, 1999). These movements are now believed to replace what was once held by political parties or labor unions (Huesca, 2001). Much of the time, these issues of concern are abstract and multi-faceted (Touraine, 1977). Further complicating the problem of clearly identifying the goals of new social movements is the rather flat organization structures they prefer to operate under. This is where we see some problem in achieving the goals that were once left to more structured, hierarchical organizations. A hierarchy does achieve some degree of order, something that may be lost in a decentralized organization, such as a new social movement (Best, 2005). It is often the case, then, where a strong central figure is necessary to establish the parameter of positions on issues taken by a movement and to ease the tensions that may exist within them (Eriksson, 2005).

We can see cases in the globalization movement in international contexts in such figures as Ken Saro-Wiwa, a member of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in Nigeria and Subcommander Marcos of the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Mexico (Bob, 2005). Both act as spokespersons who bring focus to their respective movements. In the case of Saro-Wiwa, a strong international appeal was made possible through his command of English and a good degree of wealth which provided him with access to an outside world that would

otherwise not have been offered. In return, publicity was provided by news outlets in Britain and the United States concerning the struggles MOSOP was encountering with oil giant Shell. The role Marcos plays in the Zapatista movement acts in a more iconic way providing some of the identity to the Zapatistas (Russell, 2005). This image, Russell points out, reaches to that of a mythical status to the degree where Russell refers to Marcos as "universal Marcos", who is an embodiment of all who identify with the Zapatistas. When such figures are not present, tensions can occur. Soon after Saro-Wiwa's death, infighting began within MOSOP (Bob, 2005). Bob explains that the stability Saro-Wiwa brought to MOSOP was essential in gaining support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Once fractures within the movement presented themselves, external (or international) support began to decrease and reduced the attention MOSOP was able to gain. When such problems occur, NGOs tend to pull support, given that they are organizations that must survive and seek causes that are marketable and winnable.

In order to appeal to an NGO, the 'leader' of a social movement must indicate that their movement will provide that specific NGO with a situation that is both marketable and winnable. It is here where the identity of a movement may get lost despite a strong spokesperson. The issue of globalization plays well into the concerns of new social movements. Despite the fact both the Zapatistas and MOSOP were more concerned with long-standing problems between indigenous groups and their national governments, the issue of globalization and the struggle between transnational corporations and these groups are of greater appeal to the international community (Bob, 2005). In the case of MOSOP, it was their battle with Shell. For the Zapatistas, the signing of NAFTA provided the necessary link. As a result, the support expressed from outside activists may be misguided (Atkinson, 2009b; Bob, 2005). Steps may be taken to come to agreement on the goals of various factions within a movement. For instance, linkages between Zapatistas and

other groups are developed through votes and referendums that try to forge agreements on where overlapping interests exist (Swords, 2007). Despite these efforts, the larger network may fail in reaching any type of consensus on issues that are of concern to them and in prescribing actions that would best resolve the conditions surrounding those issues. Having a strong center, or hub, would seem to relieve tensions related to issues of agreement, but this is not necessarily the case.

Pickard (2006b) uses the network structure of Indymedia.org to illustrate this point. Despite the intent of a fully democratic organizational structure of the Independent Media Centers (IMC) that makes up Indymedia, some IMCs act autonomously. This was the case with a Ford Foundation grant that was provided to the IMC out of Urbana-Champaign (which acted as the treasury for the network) in 2002. As an IMC out of Argentina sought to block the acceptance of the grant, Pickard cited concerns with the way the network was constructed through three tyranny's: The tyranny of structurelessness (the continuous need for activists to be reflexive of their internal practices that relate to issues of power), the tyranny of ideology (the degree to which a grand narrative is adhered to throughout the organization to ensure that all who associate themselves with it understand operating procedures), and the tyranny of the editor (the degree to which information is filtered). Wrapped up in these concerns are issues of access in the participatory process among individuals and groups in different settings and global contexts that shape the collective identity of the movement. The acceptance of a large sum of money from a foundation was viewed as a threat to Indymedia's image as being a radical news outlet (Pickard, 2006b). The point to make here is when centers in activist's networks are present, they tend to conflict with the overall goals of new social movements.

The goal of this section was to illustrate how networks can be thought of as they relate to new social movements. More specifically, the Internet has shown to play an important role in the

construction of these networks. Through the use of online forums, new social movements are now able to easily extend their networks to include groups that identify with a given issue on an international scale. However, networks being as dynamic as they are, problems can occur in the coordination of displays of resistance in the material world and the degree of agreement on issues among individual groups.

Hegemonic Masculinity

The way scholars have come to situate men in discussions related to gender has changed considerably thanks to Connell's theoretical construct of hegemonic masculinity. Despite having its critics, hegemonic masculinity acts as a point of departure in understanding the social relationships between men and women and among different groups of men. Through identifying various types of relationships, a stronger foundation is provided for making sense of how these relationships are sustained and reproduced by the communicative practices within our society and on a global level. The communicative practices that are of consequence to today's gendered power structures are essential to explore if we are to address how different groups understand their positions within them.

Connell (1987) bases his theory on Gramsci's concept of hegemony which Connell understands to be, "a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes" (p. 184). It is important to note that Connell emphasizes that hegemony does not require force or "the obliteration of alternatives" (p. 184). Therefore, as it relates to the power order based on gender, hegemonic masculinity does not require that the majority of men reflect masculine ideals but is based more on the institution of marriage, heterosexuality, and the overall subordination of women. When we speak of masculine ideals, Trujillo (1991) provides a good start with what is

meant by being “masculine”. It is from here where we can determine what is being sustained and positioned as we begin to understand how hegemonic masculinity is replicated. Trujillo (1991) does this by analyzing media portrayals of former baseball pitcher Nolan Ryan. With males holding a dominant position in the sports world, it is an ideal place to explore ways that hegemonic masculinity is reproduced (Anderson, 2002). Ultimately, Trujillo identifies five features that are characteristic of hegemonic masculinity that Nolan Ryan exemplifies: physical power or force, occupational achievement, familial patriarchy, frontiersmanship, and heterosexuality. Atkinson and Calafell (2009) add a sixth dimension, avoidance of responsibility, when employing the organizational communication concept of the “gray area” relating to sexual harassment to the Anakin Skywalker character in the *Star War*s movie series. These studies bring more specific criteria to understanding what is meant by Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity, especially when applying them to Hanke’s (1990) definition which includes “the social ascendancy of a particular version or model of masculinity that, operating on the terrain of ‘common sense’ and conventional morality, defines ‘what it means to be a man’” (p.232). However, Connell (1987) emphasizes that hegemonic masculinity, “is not necessarily what powerful men are, but what sustains their power and what large numbers of men are motivated to support” (p. 185). Ultimately, Connell (2005) settles on defining hegemonic masculinity as being “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (p. 77).

Connell’s definition is a bit misleading in that it initially seems to recognize the existence of a single masculinity. However, Connell does incorporate different “masculinities” into his theory. Connell’s suggestion that there are masculinities also suggests masculinity should not be

a taken for granted abstraction. Universalizing masculinity makes men as a group invisible for those who study gender (Malin, 2005). Typically, to study "gender" had come to mean studying women or femininity. However, since the early 1990s and the adoption of hegemonic masculinity as a way of looking at men and masculinity, differences appeared across groups of men and their positioning in relation to the masculine ideal. With there being a social construction of a masculinity that is hegemonic, those who do not identify with it are then considered subordinate, which would open the possibility of those who are "dominated" to both groups, men and women. As a result, a type of hierarchy of masculinities has emerged: hegemonic masculinity, conservative (complicit) masculinity, subordinate masculinity, and marginalized masculinity (Connell, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity has been described in the pages above and incorporates the ideal characteristics that were unveiled by Trujillo (1991), and Atkinson and Calafell (2009). Conservative or complicit masculinity is that which the men who benefit from the current social order in no way contest it. Connell (2005) describes this type of masculinity as being "constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy" (p. 79). Subordinate masculinity, under Connell's understanding, is largely but not exclusively, associated with homosexual males. Here, subordinate masculinity is largely equated with femininity. Connell further explains other types of subordinate masculinities that suggest:

> Some heterosexual men and boys too are expelled from the circle of legitimacy. The process is marked by a rich vocabulary of abuse: wimp, milksop, nerd, turkey, sissy, lily liver, jellyfish, yellowbelly, candy ass, ladyfinger, pushover, cookie pusher, cream puff, motherfucker, pantywaist, mother's boy, four-eye's, ear-'ole, dweeb, geek, Milquestoast, Cedric, and so on. Here too the symbolic blurring with femininity is obvious. (p.79)

Finally, marginalized masculinity is characterized by other factors that include the interplay between class and race. Hegemonic masculinity is largely considered to be a construction centered on a white middle-class ideal. Men who are ethnic minorities and/or among the working-class are then unlikely to act as exemplars of the dominant image of masculinity (Connell, 2005).

Articulating the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been important for providing a place for men in the gender discussion. To do this is an improvement over more simple sex role theories that Connell sought to move beyond. Sex role theory relies on a dichotomy based on sex, which ignores the influence of power structures within societies (Connell, 1987). Although Connell succeeds in providing a way of looking at gender that breaks from a simple dichotomy, it is not without limitations. Returning to Connell's definition, we can see where hegemonic masculinity can be useful, but it also provides points of confusion. As mentioned previously, perhaps the theory's biggest limitation is it assumes the conditions in western, predominantly white, society's value heterosexuality. There is clearly, then, a western bias in the ideal images of masculinity.

It is important to emphasize Connell envisions hegemonic masculinity as being capable of change over time. However, this ability to change is dependent on the degree in which different groups of men, and women, are influential in creating any change. Similar concerns are later addressed by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005). They focus on difficulties regarding the concept of hegemonic masculinity. They concede that a greater focus on large-scale historical changes in gender is needed. The authors claim that this would provide optimism for hegemonic masculinity in that new and less oppressive norms of what it is to be a man can come to being while abolishing gender hierarchies. They address five different criticisms of hegemonic

masculinity. First is the underlying concept of masculinity. Masculinity is "framed within a hetero-normative conception of gender that essentializes male-female difference and ignores difference and exclusion within gender categories. The concept of masculinity is said to rest logically on the dichotomization of sex (biological) versus gender (cultural) and thus marginalizes or naturalizes the body" (p. 836). Generally speaking, when there is discussion of different "sphere's" it is presumed that they exist in a rather exclusive fashion that makes one gender invisible in relation to the other within that sphere (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). This indicates, however, that this is a tendency on the part of researchers and not necessarily a characteristic of the theory.

Second is ambiguity and overlap. This is interesting because it questions who actually represents hegemonic masculinity. It is suggested that those who are in real positions of power tend not to do so. Connell positions characters played by Sylvester Stallone and John Wayne as being those who personify hegemonic masculinity. Connell is upfront with the assertion that it is unlikely that any man truly exemplifies such a character in real life, but they do act as normative representations of hegemonic masculinity. Although this point is clear, it is less when we consider social class. Hallgrímsdóttir & Adams (2004) provide an interesting example where the labor union Knights of Labor participated in what they called a "masculinity project" to redefine what it meant to be masculine by shifting the concept to fit the working-class. Here blue-collar workers became the hegemonic ideal. This is still preserved today in the reading of the Paul Teutle Sr., in the series *American Chopper* presented by Carroll (2008). But as Jefferson (2002) questions, how would a white-collar Bill Gates, for example, fit the theory? Gates holds a considerable amount of power and has obviously benefited from the established system. However, he has done this without exemplifying many of the characteristics of hegemonic

masculinity. This leads Jefferson to question whether we should not be thinking of a singular hegemonic masculinity. At any fixed period in history we may experience a single hegemonic strategy.

Third is the problem of reification. Here, the concept is developed to construct masculine power from the direct experience of women, not looking at the structural basis of subordination. As a result, emphasis then turns to the negative traits of men. This concern is expressed by Demetriou (2001) and Jefferson (2002). This could lead to the solidification of stereotypes that become static. The complexity of the behaviors of men can easily become ignored while assuming that most act in inherently oppressive ways, especially towards women (Jefferson, 2002). It is important to note this is not always the case. For example, Forbes (2002) opens up the possibility that women take part in discursive actions that help recreate a more "hegemonic and resistant patriarchy" in the workplace. Although this does not aid in the correction of the current structure, it does provide an example of how masculine discourses need not be considered contained among men. Sarah Palin's speech at the 2008 Republican National Convention likewise illustrates how women can undercut their own maternal position (Gibson & Heyse, 2010). Gibson & Heyse also explain that Palin, among others, was able to ultimately emasculate Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama through claiming that he has a penchant for more "feminine" approaches, such as taking part in community building initiatives. Here it is apparent that we cannot simply attribute gender characteristics on the basis of sex alone.

The fourth point of contestation is the masculine subject itself. The central concern is "how men conform to an ideal and turn themselves into complicit or resistant types, without anyone ever managing to exactly embody that ideal?" (Wetherell & Edley, as cited in Connell &

Messerschmidt, 2005, p.841). The hegemonic subject is then invisible. Although similar concerns and contradictions were discussed earlier, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) suggest that masculinity is constructed through discourse and being able to observe structure. These structures are found in educational and social settings in which boys and men take part. Bird (1996) shows how meanings related to hegemonic masculinity are maintained through homosocial interactions, which is "the non-sexual attraction held by men or women for members of the same sex" (p. 121). Distinctions between masculinities are made through the social interactions of men with those who are like themselves. Hegemonic masculinity is maintained in this way through emotional detachment, competitiveness, and sexual objectification of women. This does not mean that all men who associate with one another agree with the collective the views expressed or performed by the group as they relate to the norms of hegemonic masculinity. Expressions of these beliefs are suppressed through perceptions of an "appropriate" masculinity displayed by the group. Efforts to question the norms of hegemonic masculinity could result in exclusion. Such social interactions speak to the institutionalization or structure of gender norms.

The final challenge for Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) is the pattern of gender relations. The authors note there is a tendency to want to explain the self-reproducing aspects of gender relations. Instead, they seem to want to emphasize historical changes that, according to Demetriou (2001), oversimplify the true power relations between genders that places men in a dominant position over women (external hegemony) and the structure among men that allows one form of masculinity to be privileged over others (internal hegemony). To an extent, this is a point Connell and Messerschmidt are willing to concede.

Many of these critiques that Connell and Messerschmidt address indicate the need to modify the theory of hegemonic masculinity. The concept has evolved to acknowledge that when

hegemonic masculinity is discussed, it is situated in a way that assumes a version that is racially white and with a bias towards western culture. Initially, this applied globally, but as many of the studies and Connell now understand is that localized and regional norms play into the construction of hegemonic masculinity. Local norms include interpersonal interactions and immediate communities, while regional factors focus on cultural or national discourses (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Kimmel, Hearn, and Connell (2005) suggest that in order for such relationships to be truly useful, greater use of international resources should be used to ensure the views of western researchers are reproduced. Interestingly, another international spin that has been identified in the act of subordinating certain masculinities comes from Fahey (2007), with regard to John Kerry. Fahey suggests the discourses used to question John Kerry's masculinity during the 2004 presidential campaign by referring to his connections to France indicate that social hierarchies relating to gender are not only carried out within nations, but between them as well.

Despite these criticisms, hegemonic masculinity does bring men into academic discussions of gender. Holter (2005) feels that such a move is necessary and should be taken further into understanding how gender plays into invisible forms of social inequality. In order for this type of research to exist it would require "research not just into gender and women but, even more controversially, men as gendered persons and the wider role of societal institutions" (Holter, 2005, p. 16). In short, Holter would likely agree with Demetriou that the positions of both men and women within the larger social structure should be considered when discussing issues of gender equality. Connell provides the first and perhaps best articulated step towards this, but use of his theory should be approached with caution.

Synthesis of Concepts

To understand a social movement as being a set of meanings (McGee, 1980), it must be known how individual movement organizations come together to create a wholeness to the overall message of the larger movement (Eriksson, 2005). Here the rhetoric of social movements and networked activism are reliant upon each other to provide researchers the ability to make sense of the meanings that McGee references. To view movement organizations in isolation is undesirable as they can, as Sillars (1980) recognizes, be mistaken as individual movements separate from the larger overall movement. By focusing on network formation between movement organizations the more likely that we are to recognize the over-arching discourse that initiates a larger men's movement.

The use of alternative media provides activists the ability to contest mainstream messages and disperse different interpretations of masculinity in an unmediated manner that contributes to a tension evident in critiques of hegemonic masculinity. By utilizing a similar alternative medium such as the Internet, individual movement organizations can be placed in relation to one another in an attempt to discover links that moves towards constructing a network. This network is ultimately determined by a binding discourse that then creates the social movement. What we have then are seemingly disparate movement organizations constituting the nodes that can be networked together through alternative media discourse produced on the sites examined here which forms a more complete picture of a cohesive social movement focused on the shifts in meaning regarding masculinity.

Conclusion

In the first chapter, I posed three research questions that intend to show how men's movements operate online. Although they are discussed separately here, alternative media, the

rhetoric of social movements, networked activism, and hegemonic masculinity are all interrelated and interact in such a way that allow for a comprehensive way to understand men's movements. My goal here is to illustrate how components from each of these concepts apply to the research questions I posed in the first chapter.

For my first central research question I ask: *Can networks bridge multiple movement organizations that focus on masculinities?* This question seeks to address issue of breadth of individuals and groups that associate themselves with a new social movement. As DeLuca (1999) mentions, new social movements tend to contest hegemonic discourse and are often fragmented in nature. Messner (1997) has mapped out a "terrain of gender politics" that identifies several groups that constitute men's movements. Messner creates men's movements in a linear fashion that is similar to Griffin's conceptualization of social movements. If we are to take the concerns of Sillars (1980) and McGee (1980) that looking at these factions linearly as suggested by Griffin (1952), then each faction could be mistaken for being individual movements. Doing this would prevent researchers from studying social movements in their entirety (Sillars, 1980). McGee suggestion that movements are "a set of meanings and not a phenomenon" (McGee, 1980, p. 235) would seem to imply that attempting to view several competing discourses among various groups as a single movement is something that should be considered. The goal here is to rearticulate men's movements online through a more modern perspective that is primarily focused on the rhetoric produced by those who represent the factions that Messner has identified. As it stands, men's groups are viewed as individual movements who happen to sit at various points across an ideological spectrum. What this analysis would allow for is a more complete picture of men's movements that is not possible if the numerous groups that make it up are viewed as being autonomous in a way which is contentious.

Previous discussions by scholars who have studied men's movements have done so strictly through the theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005; Messner, 1997). The use of hegemonic masculinity by scholars can somewhat be problematic in that there are limitations to the theory itself, particularly with the oversimplification of power relations between genders (Demetriou, 2001), reification (Demetriou, 2001; Forbes, 2002; Jefferson, 2002), and how the masculine subject comes to know how to conform to the ideal (Bird, 1996; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). When there are problems with a theory such as hegemonic masculinity that contests its usefulness, then there may be limitations when it is exclusively used to understand men's movements as a whole. This could, in part, lead to the incongruence among different groups identified within men's movements. Being a very western oriented theoretical construct (Connell, 2005), it is of interest here how the men's groups in western societies approach issues that may or may not relate to prior articulations of hegemonic masculinity. In order to overcome the geographic distance that make up western societies, the Internet makes for the best, and most convenient, place to research the discourse that takes place in reference to men's movements. If we are concerned with how a group confronts hegemonic discourse, then forms of alternative media, such as blogs and aggregate sites are useful to discover competing voices that are present outside the gate keeping corporate structures that would otherwise prevent them from being heard. Through analyzing the discourses and rhetoric of various men's groups, it is possible to create a movement as seen by the critic as preferred by Sillars (1980).

The follow-up sub-research question to the first I ask is: *If so, can those networks also bridge men's and women's movement groups that focus on masculinities?* Hegemonic masculinity largely addresses the systematic dominance of men over women (Connell, 2005). Given to contentious picture that hegemonic masculinity draws between men and women, it

would seem unlikely that such alliances would be possible. However, when speaking of networks, they are not necessarily planned and it is important to not view them as having boundaries in order to understand the totality of the communicative process (Eriksson, 2005). If we are to look at democracy as Best (2005) does, which is as "an assemblage of modes and material and discursive organizing designed to grant popular power" (p. 215), then to expand the boundaries of a movement, even men's movements, should be done to fully realize its potential. The creation of alternative forms of media online affords the opportunity to increase the number of communicative practices that can expand the network (Eriksson, 2005). Pickard (2006a) has illustrated how movements (the globalization movement in his case), can overcome barriers related to place and politics through the use of online alternative media outlets to bring otherwise alienated groups in contact with one another. Networks may also include groups that eventually prove contentious with one another. Atkinson (2009a) shows how networks may be formed online through mutual use of forums, but actually differs in how they express or perform their resistance to popular systems. It is important to note here is that networks can consist of groups that may not necessarily be homogeneous.

The second central research question I pose is: *Do such pan-movement networks shape the rhetorical strategies to challenge ideographs by online men's movement groups? If so, how?* When reading blogs and viewing websites that qualify as alternative media, it is important to view them as Dagron (2004) suggests, as being "communication experiences that emerge as a need to counterbalance the state/or commercial mass media" (p. 46). For the purpose of this analysis, the message that is produced by the mass media which is either being challenged or reaffirmed is the position of dominance enjoyed by men as a group. With men holding a position of dominance, the ideographs that are challenged may be done in different ways within men's

movements. As with other new social movements, it is unlikely that the way men's groups challenge ideographs will be properly represented in mainstream news outlets (DeLuca, 1999). Regardless of being considered a dominant group, men as a group can largely be considered among "ordinary people" that Rodriguez (2001) recognizes as not being provided a voice by the mainstream press. Therefore, new outlets for expression and social change must be sought (Atton, 2002a). New social movements depend on a variety of tactics to rhetorically express themselves and bring attention to their causes. Environmental groups have used various forms of protests that range from the peaceful and quiet to those that are disruptive (DeLuca, 1999). Others tactics take the form of a performance where some cultures or communities contest popular narratives about their histories or memories that are constructed by others, with one such example being "toxic tours" in New Orleans, Louisiana as described by Pezzullo (2003). A similar example can also be found in "truth excursions" that are held in Zapatista communities in Chiapas, Mexico that force activists (or at least are meant to) to make sense of globalization rhetoric on a local level differing from that which appears in alternative media outlets pertaining to the globalization movement (Atkinson, 2009b). In the cases of Pezzullo and Atkinson, there are breaks from a larger social movement that is peculiar to a specific community. One big difference is Pezzullo refers to contesting an official discourse where Atkinson shows how the views and positions expressed in alternative media can be questions within the very movement they serve. Many of these discourses, particularly in the case of Atkinson, are found on the Internet. What we can see from this is that the meaning of a movement may be a point of confusion among those outside of and within a new social movement. The Internet may act as a place for individuals to come together and challenge the hegemonic discourses that they find in popular media, similar to what environmental groups have done with challenging ideographs

according to DeLuca (1999). Depending on how these ideographs are constructed, they could become part of the meaning making process that Best (2005) places value on in order to participate in the democratic process. The construction of ideographs will also have a great impact on how the network is formed among men's groups who either agree or disagree with the construction of an ideograph. As Messner (1997) conceptualizes men's movements in terms of how they seem to relate to issues of dominance within and between genders as formulated in hegemonic masculinity, focusing on ideographs may provide a way to re-conceptualize the network and structure of men's movements.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND CONTENT COLLECTION

The purpose of this chapter is to set up a framework in which an interpretive qualitative analysis of the rhetoric produced by men's movements constructed online. Before describing the artifacts that will be used for this analysis, I discuss what qualitative research entails and including what is meant by interpretivism. After discussing this method of inquiry, I will then illustrate how a rhetorical device such as the ideograph can be useful in an interpretive construction of online men's movement networks. As I will later explain, a qualitative content analysis as described by Althiede (1996) and Krippendorff (2004) can be utilized in the analysis of the text that will be assembled from the sites used in this analysis.

To find answers to the research questions proposed in the first chapter, I qualitatively explore websites that place themselves among men's movements. Creswell (2007) explains that a qualitative study should utilize rigorous procedures of data collection where multiple levels of analysis take place to locate broad interrelated themes and move from the specific to the general. These themes which emerge from the text should relate to the theoretical lens that drives the study and be presented in a manner that acts as a cohesive whole while still representing the multiple realities or viewpoints of those being studied. Unlike much quantitative research, the qualitative study of text does not necessarily operate under a rigid structure nor is it done in a perfectly linear fashion. Much of what is discovered relies on the researcher's engagement with the text and his or her ability to relate that text to the literature. Therefore, the role of the researcher is one of the outstanding characteristics that add to the complexity of qualitative research.

Explaining what qualitative research is requires careful navigation of terms that are associated with it. Despite the umbrella nature of the term "qualitative methods", the approaches

that identify being qualitative include, but not limited to: case studies, participatory inquiry, participant observation, interviewing, interpretive analysis, grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenological research, and narrative research (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Regardless of the chosen approach, qualitative researchers, according to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), "seek to preserve and analyze the situated form, content, and experience of social action, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations" (p. 18). Creswell (2007) adds that "qualitative research today involves closer attention to the interpretive nature of inquiry and situating the study within the political, social, and cultural context of the researchers, the participants, and the readers of the study" (p. 37). Given these accounts of what qualitative researchers do, Creswell (2007) concludes that a natural setting, the researcher as a key instrument, multiple sources of data, inductive data analysis, participant's meanings, an emergent design, a theoretical lens, interpretive inquiry, and a holistic account are common characteristics of qualitative inquiry. Provided these are roles and characteristics of the qualitative researcher, the definition of qualitative research, provided by Denzin and Lincoln (2008), is as follows:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. (p. 4)

Creswell (2007) provides a similar definition of qualitative research with the requirement that the final piece include the voice of the participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a need to add to the literature or suggest some action.

The decision to employ a qualitative method results in order to explore a problem the researcher feels a need to address (Creswell, 2007). These problems can be public in nature, such

as those related to politics, human rights, and social movements where conflict exists (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Researchers may also refer to unexplained personal experiences in academic literature and point to gaps that exist in that literature (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). This is not to suggest quantitative methods are incapable of locating issues related to these problems and providing answers to them, but the nature which qualitative methods seek to address problems differ in that they attempt to provide voice to those who have an interest in them. Providing a voice to those who may otherwise go unnoticed in dominant discourse is a primary goal of the qualitative researcher (Creswell, 2007). Creswell also notes qualitative research can be used to further develop theories that inadequately capture the complexity of problems as they relate to certain populations. Researchers then accept the role of one who reveals a greater complexity of an issue and provides a more detailed understanding of it.

The detailed understanding that is extracted from various texts relies on interpretation by the researcher. Qualitative research is described by Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul (1997) as a "deeply interpretive endeavor and that analytic processes are at work in every step of the crafting of the document" (p. 160). Notably, Ely et al. are speaking of crafting a document from a perspective that utilizes ethnography as a method; however, the interpretive role of the researcher is of equal importance to the analysis of other texts. Texts that can be analyzed by qualitative researchers can extend to artifacts, cultural texts and productions, historical, and visuals (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Ely et al. explain that we begin to interpret when "patterns, themes, and issues are discerned in the data and when these findings are seen in relation to one another and against larger theoretical perspectives—our own newly emergent views or those to be found in 'the literature'" (p. 160). The act of interpretation occurs at the point of the process that is preceded by description and analysis, but as noted above, interpretation can happen continuously in

crafting the final document and points to the non-linearity of the method. Ultimately, this process moves the emphasis from the producers of the text to the interpreter of the text and places the researcher in the study itself.

Up to now, there have been different variations of the word "interpret" used in relation to qualitative research. When speaking of an "interpretive role" of a researcher, it is meant to refer to the act of creating or identifying a text understanding. However, the term interpretive begins to easily conflate with "qualitative research," requiring a distinction to be made when discussing the act of interpretation and interpretive epistemology, or interpretivism. Confusion between terms is understandable when the questions closely are related to interpretivism, such as those addressing the forms and variations in which a social phenomenon exists, have also been used to describe qualitative inquiry more broadly (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Denzin & Lincoln (2000) makes the distinction between the mistaken terms by explaining that qualitative research is more broadly distinguished by the researcher's willingness to use various cultural artifacts available to them in order to fit their situations and the questions they seek to answer. Interpretation then becomes the general act of constructing meaning. When looking at the term interpretive from a general framework of inquiry, however, it is meant to represent the set of beliefs and worldview of the researcher. This version of interpretive is closer to what is necessary to understand the epistemological position I hold in this dissertation.

Work that reflects an interpretive position broadly falls under the field of and theories related to hermeneutics (Anderson, 1996; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Anderson (1996) describes hermeneutics as a way of understanding reality as being "formed in a system of cultural meanings that make sense of ourselves and our relationship with the phenomenal world" (p. 191). These cultural meanings can be discovered in various texts and require reading to place

meaning to those texts (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Therefore, Lindlof & Taylor (2002) explain that hermeneutics "involves interpreting the meaning of a text by empathically imagining the experience of its author and by engaging in a circular movement that alternates between textual features and context to generate holistic knowledge" (p. 32). What this suggests is that there is polysomic set of meanings associated with a text which can express multiple understood realities. Multiple meaning making, then, occurs on two levels, by the original author of the text, and then by the researcher who assigns meaning to the text. This suggests that nothing is able to speak for itself. Text must be placed in larger contexts in order to provide meaning. This is where the "interpretive turn" in scholarship is seen (Anderson, 2006; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In the interpretive turn, researchers must recognize they take part in a constant process of description and meaning making that places them within it.

One of the strengths of interpretivism, according to Holstein & Gubrium (2008), is that it is centered on both how people methodically construct their experiences and their worlds, and in the configurations of meaning and institutional life that inform and shape their reality-constituting activity (p. 174). Therefore, the importance of language and discourse is emphasized in understanding issues related to power and authority (Creswell, 2007). Another benefit to the interpretive approach is the researcher recognizes he/she is part of this power structure as both the interpreter and representative of the text in the final product (Creswell, 2007). This issue speaks to the self-reflexivity required in the writing process. Researchers may find it difficult to be entirely certain their findings or representations are accurate due to their degree of involvement in the process. Ely et al. (2001) explain that a perpetual act of writing and relating what is written to academic literature is required in order to be certain of emerging themes and

connections between them. New literature not previously reviewed early in the document may need to be introduced to make meaning of the text.

One of the rhetorical tools that can be utilized in this analysis on men's movements is found in the literature related to the ideograph. As evidenced below, the ideograph may be useful in interpreting discourse produced online by men's movements and provide a way to make connections. Ideographs are also useful for providing concise explanations on how groups interpret what is real through the polysemy of terms related to men and gender. Such issues related to identifying the different practices and goals of a diverse group of participants have been taken on by those who study organizational communication (Mumby, 1993; Mumby, 2011; Tourish and Hargie, 2004). The recognition of differences in how groups discuss their goals provides some insight on how researchers are able to organize and comprehend the discourse they produce (McClellan, Williams, and Deetz, 2011). The discussion of goals indicates the political nature of language and how groups differentiate themselves within those discussions. Consequently, interpretivism acts as a logical approach to understanding how diverse groups who utilize ideographs organize in relation to complex issues within new social movements.

The Ideograph

McGee (1980) uses the term ideograph as a shorthand way to link rhetoric and ideology. Terms such as "liberty, equality and rule of law" are examples McGee (1980) uses of how terms are used in societies (the United States in his example) to either unite or separate groups based on how they are used and what interests they serve. They unite in that they provide parameters in which we use language to define a collective or group. They can separate by prohibiting us from exploring alternative meaning in other societies. Ideographs are constructed to be understood in ways that can help in "explaining, justifying, or guiding policy in specific situations" (p. 13).

When exploring how ideographs are challenged, it is important to note that McGee (1980) suggests ideographs be situated either diachronically or synchronically. If ideographs are understood diachronically, emphasis is placed on the establishment of grammar. The difference is that the synchronic use of ideographs best illustrate how terms or phrases are contested as groups are making use of them. As mentioned in the previous section, ideology can be reorganized (McGee, 1980) and serve the interests of specific groups when it comes to resource allocation (Condit & Lucaites, 1993), which means terms, can be pitted against one another when crisis arises. McGee (1980), when explaining the meaning of equality during the time of segregated school bussing meaning both access and educated for example, explains that an ideograph:

> …is always understood in its relation to another; it is defined tautologically by using other terms in its cluster. If we accept that there are three or four or however many possible meanings for the term *equality*, each with a currency or legitimacy, we distort the nature of the ideological dispute by ignoring the fact that *equality* is made meaningful, not within the clash of multiple usages, but rather in its relationship with "freedom." That is, *equality* defined by "access" alters the nature of *liberty* from the relationship of *equality* and *liberty* thought to exist when *equality* is defined as "being educated. (p. 14)

This is not the only way equality can be understood as an ideograph. Condit and Lucaites (1993) examine the term equality as an ideograph in a different way. They trace the use of equality as it related to African-Americans and the citizenry as a whole from the signing of The Declaration of Independence through the civil rights movement in the mid-to-late twentieth century. The authors emphasize that, diachronically, equality has gone through several different articulations

over that period of time related to opportunity and property based on race, gender, and class. Gradually, and by linking the term *"*universal" to the concept of equality, the way it is understood as being a foundational belief in what we stand for as a nation has changed. This change did not come uncontested. Rather, it depended on changes in the political environment of the nation and the willingness of leaders and society to accept new conceptualizations of what the term equality means.

There are numerous examples of scholars exploring the rhetorical use of ideographs. Cloud (1998a), discusses how "family values", as used during the 1992 presidential campaign, has been used by both major political parties in the United States in order to restore the mythical family ideal. This was done, she argues, in part, to divert attention from other social problems related to the economy and racism. Rhetorically, by choosing to focus on the loss of the traditional family, single-parent households and feminism became scapegoats for the current crisis. In another example, the ideograph of "rights" is able to serve dual purposes. Black (2003) shows how movements promoting the right to life and animal rights, in essence take up the same means to achieve an end that may not be recognized as having any relation. The meaning of being, according to Black, is essential for both movements. Arguing that both groups advocate for viewing those who they speak for as a life as being central to their interest, Black explains that both have an interest in expanding the term rights to include the unborn and animals. What makes such a distinction particularly difficult is that ability to apply rights to the living has been historically challenging because of differences in conceptions of what it means to be human or have any autonomy (Condit and Lucaites, 1993; Hauser, 2008). Another example of the use of ideographs is McCann's (2007) analysis of the term victim. In his article, victim becomes an ideograph viewed therapeutically and materially among supporters and opponents of Governor

George Ryan's decision to commute all sentences that imposed future use of the death penalty. The therapeutic view of victim was adopted by those who opposed this decision. This view separates the use of the death penalty from the socioeconomic conditions that may lead to the initial act and views the state's adoption of capital punishment as a deterrent of crimes that are punishable by death. Conversely, the view of materialists acted in support of the governor by arguing that individuals are unjustly sentenced to death without consideration for their lived material conditions. These three examples provide different ways that ideographs can be interpreted and examined. They can apply to political discourse (Cloud, 1998a; 1998b), the unborn or non-human (Black, 2003), and those related to social justice (McCann, 2007). However, these analyses have focused on spoken or written texts. It has been argued that ideographs also can be used in relation to visual texts as well.

Visual texts are important to this research because it deals with a partly visual medium, the Internet. The websites explored in this dissertation have a large visual component related to them. The use of pictures, illustrations, and the way which they are laid out are necessary to point out as they become part of the thick description that is required in research such as this. Two examples of how the use of visuals can be used to examine ideographs will be presented here. Edwards and Winkler (1997), looks at various political cartoons use of the famous image of the United States flag rising in Iwo Jima. The authors suggest this image acts as a referent to other themes of cultural beliefs that allows for it to be effectively parodied because it has found a place in the public's collective memory. Therefore, it acts as a summation of "political and ideological reality" (p. 296) which provides a commitment to an unspecified goal. Looking at an image in this way would place it as constituting as an ideograph. Through distortions or other

alterations to the image, political cartoonists are able to highlight "less than noble motivations that govern American society" (p.302).

Cloud (2004) makes use of photographs that appear in the magazine (online) *Time* that represents the *clash of civilizations* ideograph. It is argued here that photographs of Afghans (women in particular) are used to represent an oppressed Other that needs protection from a *savage* culture. Cloud links these images to the notion of "the white man's burden" (2004). By representing a binary between Western society and an "uncivilized Other", these images can be interpreted as legitimizing the United States foreign policy that seeks to *protect* the oppressed in Afghanistan. Viewed in this manner, military involvement on the part of the United States is a humanitarian measure. These images play on the frequent use of women in visuals as acting as single visual summations of being oppressed and in need of intervention.

This overview of the use of ideographs in this manuscript can provide textual benchmarks in which constructions of reality can be identified. My second central research question inquiries about the role ideographs have in network construction across men's movements. The next topic, online sites, will be analyzed for the purpose of answering the research questions posed in the first chapter.

Artifacts for Analysis

The websites used for this analysis were selected through the search engine Touchgraph.com. Touchgraph produces a visual network of interconnected websites based on those that are most strongly associated with a desired search word or phrase. When a search criteria is entered, links to news outlets, blogs, social network sites, and other related organizations or groups that reference the word or phrase are presented through a series of linked nodes. In this network, the strength of the link is illustrated by the size of the node. The larger the

node, the stronger the link. By clicking on individual nodes, it is possible to expand the network to discover secondary and tertiary linkages. As links become redundant, the network ceases to expand and instead stack on top of each other to illustrate overlap. The aim in using this type of search engine is to discover blogs, online magazines, and organizations most closely related to the terminology used in men's movement literature.

The terms used to select the websites to be analyzed primarily come from Messner's "terrain of the politics of masculinities" (1997). Of interest to this analysis is the organizations and blogs that are somehow connected to the terms Messner uses to create the larger conceptual model of men's movements. Terms, or variations of, used as search criteria include: Promise Keepers, Mythopoetic men's movement, men's liberation movement, men's rights movement, radical feminist men, socialists feminist men, gay liberation movement, racialized masculinity politics, multiracial feminism, and National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) (Messner, 1997). What is immediately evident from these search criteria is that Messner includes both individual organizations, Promise Keepers and NOMAS, for example, and smaller movements in order to construct the larger men's movement. Although not necessarily problematic for the purpose of this analysis, it does show an inconsistency that may be inherit in making sense of the movement as a whole. To expand on the search, larger ideological "terrains" that Messner categorized these groups and movements under were also used as search criteria. These included anti-feminist backlash, anti-patriarchal politics, and racial and sexual identity politics (Messner, 1997). In all, use of these terms provided twenty-two sites of organizations and individual contributors that are able to be utilized for this analysis.

Given that my concern is with the creation of rhetorical linkages between groups online and the challenging of ideographs, the sites that were selected needed to contain original content

and not just act solely as news aggregators with no space provided for user feedback. The creation of original content is desirable in order to compile texts that will provide the ability to analyze how contributors to the sites react to messages that are present in the mainstream press or popular culture and to other contributors. Contributors, in this sense, are those who provide unique material that is posted to the website whether they are administrators, moderators, or members. More importantly, it is desirable to have some degree of interactivity present within the website.

Warnick (2007) provides a description of what interactivity means for rhetoricians and how it can be used to examine online texts. Interactivity is defined by Warnick as "communication that includes some form of reciprocal message exchange involving mediation and occurring between a group … and users, between users and the site text, or between users and other users' (p.75). The actions that were described as representing interactivity can help in promoting identification with the website organizer and/or other users. Warnick utilized four types of interactivity, first developed by McMillan (2002), which are useful in examining websites. The first is user-to-system. Here, quite simply, a "user activates a technical capacity of the system, and the system responds" (p. 75). All that is involved in this is that when a user clicks on a hyperlink, for example, the system directs the user to the desired site.

The second form of interactivity is user-to-user. This can include chats, comment pages, blogs, moderated discussions, or online town hall meetings. In this case, we can think of users creating messages for other users through site provided forums. However, this can be expanded to include website authors communicating with users through the use of emails and/or invitations to request participation in volunteer efforts or fundraising. A user can then be looked upon as being a visitor to the site, or a manager who uses the site to communicate with the site's visitors.

The third type of interactivity is user-to-documents. What this offers is the ability for a user to actually alter information by contributing information of some sort that changes or adds to the site content. Such contributions can include partaking in polls, adding photos, or the submitting questions.

Finally, there is text-based interactivity. This type of interactivity function acts in an obvious action-response relationship. In this case, interactivity is more of a literary device that draws a connection to the reader of online messages through the use of a first person, active, or passive voice. Rhetorically, this can communicate the level of involvement an individual has in the creation of the material that appears on the site.

Since men's groups and/or organizations that are present online with a minimal level of interactivity is required for analysis, there is a limitation of balance in representation. As Fox (2004) noted, men's rights advocates (MRA) are the most prominent men's group online. The sample for use here confirms this. Of the fifteen sites selected, twelve were found to be associated with the search terms *men's rights or men's rights advocates*. Overall, sites that fall under Messner's (1997) ideological category of anti-feminist backlash represent twelve of the websites, with three linking to the Promise Keepers and one being a Mythopoetic men's site, in addition to the fourteen MRA sites. Hence, three websites remain under the ideological category of anti-patriarchal politics and one that is classified under the progressive coalition politics category. Knowing that the concern here is in regard to rhetoric online, this is not meant to be a recreation of the literature Messner bases his "terrain" on. Many of the terms and phrases Messner uses (e.g., multiracial feminism, men's liberation) to create a larger illustration of men's movements yield no usable results. Despite this limitation as it relates to Messner, the rhetorical

re-conceptualization of men's movements online may prove to be entirely different than previous analyses.

I will first begin with describing websites that are in the anti-feminist backlash category. This group contains a few different types of sites which include those run by actual organizations, blogs, online magazines, and news aggregate sites that allow for reader contributions. To start, a little information about the sites operated by organizations is necessary. The National Center for Men (NCM) maintains the site nationalcenterformen.org (Figure 1) and claims to be, "the first men's rights group in the United States to address the full range of men's issues, from conscription to circumcision, from father's rights to sexist dress codes that are unfair to men" (National Center for Men, 2012, Our History). Bringing these issues into the national spotlight through numerous appearances on talk shows and news programs are discussed to illustrate the organization's ability to garner attention. Included in this site are a series of videos, known as "MensNet," and articles which describe the importance of and explains the organizations position on a variety of issues and topics. Another organization, National Coalition for Men (NCFM), also emphasizes their long history claiming to be the world's oldest men's rights organization on their website ncfm.org (Figure 2). However, the NCFM site is different, in that the interest is focused more on the pressures placed on men to meet social expectations in our society. The stated main objective of the ncfm.org website is to, "Promote awareness of how gender based expectations limit men legally, socially, and psychologically" (ncfm.org, 2012, Philosophy). As with the NCM site, the NCFM primarily distributes information by updating their site several times a week with original articles authored by organization contributors. In addition to these articles, NCFM publishes a newsletter called, *Transitions,* and organizes offline activities to promote their position on numerous issues. The scope of these two organization's

primary aims are a little different, but they are similar in that information is diffused from the organization to the reader with little online interaction.

The one-way online diffusion of information is also shared by Christian-based men's groups. Much like the NCM and NCFM, groups that operate under Christian principals position themselves as outlets for men to seek help and to restore accountability in their lives. Almost synonymous with this type of organization (and even specified by Messner) are the Promise Keepers. The Promise Keepers have been conducting large scale gatherings since 1990 to train men to be "godly" and "take a stand for God in their marriages, families, churches, and communities" (Promise Keepers, 2012, About). Through their website promisekeepers.org (Figure 3), limited access to news and blog posts are made available which provide a partial view of reader responses.

A final "backlash" organization website included in this analysis is The Mankind Project. Through their site mankindproject.org (Figure 4), The Mankind Project seeks to provide men the ability to face life's challenges through their New Warrior Training Adventures. Akin to the Mythopoetic men retreats, the New Warrior Training Adventure "is a modern male initiation and self-examination" (The Mankind Project, 2012; The New Warrior Training Adventure). The ultimate goal of this organization is to make men fully accountable for their decisions and to promote authenticity, integrity, community, service, and inclusivity. Linked to mankindproject.org is the MKP Journal, which is open for original contributions that seek "to educate the public about diverse men's issues — personal and social — addressed from an MKP perspective" (Mankind Project Journal, 2012, Submissions). Articles here are submitted to an editorial board and published on the site along with a comments section for readers to provide feedback. The editorial board is comprised of volunteers who aid in contributions, editing, and

providing feedback regarding the content of the journal. Positions on this board relate to areas such as poetry, elderhood and reconciliation, creativity and performance, jobs and careers, organizational development, men's health and fitness, men's mental health, corporate leadership, and movies.

Another type of anti-feminist backlash website is the online magazine. Online magazines here differ from other websites in that as they, despite seeking contributions by way of content, have great editorial control over what appears on the site. It is frequently the case where specific guidelines are provided that need to be followed for any written piece to be considered. These guidelines are generally related to word length, style, and decorum. Four sites fall into this category. The first is mensnewsdaily.com (Figure 5). Mensnewsdaily.com provides an online forum for articles, news stories and opinions which the "primary, but not exclusive, audience should be men's rights activists, supporters of men's causes and those seeking information and education relevant to men in western culture" (mensnewsdaily.com, 2012, Submission Guidelines). In addition to articles, a series of videos are also available which cover issues such as domestic violence and equality in the workplace with a forum for viewers (and readers) to leave feedback. The objective of this site is to promote the value of masculinity and combat cultural ideals that allow for the acceptance of male-bashing.

A second website, avoiceformen.com (Figure 6) operates on a similar philosophy. According to the site, "A Voice for Men welcomes contributions from the larger community of men and women with something to say about most any aspect of the modern sexual zeitgeist" (A Voice for Men, 2012, Writers). Articles here are categorized under the subheadings of activism, misandry, men's rights, feminism, sexual politics, men, and women and allow reader comments, as well.

The Spearhead is a third online men's magazine that provides a voice to men as a group and is part of a social movement. It is noted on the-spearhead.com's "About" page that:

> What sets our movement apart is that many men, because of the real injustices so many of us have faced first-hand, have come to a common awareness that there are serious political, legal and cultural problems that plague men in our society….This magazine is an expression of our growing voice, and combines the talents of some of the Anglosphere's best bloggers on men's issues. (The Spearhead, 2012, About)

The fourth magazine, goodmenproject.com (Figure 7), also explores the "multidimensionality of men" and challenges modern cultural notions of what it is to be a man (The Good Men Project, 2012, About). The entries for these four websites are relatively similar not only in which issues they discuss but also in their formats and policies as they relate to audience interactivity.

Blogs are another type of social media website that is important for gathering information related to this analysis. The benefit is they provide voices to individuals within an online community that are more than likely to provide links to others within the same community (Kim, 2005). Furthermore, opinions found on blogs are free of any gatekeepers and can provide an unfiltered discourse that can be critical of that produced by mainstream media outlets (Kim, 2005). It is ironic, however, that blogs are typically heavily reliant on the information provided by mainstream media outlets for material on their own sites (Kenix, 2009). Subsequently, Kenix (2009) questions whether blogs should be considered a form of alternative media. Despite this apprehension, the two blogs that were selected for this study are important because they offer a place for discourse that is free of any editorial constraints. These blogs were most strongly associated with search terms that were entered into the Touchgraph search engine. For MRA's,

the most popular blog is angryharry.com (Figure 8). Angryharry.com consists of a long list of apparently random short postings on the home page that relate to issues, people, stories, poems, and comments that are important to men. Several links to other blogs, statistics, and relevant articles are provided in the margins as the reader scrolls down the page. One of the more interesting features is a page where the administrator, Angry Harry, posts selected emails. The emails that appear are mostly complimentary, but fair amounts are also critical and contain responses.

Another blog that appeared in this search was the Men's Rights Blog found at mensrightsboard.blogspot.com (Figure 9). The format of this site is very similar to angryharry.com, but provides fewer secondary links associated with the site. Nonetheless, the types of issues that are written about are similar and contain original content. As with other sites that are magazines and associated with organizations, the topics of greatest concern on these blogs include domestic violence, misandry, feminism, and general activism.

A third blog is standyourground.com (Figure 10). Standyourground.com fails to provide the original articles that are presented in the former two blogs, but is useful in that a series of forums are available where readers can post comments and take part in discussion related to topics and issues of their choice. The forums provided are specific to the history of men's movements, domestic violence, men's stories, activism, and a main page, where most recent activity occurs. A series of links is also provided to "masculine friendly sites" (standyourground.com, 2012, Home). Despite the presence of these links, they are not included for discussion here due to the search criterion that was used in Toughgraph.com. These three sites showed up as the most salient and are certainly not exhaustive of what is present on the web as most others did not appear in the search.

A final MRA site worthy of mention is mensactivism.org (Figure 11). This site acts more as a news aggregator than a magazine or blog. Typically, news aggregators "produce little original news content, instead providing a platform for established news producers and access for users to multiple news sources" (Hester & Dougall, 2007, p. 811). However, news aggregator sites can be useful in allowing content found in alternative forms of media to be accessed by those who identify with a movement (Atkinson, 2008). Perhaps more importantly, posters can bring attention to local issues that are of interest to larger movements by utilizing news aggregators (Atkinson, 2008). Started in 2000, members of mensactivism.org have posted news stories and make them available for comments (Mensactivism.org, 2012, About). The website administrators describe their aims to be apolitical and provide news to promote men's activism projects and support a network of men (Mensactivism.org, 2012). Articles that express different perspectives are encouraged in order to, "help foster a dialogue between those with differing views on men's rights issues, and to recognize that there are often issues which are not black and white within our movement" (Mensactivism.org, 2012, Philosophy). Again, as with blogs, links are provided to other sites that share similar viewpoints. The value to this site is that comments are provided by readers or those who provide the link to the articles.

Up to this point, the websites discussed in this analysis are considered to take part in the anti-feminist backlash. A description of some of the sites produced in searches involving groups under the anti-patriarchal politics category, as discussed by Messner, are mentioned below. Four sites that were found to be useable for this analysis were linked to this search. The first, and strongest link, is xyonline.net. (XY). XY (Figure 12) considers itself a forum that is pro-feminist for the purpose of gender equality and justice through encouraging men to, "involve themselves

in personal and social change towards gender equality" (xyonline.net, 2012, About). The content of XY includes:

> …over 200 articles on key 'men's issues', from fathering and men's health to the relationships between masculinity, class, race and sexuality, to domestic violence. XY makes available key national and international guides and manuals to working with men and boys and engaging men and boys in projects of building gender equality, ending violence against women, and striving for social justice. XY also includes personal stories, book reviews, and links to related websites". (XYonline, 2012, About)

In addition to these articles, there is a related blog presented by five regular contributors. Acting more as an online magazine, XY started as a print publication in 1990 in Australia and claims to operate on a not-for-profit basis only accepting advertising money from institutions that share their principals (About).

Another anti-patriarchal sites that were selected are organizations that focus on violence perpetrated by men, mostly on women. Men Can Stop Rape (MCSR) (Figure 13) was founded in 1997 with the vision of, "…a plan for prevention that outlines positive, proactive solutions to engaging men as allies, inspiring them to feel motivated and capable to end men's violence against women" (Men Can Stop Rape, 2012, Our Mission & History). A strength of MCSR is that they offer blog postings that frequently updates.

A final website that is pertinent to this analysis is nomas.org, which is maintained by the National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) (Figure 14). This site holds an unusual place in relation to the others because it is specifically expressed by Messner (1997) as falling into the *progressive coalition politics* terrain in his conceptual model where he feels compromise can be found in the competing factions of men's movements. NOMAS is described

as a “pro-feminist, gay affirmative, anti-racist, dedicated to enhancing men's lives, and committed to justice on a broad range of social issues including class, age, religion, and physical abilities” (National Organization for Men Against Sexism, 2012, Statement of Principals). While placing themselves in men’s movements, NOMAS claims that “with its history of more than thirty-five years, it remains the oldest and the most politically progressive network of men who share a hopeful perspective about men and masculinity” (nomas.org, 2012, A Brief History of NOMAS). As far as original content is concerned, the website offers several articles from contributors in their news page and on the homepage, but does not allow for feedback. A newsletter titled, “ Brother” has been published online by NOMAS, but has been sporadic in its release with nothing produced recently.

Although many of these sites claim to represent men’s movements they, combined, are parts that make up a whole movement. Emphasis was placed on recovering recent original content in order to gain a recent account of the ideographs and rhetorical connections that are present online in constructing men’s movements. For this analysis, original material was gathered from April through June 2012 appearing on each of these sites discussed above. Making sense of this material as it relates to my research questions requires the formation of a workable text. Each of these sites can contribute to the production of a master text of online discourse as it relates to men’s movements. By obtaining parts of these sites and bringing them together to find thematic points of departure and reconciliation, I am collecting fragments of various forms of discourse and relating it to a larger narrative as McGee (1990) and McKerrow (1989) suggest is possible. Altheide (1996) probably supplies the most well detailed plan for researchers to follow in organizing such material. He divides the qualitative document analysis process into four stages. The first is gaining access to documents. Here, Altheide emphasizes locating documents

that properly fit the issue the researcher is investigating. This requires becoming familiar with the format of several examples of the document for determining the unit of analysis. This has been done in the previous pages in the selection of websites used for this analysis.

The second stage is collection of the text. Construction of what Altheide calls "protocol*s"* leads to the development of possible categories, which are few in number, but can be represented in numerous ways. In qualitative content analysis several different units of text are possible, from a sentence, to a paragraph, to entire publications that can represent numerous categories or themes (Krippendorff, 2004). Selecting the appropriate units is important, according to Krippendorff (2004), in order to provide examples that represent what similar types of text that may not be present in that which is selected for analysis. Although a single text may be selected for analysis, it may come to represent numerous themes to a researcher as different units of analysis which are selected from that text (Krippendorf, 2004). Therefore, how a text is used is necessarily at the discretion of the analyst as thematic categories are discovered. These categories can be amended as new themes emerge or need to be refined.

The third stage is organization of text. This stage entails the actual recording of the text while recalling possible problems with the categorization of themes. Categories become more concrete and well defined as more examples are discovered that have something in common (Krippendorff, 2004). The final stage is the analysis stage. In this stage, summaries about the cases within each category are written in order to find meaning and a theoretical basis. Emphasis is not placed on the number of occurrences within each category, but rather on the common or extreme themes within them. Although this is not the only method of performing a qualitative content analysis, these basic steps provide a basic framework to consider when creating a research design. It is important to note, however, this process does not occur in a perfectly linear

fashion (Krippendorff, 2004). Themes may become evident at different stages of this process and as the process is repeated. The emergence of themes does not occur at a given point in this process.

This framework proposed by Altheide and Krippendorff, leads to a few other issues that researchers need to consider when performing qualitative content analysis. David Silverman (2003) suggests that the text used should be limited. The quantity of text needs to be kept to a manageable amount given that analysis needs to be very detailed. Larger samples that do not provide the depth in coding are typically better suited for the content analysis approach mentioned earlier. Limiting the number of text used leads to another problem of context. Atkinson and Coffey (1997) express concern for keeping the number of text too limited and self-contained when they note that, "like any system of signs and messages, documents make sense because they have relationships with other documents" (p. 56). This issue of intertextuality is looked upon as posing a problem for researchers. The researcher needs to be able to place the text in comparison to others to fully understand the meaning of the text.

The question of accuracy is a central concern to those opposed to text-only analysis. Philo (2007) takes on this criticism stating that:

> In essence, I have suggested that discourse analysis which remains text-based encounters a series of problems specifically in its ability to show: (1) the origins of competing discourses and how they relate to different social interests; (2) the diversity of social accounts compared to what is present (and absent) in a specific text; (3) the impact of external factors such as professional ideologies on the manner in which the discourses are represented; and (4) what the text actually means to different parts of the audience. (p. 185)

What Philo fears is a parochial reading of a researcher. Even if attempts are made to connect the content of a text to the power structures and ideologies that produced it, examining all facets of the construction and reception of that text is extremely difficult.

Despite the concerns about qualitative content analysis, there are some strength's in taking this approach. First, it offers the opportunity for the author to be reflexive within the approach and allows the reader to understand the interpretation being presented (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997). This provides a degree of transparency in the process of analysis. Second, it is argued that contextual information can be easily provided in order to explain the scope of texts (Fürsich, 2009). In fact, that is often the goal of the researcher when searching for meaning. Third, by not falling under the constraints of predetermined categories for coding, qualitative content analysis is less likely to overlook "new empowering or hegemonic textual structures" (Fürsich, 2009, p. 244). Finally, it may be as important to identify what is not present in a text just as it is to identify what is present. The ability to explain exclusions is a powerful way to emphasize the influence of dominating ideologies.

This method will be applied to produce the next section of this analysis. Its main focus is to discuss and illustrate how networks bridge multiple movements which center around masculinities, if those networks can also provide a bridge to women's movement groups that focus on masculinities, and if these pan-movement networks shape the rhetorical strategies to challenge ideographs online. The goal is to then make sense of competing discourse produced by various groups that make-up men's movements. Lastly, in the final chapter, the implications this analysis has on how we understand ideologically diverse activist networks operate online, is discussed.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

> "Not surprisingly, along with the vast change in Western politics since the Reagan/Thatcher era, today's inquisition emanates from left-driven media zealots; a camp akin to its conservative Christian cousins when it comes to employing bullying tactics."

The sense of alienation expressed in views such as this perfectly illustrates why many movement organizations use alternative media outlets to state their views. Men's movement organizations are no different. In a day where Internet access is extremely widespread in Western societies, appeals are made online rather easily that challenge mainstream messages, perhaps to the point where they are even mistaken for echoing mainstream views. This may be particularly true for men's organizations or groups regarding masculinity. An assumption can be made indicating mainstream outlets produce messages that preserve hegemonic masculine norms. In fact, as stated below, men's movement organizations do take umbrage with how men are presented, but in a way that leads different factions within the movement to speak past each other while possibly promoting a similar goal. Part of this issue rests on the belief that the major factions among men's movement organizations mistake the other for being a mainstream voice.

If we return to the *"*Walk a Mile in Her Shoes*"* event described in chapter 1, one may get the impression that there exists a simple dichotomy of those who either embrace the message of men being aware of issues impacting women and those who are seeking to completely disregard that message. Given that these are sponsored events that occur around North America, the environment is replicated. Certainly, such an event only attracts men who choose to become participants as walkers and a female audience for the walkers to perform before, and others who are present to voice disapproval of the event. It is unlikely that anyone would attend such an

event with any degree of apathy. Discussion becomes nearly impossible as groups holding extreme positions lack the desire to engage in understanding a dissenting viewpoint. In that case, a gap is present in the discussion of social gender dynamics that reduces to a zero-sum game of sorts. That is, each group presents their perception of being oppressed or victimized to an extent where they disregard the possibility of the other from suffering the same as a result of current social structures.

Similarly, those who simply observe these image events and become aware of the issues that they pertain to, view the groups involved in a similar dichotomous manner. The opening quote from the website, A Voice for Men (AVFM), emphasizes the simple categorization of "liberal" and "conservative" when mentioning enemies of men's movement organizations. Men's groups that are considered pro-feminist become targets of those who are typically conservative, whereas, men's groups that focus on how men are potentially victimized, oppressed, or marginalized are castigated by the left. This is an opinion expressed by a single website representing one men's group, yet suggests that various groups are targeted by either end of the ideological spectrum. Subsequently, two things are indicated. First, there is a middle ground of sorts that acknowledges the ideological breadth of men's movement organizations. In a sense, this is a self-proclaimed position held by the site A Voice for Men by indicating that men are demonized by those on the left and the right; and, this assumes that AVFM understands itself as being the monolithic voice and center of a singular men's movement. It is relatively obvious from the opening statement that there is a sense of detachment from the extremes that we need to be cautious of when analyzing men's movement organizations.

Second, rhetorical threads must exist that connect groups that may obfuscate ideological positions that provide a more complete view of men's movements, which may open the

possibility of a more complex discussion of issues online regarding gender and masculinity among men and women who choose to view these issues from a man's perspective. If we are to rely on mainstream media coverage of image events such as Walk a Mile in Her Shoes that shape social gender politics, then we fall victim to skewed coverage produced from a profit driven industry. Delving into the online rhetoric of those who actively participate in or provide commentary on such events from an alternative media platform is the only way to discover and understand connections that bind factions of men's movements and form a more complete discussion between them.

In order to understand the discourse produced by these sites, an explanation of a conservative-liberal dichotomy is necessary. When discussing both, it should be noted that there is a split between the social and economic or fiscal aspects within each ideology. This is not to suggest that there is mutual exclusivity between social and economic concerns. To an extent, divorcing the two may be nearly impossible in some cases.

McLean and McMillan (2003) broadly describe the ideology of conservativism as one that "aspires to the preservation of what is thought to be the best in established society and opposes radical change" (p. 114). Adherents to conservativism may even, but not necessarily, have a penchant towards traditionalism and a desire to restore previous social or economic structures. Socially, this can easily be understood as preserving or not extensively advocating for changes in current conditions experienced by those of different race, ethnicity, or most important here, gender. Economically, the preservation of capitalism, at least in the West, is a paramount priority for conservatives, particularly against socialism. Conservatism is largely sustained by perceived threats posed by feminism, ecologism, and social rights movements (McLean and McMillan, 2003).

Liberalism, on the other hand, is described by McLean and McMillan (2003) as "the belief that it is the aim of politics to preserve individual rights and to maximize freedom of choice" and "has focused on the space available in which individuals may pursue their own lives, or their own conception of the good" (p. 309). As can be deduced here, there is a greater desire among liberals for the intervention of government in order to assure the agency experienced by individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender. Despite this more favorable view of the use of political power to achieve desired goals, liberalism does not suggest this power be absolute. A preservation of the split between public and private is desired (McLean & McMillan, 2003). This split becomes difficult for liberals to navigate as a complete laissez-faire form of capitalism is capable of producing oppressive power structures.

Of course, these descriptions of what is meant by liberal and conservative do not consider the dynamic nature of the ideologies over time that may make it harder for individuals to establish which they would identify with. There is more overlap between the two than what is suggested here. What is important to this analysis is to have an understanding of the general positions held by each to understand how various discourses interact. This is particularly true of the social stances both ideologies take in regard to gender and, more importantly, how they would position themselves in terms of hegemonic masculinity. It would be expected that more conservative groups seek to preserve hegemonic masculine norms, as well as the taxonomy of masculinities as described by Connell. Conversely, more liberal groups will be expected to take a more progressive approach and attempt to alter the behavior of men and the expectations society has of them in order to challenge the hegemonic masculine norm.

Another distinction that needs to be addressed is between latent and manifest links. When exploring how sites link to one another on the Internet, it is imperative to explain what a *link* is.

There are obvious ways in which links can occur, such as hyperlinks that direct the reader to another site. These referred sites may or may not be similar to the ideological position of the original site, but they are typically offered as a way give an example to confirm a position or opinion attempted to be conveyed. Links of this type are manifest links. Examples of manifest links that are encountered in this analysis include links to similar or partnering sites, sites that pursue a cause that is being discussed, links to mainstream news articles, and *oppositional* sites to emphasize points being made by those of a different ideological position.

Latent links, on the other hand, are not as obvious and require more from the reader to make connections between the discourses produced by two or more sites. Here, there is no explicit link or reference provided for the reader to follow. Despite the absence of a manifest link, latent links are just as, if not more, important to the modeling of online movements in that they are able to piece together discourses that occur in isolation of one another. Authors and discussion board posters may participate in a dialogue that resembles those taking place on other forums while ignorant of their existence (Mayring, 2002). As the research questions are addressed, it is obvious this is indeed the case. In the end, latent links can provide a more complete and complex illustration of where men's movement sites converge and diverge from others. Equally as important, however, what latent links uncover may be more likely to challenge preconceived ideas of where sites may relate to each other ideologically for researchers and participants.

The existence of both types of links, but more so latent, greatly depends on the amount of interactivity allotted by the sites. Manifest links are a form of interactivity in that they allow users to navigate within and between sites. Latent links point towards a different type of interactivity, one that allows users to identify with and contribute to the dialogue found within a

site. The degree to which users are able to contribute varies greatly across the sites used in this study and impacts the amount of dialogue available to analyze. The sites with more freedom for readers to post, such as A Voice for Men (AVFM), The Spearhead, and The Good Men Project (GMP), offer more material and make up the preponderance of text in this analysis. Other sites, Men Can Stop Rape (MCSR), The Promise Keepers, and Angry Harry for example, offer very little, if any, space for reader participation which greatly reduces the amount of text they offer. Despite these differences, what they provide is the ability to judge whether participation impacts the ideological position a site occupies relative to others and if the issues discussed as they pertain to men and masculinity is impacted.

The first research question posed is: *Can networks bridge multiple movement organizations that focus on masculinities?* Inherit in this question are divisions within social movements when discussing various issues or topics. Men's movement organizations are no different. In fact, this is even truer of men's movement organizations due to the multiplicity of positions of power men are viewed to hold in various social systems. As will be shown, the relationship between various organization factions is complicated when men as the producer of movement rhetoric is as much a concern as men being the subject.

Three major topics will be discussed to address the first research question, which include: View of feminism, masculinity, and power- These topics are extracted from over seven thousand pages of text produced by fifteen sites over a three-month period, April through June of 2012. Imbedded within these topics are themes that collectively encompass the dominant discourses found on men's movement organization sites. Each theme contributes to a broader set of discussions that can be bound together rhetorically culminating in the larger topics identified thus encompassing an entire spectrum of sites incorporated into a discussion regarding

masculinity. Table 1.1 illustrates which sites the themes are addressed in and the intensity by which they are covered by that site. Intersections form and are noted at the end of each topic section. These intersections will show how the themes within the topics are similarly discussed in such a way where it is possible to unveil how a rhetorical network can be established.

The sub-research question that accompanies the first is: *If so, can those networks also bridge men's and women's movement groups that focus on masculinities?* This question will not be addressed in isolation, but rather incorporated into discussion of the themes that relate to the first primary research question. Much of the ability to provide an answer to this question is contingent upon the role women have in contributing to the four topics above and how women, as a larger group, are viewed by men and women who contribute to these sites. The importance here is to understand the possibility of allowing this insulated type of network to allow participation from other social movement organizations or groups.

View of Feminism

Perhaps the largest topic identified within the text is how feminism is viewed among contributors to these sites. No single topic creates as much of a fissure between groups that clearly place sites into one of two camps: pro-feminism and anti-feminism. It becomes clear that reasoning rests partially in the perceived success feminism has had in framing the broader discussion related to issues involving gender. Predictably, pro-feminist and anti-feminists disagree on the degree of success feminism has impacted social narratives and various power structures. More importantly is the issue of who benefits from any success. Pointing to any perceived social success of feminism that result in many men's movement organizations appear to be simple backlash movements that lack depth or purpose. However, this is not necessarily the case if feminist thought has permeated social narrative of how men and masculinity are

perceived. Feminism, then, is not simply looked upon as being an approach to viewing gender in a grand social structure; it has become *the* approach in which we view gender in society.

Damsels (and men) in Distress.

Sites that rest on the pro-feminist end of the spectrum include xyonline.com (XY), MCSR, NOMAS. These three sites, in particular, adopt a position that challenge their inclusion as a men's movement organization in an intuitive sense. NOMAS, for example, begin their "tenants" section with the following:

> Whatever psychological burden men have to overcome, women are still the most universal and direct victims of our patriarchy. Our organization must take a highly visible and energetic position in support of women's struggle for equality. Our movement was born directly out of and continually nourished by feminism. Our support for women's rights and specific women's issues must be vigorous and unmistakable (National Organization for Men Against Sexism [NOMAS], n.d., Tenants).

Likewise, XY adopts a similar platform:

> XY is a pro-feminist website. It is guided above all by a commitment to feminism. XY is intended to advance feminist goals of gender equality and gender justice. XY is intended, therefore, to encourage men to involve themselves in personal and social change towards gender equality. It inspires men to develop respectful, trusting, and egalitarian relations with women, to promote equitable and liberatory ways of living and being, and to join with women in projects of gender equality and social justice. (XY, n.d., About us)

In both cases, women are clearly the initial subject of interest as men are positioned to *come to the rescue.* It is up to men to act for women. The site Men Can Stop Rape, needs no proof of this claim beyond its name. Upheld in this view is the hegemonic masculine norm that men are to act

as being the sole agents for change. By pointing to the internal hegemony of men, like that described by Demetriou, it is only from there that change can come to society as a whole. This method of social change is perhaps a bit unintentional since these sites are created by men to appeal to men.

As purely altruistic as men demanding change for the sake of women comes across, it is also argued that men can benefit from their own desire to end the oppression of women. In the view of NOMAS, "all oppressions are linked, and a consciousness of any oppression leads to the awareness of them all" (Tenents). Patriarchal power structures are argued to negatively impact everyone. Where NOMAS claims to set itself apart is the inclusion of voices from a broad range of people, regardless of race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation:

> The simple truth is that oppression of gays, homophobia, women's oppression, and men's numerous sex role burdens and wounds are all part of the institution of patriarchy. Each injustice associated with sex contributes to all of the others. All oppressions are linked, and a consciousness of any oppression leads to an awareness of them all. The uniqueness and great potential strength of our movement is that we span all these categories of oppressions. Most people in this country have never heard gay men speak up for women's rights. Most people have not heard heterosexual men speak out forcefully for the civil rights of Gay men and Lesbians. Most people have not heard women speak knowledgeably and sympathetically about men's sex role burdens. In NOMAS, all of these things take place at every conference or meeting. There is something very special and wonderful in the breadth of our vision as a social movement, which speaks more persuasively than any of us could do alone. The totality of our opposition to the consequences of patriarchy is no weak point at all, but our greatest strength. We are not

> standing up as men to create a movement that cares only about men's sex role issues, or only about gay rights, or only about supporting women's fight against sexism. What is most special about our movement is that we have seen the connections between all these injustices, and are committed to ending all of them. (NOMAS, n.d., Statement of Principles)

Similar claims are made by groups across the men's movements spectrum. Nonetheless, it is here where the *what is in it for us question* is answered for men who want to better their own lives. Connell's (2005) opinion that men will benefit from the rights gained by women is echoed primarily in these three websites. What is unfortunate for these three sites is the lack of opportunity from administrators because a larger number of contributors limit the discussion regarding the benefit of a pro-feminist viewpoint. Events such as conferences and workshops are offered in some cases; otherwise the dialogue is driven by few contributors, typically from the academic world.

It is not only these three sites that offer a glimpse into how feminism may benefit men. The Good Men Project (GMP) offers a platform for some men to voice their support for feminist viewpoints. This is not done without the urging of women. The GMP, more than any other site in this analysis, has the greatest number of female contributors, editors, moderators, and posters. The strong female presence is greatly beneficial to discussions surrounding feminism. Generally, feminism is referred to as a singular monolithic ideology. No nuance is present. No reference is made to feminis*ms'*, or waves of feminism. What the women at the GMP do is present a mollified version of feminism that makes simple differentiations between *academic* and *online* feminists or by even presenting themselves as "sex-positive" feminists. This feminist rhetoric is

more conciliatory to reduce the accusatory tone that many men read as typically being present. One female poster does exactly this when writing the following:

> That bit you mentioned, the "men as a class oppress women," is very much not what current feminist theory suggests. So let's see if I can explain it a bit more…you may disagree that this is how things are, but it's the narrative as I understand it: Historically, in the west, women were oppressed by the patriarchal system we had in place, not by men, but by the system. And men didn't put that system in place…we all did. Everyone created (and helped sustain) that system and it ended up screwing over women in a hell of a lot of ways, because they were women. Women couldn't vote; women's occupations were less valued; women were treated like less-than-adults and assumed to be less capable, etc. And the important aspect to this, is that all that was because they were women. This isn't to say men were all hunky dory…but that men as a class were not oppressed because they were men. (We're talking historically here). So when men were oppressed, it was because of their economic status, or their race, or sexual orientation, or religion…etc. And women were oppressed because of all those things too…plus because they were women. And again, men weren't the oppressors….the system was the oppressor. Except now it's 2012 (not 1812) and the systematic and institutional oppression of women is pretty much gone (in the west). Now we're dealing with society still hanging onto old gender norms and old ideas about men and women…and in that way men end up getting screwed over too, because the old system of rigid gender norms locks men into these unrealistic and pretty dang harmful norms (i.e. men shouldn't be emotional, etc). And in some ways, when we haven't broken out of these old gender norms, men have gotten the short end of the stick (i.e. with regards to victim support in

> DV cases). – this is why you get a lot of feminists saying that more feminism will actually help men, because this is the feminism they're talking about – The idea of getting rid of the old gender norms across the board.
>
> Anyway, I think the reason I get really frustrated when you (or anyone else) starts attacking feminists, or assuming most feminists are out to get men, or whatever, is because a lot of the stuff you all are talking about aren't what the feminists I know are like. So it's like…really tiring to have to wade through the anti-feminist bit to get to the actual meat of a person's comment. (The Good Men Project [GMP], May 23, 2012)

Explanations such as this allows for some male posters to, at the very least, express some support for feminist contributors despite some apprehension to embracing what feminists (not necessarily feminism) stand for as a whole. This is illustrated by one poster below responding to the common belief that "feminists don't care about men's issues":

> Stuff like the above is very encouraging. And this site alone is evidence that some feminists do, very much, care about men's issues. But I just got out of a massive facebook row with a friend of mine who objected to me linking to an article about men's issues. She claimed that while she recognised that men's rights issues existed, referring to them or addressing them was an example of male privilege and derailing the conversation from where it belonged (women's rights).
>
> She's not the only feminist of my generation I've seen to express this opinion. In fact, most of the feminists I've personally met seem to think that men's issues are some kind of joke played by the kind of person that thinks white people have it bad. So by all means keep posting the feminist voices aiming for a

> path that includes men, but don't be surprised when the men who've met the other kind of feminist are a bit sceptical of the whole thing. (GMP, April 7, 2012)

The real power of these types of "feminist voices," as this poster refers to them, is that they begin to form a channel of communication between men and women that begins to eliminate confrontational language. This online environment is largely peculiar to the GMP. The GMP is so successful in this regard that some women have used their message boards to laud the GMP for being a great feminist site directed towards men, just to be informed by female contributors that it is not a feminist site at all. The GMP acts as a point of transition for how men approach and view feminism within these movements.

Pedantic Thugs.

Up to this point, the referenced sites either hold a pro-feminist or an undistinguished position regarding feminism. It is far more the norm that antagonistic views of feminism are provided on men's movement sites. Frequently, feminism is viewed, not as an ideology to provide any degree of social justice, but rather as a hate movement directed towards men and attacks all that is "masculine". Feminism is frequently viewed this way on the sites Angry Harry, The Spearhead, Standyourground.com, Men's Rights Blog, Mensactivism.org, and AVFM. One frequently referenced case is a belief expressed by Sally Miller Gearhart that the population of men should be reduced to and maintained at approximately 10 percent (A Voice for Men [AVFM], December 21, 2011). This example is obviously extreme, but acts as a convenient and helpful starting point for anyone attempting to position feminism in a negative light. When such fringe opinions are cited, the likelihood for any conciliation between many men and feminists become strained. In a critique over how one female author laments the lack of desire for men to get on board with feminists, one AVFM writer lashed out with:

> How surprising, that an ideology founded on the hatred of men, that sees men as disposable sources of finance, sperm donors, that paints men as innately violent monsters from whom wimmen-and-children must be protected by gender biased laws and disregard for constitutional rights, that has declared destruction of the family as a central objective – how surprising that men are not flocking to get on board!
>
> Well of course some men do flock to get on board and Angyal quotes one such male born feminist, Michael Kimmel and describes him as "a leading thinker in masculinity studies." Nope sorry, calling bullshit on this one. Masculinities as a branch of gender studies, which is a branch of feminism, might be the breeding ground for white knights such as Kimmel and our very own Michael Flood[8], who wish to engineer modern men into servile androgynous drones of women but they know little about the realities and challenges facing ordinary modern men. It is only through the MRM and initiatives such as New Male Studies[9] that these challenges will be addressed. (Canning, 2012)

Criticism such as this seems shallow and less thought out. In essence, they come across as knee-jerk reactions and contribute to the belief that many of these movement organizations exist only as backlash. However, many anti-feminist men produced far more refined dialogues.

Much of the criticism feminism faces is it is judged to be a flawed ideology that seems to lack any internal consistency. By focusing on individual issues important to men and women, this appears to be the case in reference to these movement organizations. One message found on the Men's Rights Blog attempts to do this:

> Curious Female, what feminism is today is a buffet ideology: "Well, I'll have me some of that voting, and I really want some equal pay, and how about some cash for women's

> shelters, but no, sir, don't want any of that Selective Service. I also don't want any abortion on my plate." Girl, either we are equal all the way, or Pandora needs to close that damn box. Problem with buffet feminism is that the feminist leaders have to serve ALL of the dishes. When you support feminist leaders, you support the entire buffet. (Men's Rights Blog [MRB]. March 19, 2011)

The "buffet ideology" discussion is found throughout anti-feminist men's sites, particularly those with heavily used discussion boards such as AVFM and The Spearhead. Such discussions frequently extended to occupations and occupational dangers, chivalry, or autonomy over one's own body (infant male circumcision, for example). Many men indicate that interest in addressing any of these issues is not desired by feminists because of the preponderance of interest they serve to men, despite the fact they are issues related to gender. The speculated reason for this is that doing so will undermine the "business" of feminism as attention is diverted from the real issue, which is the plight of women. Taking on such issues would also risk humanizing men. In this way, anti-feminist men express a feeling of frequently being under attack by feminists and pro-feminists who have the ability to control gender narratives in academic journals and classrooms. The way society has come to understand the terms patriarchy, masculinity, and gender are frequently pointed to as examples of the unabated narrative control feminists and pro-feminists have. Over time, these influences are shown to influence how men are depicted in news and popular culture.

No More Mr. Tough Guy.

When discussions of a "patriarchy" appear in feminist discourse, anti-feminists point out that men are typically dehumanized and are reduced to simple agents of a system. Men as emotional beings, tend to be deemphasized. Sites such as Angry Harry, AVFM,

Standyourground.com, NCFM, and Men's Rights Blog exist, to an extent, in order to get men to talk about how life events (divorce, for example) and social conditions (having to act "manly" and face challenges alone) impact them and share a desire to have them recognized. The ManKind Project goes a step further by offering therapeutic retreats for men to share and express these feelings face-to-face. The overall message is men are not impervious to feelings of helplessness and confusion. One comment found on The Spearhead sums up this sentiment:

> Male vulnerability is quite a conundrum for feminists which is why they seem quite ambivalent about it. It inconveniently contradicts their patriarchy narrative where they deny us any humanity by characterizing us all as violent oppressors (who, you know, rape and stuff). Acknowleging that men yearn for love makes us sound too human. Predictably, feminists just can't stop themselves from gloating about male pain, especially when thay are responsible for most of it. They are too arrogant to care that doing so reveals this contradiction. In their hamster-infested minds, characterizing us as both oppressors and love-lorn losers means they get to despise us twice. (The Spearhead, April 10, 2012)

Just as nuances of feminism are overlooked by many men, it is their feeling that any male perspective and diversity in society is denied by feminists in order to make broad assertions about men. Even more insidious is the platform held by those willing to describe men as being unfeeling, uncaring, and violent. This encourages many to reference feminism the same way one would refer to White Supremacists' groups, equating the bigotry of women towards men to that of Whites towards Blacks. Focus is placed on the destructive aspect of feminism.

The primary concern reflected by these men is the selective nature of feminist thought that does not even provide for any consideration of men's issues or rights. When viewed as a

zero-sum game, there is only an oppressor and the oppressed. Many discussions found on these forums express this frustration. The frustration, in part, circulates around the give-and-take between which sex is 'worse' in different contexts. More often for pro-feminists, it is the fact that the possibility that any social grievances on a man's part can even be conceived. For anti-feminist men, a ridged feminist orthodoxy is frequently designated as a culprit for the complete disregard for any type of men's rights movement (a name which may be the cause of this problem and is reflected by AVFM's adoption of the term "humanism", in reference to their mission).

Collateral Damage.

It is not only men who are claimed to be hurt by feminism. It is also argued that women are also dehumanized by feminist rhetoric. Employing the monolithic view of feminism, many anti-feminist men suggest that women tend to be "infantized" in two different ways. The first rests on a bit of a concession that there is a degree of male privilege evident in society by mentioning that with privilege comes responsibility. The purpose is to suggest feminists exonerate women from such things as placing more emphasis on their careers or accepting less desirable and dangerous jobs (construction or mining, for example), working equal hours to close the wage gap, having the expectation of being a provider for the family, or any expectation of military service (primarily in the United States), to name a few. In short, this is done by ignoring any *cost of being male.*

The second way men feel women tend to be infantized by feminists is by being forced to follow an ideology that places the responsibility of change exclusively on men. Similar to Connell suggesting that change in masculinity is the sole responsibility of the behaviors of men, feminists appear to likewise strip any agency from women when it comes to promoting change to

better the lives of women. A simple example used by anti-feminist men is that pro-feminists place the entire onus of recognizing consent on men in cases of sexual contact between two intoxicated adults. Part of bettering the lives of women is predicated on men affording more choice to women, particularly when it comes to choosing not to enter the workforce to care for family. Although this initially appears to work against the first point, the concern is women do not need to be told what to do so long as consequences for those choices are understood.

Home-wrecking Socialists.

When discussing what is meant by the term *conservative* earlier in this chapter, a threat to capitalist practices was mentioned as a central concern. It is here where among all that is discussed in regard to men's movement organizations that many sites can be referred to as being conservative. The image that appears on the site standyourground.com (Figure 15) succinctly points to a common sentiment echoed among anti-feminist men's sites, that feminism largely equates to socialism. This is not done without some degree of contortion by feminists, conflating class struggles with genders struggles. One AVFM contributor points out how this may be done:

> Feminism has, especially recently, allied itself with Marxism (you can check the sites of many Marxist and Marxist derived organizations), as well as forming their own organizations that are explicitly Marxist-feminist (as well as socialist-feminist, or communist-feminist, distancing from pure Marxist ideology), such as Radical Women, or the Freedom Socialist Party. However, while these organizations may have helped feminists in gaining more power, by co-opting communism and socialism, they ignore that feminism is incompatible with Marxist thought, as well as leftism in general. Feminists, both Marxist and otherwise, add "men and women" to the "oppressor and oppressed" list, but in doing so, completely and often intentionally miss the point.

> According to Marxism, a person is a member of the oppressor class by oppressing. A person is a member of the oppressed class, by being oppressed. It is all based on action and behavior. For feminists, a person is a member of the oppressor class by having a penis, and a person is a member of the oppressed class by having a vagina. This allows any man to be demonized as oppressor without considering if he actually did any oppressing.
>
> Likewise, a woman gets the status of oppressed, with all the moral high ground, regardless of if she actually was oppressed. Marxism would see a male coal miner as oppressed, and a female sweatshop owner as oppressor, while feminism would not, looking only at gender. The miner, by having a penis, would be hated as privileged, and the sweatshop owner, by having a vagina, would be thought of as held down by the patriarchy. Marx himself, as far back as the mid-1800s, said “Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex”. (Wacek, 2012)

This viewpoint addresses how feminists incorrectly employ Marxism. Similarly, many men wrongly present the feminist-Marxist link.

One of the biggest reasons for anti-feminist men’s movement organizations misrepresenting feminism’s promotion of Marxism is they feel government agencies force many of the ideas put forth by feminists. Bills such as the violence against women act (VAWA), and success in the court system are frequently designated as ways feminism has eroded social and family structures in Western societies. A message on the NCFM site points to this success:

> VAWA has been based on a false premise called "gender based violence," since its inception. "Gender based violence" simply blames all males as the cause of all violence,

> but especially intimate partner violence. It's a spin off of gender feminist, Patriarchy theory, but IT'S A BIG LIE. Yes, VAWA being based on a false premise of "gender based violence" makes it nothing more than a thin facade for a hate movement – plain and simple (National Coalition for Men [NCFM], May 17, 2012)

Additionally, a female poster on the GMP notes:

> And of course, the destruction of the family, a goal set out by many early feminists, and played out through the failures of equality in family courts, failures that are supported and perpetuated by feminist groups like NOW. I'd say the family destruction, and the inevitable purchasing of love and forgiveness by the guilty parents for not being around as often as the kids need, also results in depersonalization and a sense of entitlement. So, while I don't think Feminism is solely to blame for our cultures unwillingness to help, I do think it has played a significant role in both depersonalizing everyone, creating a sense of entitlement in our younger generation (and the older generation of women) as well as in creating a number of legal deterrents to aiding those in distress. (GMP, April 3, 2012)

As the opinion of this poster suggests, feminism has been the cause of the destruction of the traditional family structure through opening the door for intervention by the court system. However, discussions linking feminism with Marxism or socialism tend to focus on the intrusion of governments, not economic systems. In fact, it will be shown later that many anti-feminist men indirectly promote a Marxist approach in making lives better for men as they discuss how capitalistic practices exploit them. This is the large contradiction in the accusation that only feminists are agents for Marxism.

Despite these mostly antagonistic views of feminism, there is general agreement that the movement has been largely successful in bringing the discussion of gender issues public. This is

envied by most anti-feminist men. Without the elevation of a women's movement, issues of concern to men would never have been addressed in ways they are now. Anti-feminist men believe that feminist discourse has come to dominate government and academia. The reason for this is a point of debate. Most contend it is the result of the willingness of powerful men to give into pressure placed upon them. Others would say this is the result of feminists creating and controlling a lexicon that excludes and denies men the ability to position themselves as members of an oppressed group. One point is very clear, men's movement organizations are lacking a unified narrative that allows them to productively engage with a well-entrenched feminist ideology that drives any discussion when gender is involved.

Intersections.

Despite the divisiveness found under views of feminism, the way the themes are discussed often overlap to provide similar ways of addressing the topic overall. The emergence of these themes provides a glimpse into three different types of intersections that bind movements together rhetorically. These intersections include: conciliation, disgruntlement, and distention.

As mentioned, the topic of feminism acts more as a point of demarcation between competing groups of movements rather than providing any type of abridgement between pro and anti-feminist factions. One type of intersection that is present which provides some cushioning between pro-feminist and anti-feminist sites, however, is a conciliation intersection. This type of intersection works in a couple of different ways. The first appears when looking at the *damsels (and men) in distress* and *pedantic thugs* themes. Here, some common ground can be found in the discussion between the GMP site and NOMAS, XY, and MCSR sites in that there is an effort to understand that feminism is potentially beneficial to both men and women.

The GMP acts as a bit of an outlier in the analysis in that it is not necessarily anti-feminist like other sites. Many of the female contributors and posters consider themselves feminist, but do so with some caution. There is a clear attempt by the GMP to promote some of the benefits of feminism while dropping the accusatory tone that is present on pro-feminist sites. Joanna Schroeder of the GMP illustrates such sentiment in this way:

> I'm a feminist. You all know that by now, right?
>
> I refuse to stop calling myself a feminist, despite MRAs and feminists alike wishing I would drop that label.
>
> Just because I disagree with a lot of the things that prominent feminists say, doesn't mean I disagree with equality and with examining society with a focus on women. And despite some of the disgusting things being done in the name of feminism—whether it be the attack-mobs of Internet RadFems who have been actively trying to ruin the life of my friend Hugo Schwyzer, or the similar groups of feminists on the Internet who berate, belittle and demean men for voicing their feelings and concerns about equality and Men's Rights issues—I still call myself a feminist. I believe I define my own feminism. (Schroeder, April 4, 2012)

Schroeder is not alone in cautiously integrating feminism into men's movement site narratives. Other contributors and posters express a similar need to incorporate their backgrounds in feminist thought in order to reduce the friction that is likely to exist on this type of site. It is frequently the case where opinions on the GMP are qualified with the declaration of "being a feminist". The benefit of these disclosures is that feminism is shown to not be stoic and allows for a degree of fluidity that makes it salient to the male readers without fear of being attacked.

Pro-feminist sites, likewise, attempt to emphasize that feminism is as beneficial for men as it is women. NOMA, for example, takes some time to recognize that there is a male perspective that is not frequently recognized:

> Most people have not heard women speak knowledgeably and sympathetically about men's sex role burdens. In NOMAS, all of these things take place at every conference or meeting. There is something very special and wonderful in the breadth of our vision as a social movement, which speaks more persuasively than any of us could do alone. The totality of our opposition to the consequences of patriarchy is no weak point at all, but our greatest strength. We are not standing up as men to create a movement that cares only about men's sex role issues, or only about gay rights, or only about supporting women's fight against sexism. What is most special about our movement is that we have seen the connections between all these injustices, and are committed to ending all of them. (NOMAS, n.d., Tenants)

The site XY echoes this outlook in this way:

> XY supports men's efforts at positive change and affirms positive and health-promoting formations of masculinity and selfhood. XY recognises both commonalties and diversities in the lives of men, shaped by such factors as class, ethnicity, sexuality, age, and disability. It promotes inclusive frameworks and practices for engaging in work regarding men and gender, and encourages alliances between pro-feminist and other social justice movements. (XY, n.d., About Us)

By accepting the notion that men have perspectives and burdens that are peculiar to them as a group, these two sites offer what they believe to be a channel for all men's organizations to

explore how feminism addresses the interconnectivity of oppression and how it fits into discussions of gender.

Despite such attempts by the GMP, NOMAS, and XY to emphasize the benefits of feminism, this approach is not widely embraced by anti-feminist sites. This does not mean, however, that anti-feminist sites do not take part in this conciliatory intersection. Anti-feminist sites largely agree that “feminism” has too negative a connotation to fully embrace. Instead, there is a tendency to favor gender-neutral language that would abridge all men’s movement organizations. As previously mentioned, AVFM incorporating the term “humanism” is an example of this. Despite the overwhelming tendency to attack feminism, some contributors on anti-feminist men’s sites are reluctant to take part in inter-gender ideology wars and instead seek a larger cohesive movement. One NCFM poster, Riversong, takes the following approach:

> Warren Farrell's political solution is "neither a women's movement blaming men nor a men's movement blaming women, but a gender transition movement."
>
> Come on brothers, let's not fall into the same trap of blaming the "other". Some righteous indignation is constructive, but anger only burns our own souls.
>
> (NOMAS, April 17, 2012)

Riversong continues in another post:

> Dividing the world into good and evil is a convenient, but intellectually lazy and ultimately self-defeating, response to a world which is nothing but shades of gray – shades cast by the shadows that we all live out in a fundamentally dysfunctional society. Most problems are not, in fact, caused by "malicious" people, but by ignorant and selfish ones who fail to see the big picture and that we're all in this together.

> Blaming the "other" feels good for a while (just as every prejudice is based on a sense of disempowerment and an attempt to re-empower at the expense of another), but the only way real change is made is by assuming responsibility for our own part in the problem and inviting others to do the same.
>
> That doesn't mean we stop protesting injustices where they are evident, but that we don't turn a righteous struggle into an "us vs. them" crusade that only demeans all sides of the battle and results in a bloodbath like our Civil War. (NOMAS, April 17, 2012)

Excerpts such as these express the desire for a more inclusive form of men's movement organization. Typically, the way anti-feminist men's group do this is not by adhering to feminist thought, but rather by incorporating women.

Having women speak for men on anti-feminist sites is looked upon as a way of providing legitimacy to the perspectives they share. This second form of conciliation is a concession of sorts that men are dependent on women in order to be an effective movement. In an AVFM thread discussing the relative ineffectiveness of men's organizations, a poster named Keyster expresses the importance of women in the movement:

> What's the first step you ask?
>
> Establish a NARRATIVE in a female voice.
>
> Write a book, publish it, promote it, get it out there.
>
> And every TRUE MRA should be 100% behind this effort.
>
> The Times are ripe for this - the cultural window is open. If the MRM, led by men, was going to break-through, it would have by now. We're incapable of it.

> That sounds rather Misandric I know, but those are the facts on the ground.
>
> (AVFM, June 26, 2012)

What there is, then, is envy of the ability feminists have to get their message out and have it remain in mainstream media outlets. The incorporation of women into organizations such as AVFM, provides some hope that discussing men's issues from a female perspective will provide anti-feminist movement organizations the ability to provide legitimacy to the discussions taking place on these sites. This may not be done with the intent of finding a common ground with feminists, but rather to forge into the gender dialogue.

Despite attempts to open channels for dialogue between movement organizations, another type of intersection is more dominant, disgruntlement. Disgruntlement essentially acts as the break between the large group of movement organization factions of pro and anti-feminists. Themes such as *pedantic thugs* and *home-wrecking socialists* harbor most of this rhetoric. Even on the GMP site, there is enough of this type of intersection that it virtually eliminates it from being neutral to being more anti-feminist.

Disgruntlement primarily has to do with lamenting the anti-feminist belief that feminism is the dominant discourse in which gender politics is understood. This frustration permeates and binds anti-feminist sires together. Even on the GMP, a site where feminist viewpoints are more likely tolerated, some posters share experiences such as this:

> I just got out of a massive facebook row with a friend of mine who objected to me linking to an article about men's issues. She claimed that while she recognised that men's rights issues existed, referring to them or addressing them was an example of male privilege and derailing the conversation from where it belonged (women's rights).

> She's not the only feminist of my generation I've seen to express this opinion. In fact, most of the feminists I've personally met seem to think that men's issues are some kind of joke played by the kind of person that thinks white people have it bad.
>
> So by all means keep posting the feminist voices aiming for a path that includes men, but don't be surprised when the men who've met the other kind of feminist are a bit skeptical of the whole thing. (GMP, April 7, 2012)

This excerpt highlights the feeling of loss of control in the arena of gender discourse. But the above citation only acts as an example of the problem anti-feminist men face. Another GMP poster postulates the reasoning for this:

> OK, I will be the one to acknowledge the elephant in the room: the contribution of the feminist movement's philosophies on men's issues being ignored.
>
> 1. The concept of "male privilege" that has been taught in women's studies/feminism theory and argued in society socializes the idea that boys and men automatically have privilege over girls and women based on being male, no matter how debased the boys/men's circumstances are. So, why should those with the privilege be offered help? That would be an affront on the underprivileged ones. That contributes to men's/boys' issues being kept in the back room.
>
> 2. The concept of "the patriarchy" taught in women's studies/feminism theory and argued in society socializes the idea that boys and men automatically have power and control over girls and women based on being male, no matter how debased the boys/men's circumstances are. So, why should the ones automatically granted power and control be offered help. That would be an affront on the ones without power and control? That contributes to men's/boys' issues being kept in the back room.

> 3. One of the feminist movement's premier issues has been "violence against women", which they use(d) synonymously with the term "domestic violence." Thus, the message promoted is that DV is violence against women. Hence, we have the VAWA. So, if a woman hits/slaps/punches, etc. a man, the cops and others have been socialized to not consider that domestic violence (since it's not violence against women), whereas the reverse absolutely is. That has promoted and maintained this double standard mentioned above.
>
> Not to say that there are no other forces at work but these have had a huge negative impact on men's issues/rights not even being acknowledged, let alone addressed. (GMP, September, 18, 2012)

Claims such as these would be contested by pro-feminist men's sites as reasons why men should give credence to feminist thought. Nonetheless, such reasons result in a belief that male voices are not welcome when gender rises in the discussion of social issues and power structures.

Being shut-out due to having a competing viewpoint contributes to an *us-versus-them* approach in addressing feminism, be it men or women that portrays feminism as a hate movement. A comment on a The Spearhead forum illustrates this:

> Feminists don't need to breed to make more feminists. All they need to do is what they HAVE done, unopposed ideologically. Painting an entire sex with a foul brush needs to be recognized as hateful, not given fucking tenure and an interview in mass media. It needs to be seen as what it is, a call to violence, a call to inequality, a call to the application of force, instead of just being seen as "poor women fighting for equality". (The Spearhead, April, 12, 2012)

Clearly, issues related to power are evident here. However, it is the lack of power men are believed to have which drives this perception. Notable among these anti-feminist perceptions of feminists, however, is the insinuation that pro-feminist men share a level of disgruntlement over their perceived lack of power when dealing with men as a group.

Pro-feminist men utilize statistics and information produced by women's groups which often portray men as harmful to women. From domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, and even female participation in sports, pro-feminists spend a great deal of time emphasizing the way men create a hostile environment for women to live. This is rather unmistakable when "Stop Being A Jerk" is printed in large letters on the front of a flyer by the site MCSR directed towards men (Figure 16). However, this type of disgruntlement is also evident within the text produced by pro-feminist sites that lament the idea of men attempting to fit into gender dialogues. This specifies a tension that exists among men's movement organizations. In discussions of domestic violence, for example, Jack C. Stranton of NOMAS moves to deflect attention away from anti-feminist men's claims that men are often victims of domestic violence by concluding:

> Of course we must have compassion for those relative few men who are harmed by their wives and partners, but it makes logical sense to focus our attention and work on the vast problem of male violence (96 percent of domestic violence) and not get side-tracked by the relatively tiny (4 percent) problem of male victimization. The biggest concern, though, is not the wasted effort on a false issue, it is the fact that batterers, like O.J. Simpson, who think they are the abused spouses are very dangerous during separation and divorce. In one study of spousal homicide, over half of the male defendants were separated from their victims [38]. Arming these men with warped statistics to fuel their

> already warped world view is unethical, irresponsible, and quite simply lethal. (Stranton, 2012)

The statistics cited by Stranton are a point of contention as both anti-feminist and pro-feminist extract statistics from sources friendly to their respective worldviews, but the overall tone of Stranton's piece is the frustration that the desired narrative his group, NOMAS, seeks to set is in danger of being derailed. This is also a primary motive for NOMAS and XY promoting the need for preserving the current gendered language found in the VAWA. However, pro-feminist disgruntlement does not end with narratives involving men and women.

There is a clear discomfort among pro-feminist men in their dealings with other men who do not share their perspective. A sense of "not fitting in" is a point of frustration for these contributors. Bill Patrick from XY speaks of how he values the socially diverse and interesting conversations females are capable of carrying on as opposed to the sports-centric conversations he has with men. Patrick notes that he feels this way, "Because I find watching sports on t.v. to be only marginally interesting. And I find the limited conversational repertoire of many straight men to be only slightly more interesting than that" (Patrick, May 23, 2012). In another article related to athletic ability in sport, Patrick celebrates that:

> Even though we still have a long way to go before women achieve full equality, feminism has already born(e) fantastic and copious fruit. The notion that men are somehow innately superior to women is rapidly crumbling worldwide as ever-increasing numbers of women attain positions of power throughout society. (Patrick, June 5, 2012)

This denouncement of "men are somehow innately superior to women", oddly, follows after his claim that female fighters in a self-defense program use "areas of innate female biological superiority" against male counterparts. What claims such as these do is continue a thread of

discourse of "why don't other men get it?" that begins with the belief that embracing feminism is the way to release the burdens of male sex roles and the need to appear dominant over females and subservient males. In other words, there is a strong sense of frustration that feminist discourse in not understood and accepted by men outside of those who identify as pro-feminist.

The distention of dialogue is a final type of intersection found within this topic. Distention does not initially seem to be a priority for anti-feminist men as they appear to simply be backlash movement organizations that stand to halt feminist successes in the social narrative. When considering the *No More Mr. Tough Guy* and *Collateral Damage* themes, however, there is a need for a new type of discussion on gender that is less gynocentric and more inclusive of the concerns of men and the LGBT community. More importantly, there is a demand that men belong in social movements involving masculinity because they are currently excluded from the discussion as the terms which masculinity is defined and understood are created by those who accept an approach which disproportionately embraces female perspectives. Men who do not agree with this perspective are excluded from the linguistic formation of their own identity and become referential non-participants.

Control over the gender dialogue can be viewed as a pendulum that has moved too far from one end to the other, but never resting in an area that is satisfying to either men or women activists. Creating a sense of balance is what much of the discussions on most of these sites are all about, albeit in different ways. One of the clearer examples comes from a poster on the GMP who is replying to an article about the criminal justice system and men:

> I've never had an issue with life improving for women. I don't think you'd get an argument that feminism wasn't good for women outside of a few anti-feminists. If the

> criminal justice system does not always recognize that men can be victims then it doesn't always recognize that these "are" crimes unless somehow male victims don't count.
>
> I remember at one point feminists complained about the subtle use of language to disenfranchise women. I guess we haven't gotten to the point where men can take issue with nuances of language that disenfranchise men without a backlash.
>
> (GMP, September 18, 2012)

This poster touches on two important points when it comes to distention of dialogue. The first is that there is an over-encroachment by feminist and pro-feminists that has stifled discussion through "nuances of language" which does not allow for retort. The ability and even need for non-feminist male perspectives goes unrecognized and causes feminist and pro-feminists to continue expressing the need for men to adopt the feminist perspective to challenge hegemonic masculine norms. Another GMP article prompted a response by another poster that highlights the difficulty for many anti-feminist men in accepting this premise:

> (y)ou get a lot of feminists saying that more feminism will actually help men, because this is the feminism they're talking about – The idea of getting rid of the old gender norms across the board.
>
> So….why do we also get a lot of feminists that also deny the existence of male victims or at least ones that have no problem with the denial if it works in their favor? If feminism were truly all about getting rid of the old gender norms I'd be all for the idea that "more feminism" is a part of the answer. But there are way too many examples of feminism that has no problem with men suffering in silence when it suits them.
>
> But its more than that. There are those of us who aren't feminists and want the same thing but since we don't ID as such do you know what we get for our troubles? We get told that

> we hate women because we don't ID as feminists or that we don't ID as such because of "the media".
>
> I'd like to work with them but I refuse to do so as long as they expect me to drink their proverbial Kool Aid. Until then I'll just work with the few reasonable ones that I come across. (GMP, May 23, 2012)

This perception that feminists are uncompromising leads to the second point arising from the first GMP poster, a need for a counter-discourse.

In order for men to claim the need for a more inclusive gender movement, they must convince feminist groups (pro-feminist in the case of movements focusing on masculinity) that men indeed care enough about their current state to warrant inclusion. The fact that anti-feminist movement organizations exist in the first place hints that this is the case and there is an underlying concern that may not be overtly apparent in social settings. In a sense, this feeling originates from the "referential" position mentioned earlier where men and masculinity are *talked about* by feminists and pro-feminist s and not actively engaging with the men who are the subjects. The creation of a compatible lexicon, then, is essential for anti-feminist men to constructively engage with pro-feminist men. One Standyourground.com poster pushes for men to do just this:

> Most feminists are post-modernists who believe that there is no such thing as objective reality, and that truth is merely a construct. That means that our constructs are just as good as their constructs. All we have to do is publicize them. That may sound cynical, but it is the only way to deal with people like that. (Stand Your Ground.com [SYG], June 19, 2012)

The difference here, however, is that the constructs this poster is speaking of, would come exclusively from online alternative media forums and would not carry the weight of academic credentials as found on pro-feminist sites.

Masculinity

Despite being a topic that this analysis is designed to explore as it related to social movements, masculinity emerges as a topic that needs to be discussed in and of itself. Due to the shift in perspective offered by men and women who participate in these movement organizations, a more complete critique of what is masculine develops when added to those of pro-feminist men who largely make-up the academic literature discussed earlier in this paper. This is not to exclude pro-feminist views seeing they are part of these movements. Some views on where masculinity currently stands and where it should go are, in fact, bolstered by allowing a more diverse group of voices. Where discussions related to feminism divides, those related to masculinity unnoticeably unifies.

Unmanly Men.

One immediate paradox that is presented is whether the idea of a men's movement, one that is anti-feminist in nature, is un-masculine by its very existence. It is obvious why pro-feminists would have a stake in the desire for change given their self-proclaimed title, but less so is why anti-feminist men would make similar arguments for promoting a new approach to understanding masculinity. In a GMP article that asks, "Is Masculinity Like Fight Club?" Joanna Schroeder, a GMP contributor and editorial board member, expresses surprise that men are often unwilling to discuss masculinity or acknowledging there is any "crisis" in masculinity. To express any concern regarding men would be a sign of weakness, to many. To complain about

the state of men, boys, and masculinity is often looked upon as being the most unmanly thing men can do. One response to the Schroeder article looked at the issue this way:

> Advocating for men's rights is the most heartbreaking and difficult thing I have ever done. Very few men have sufficient strength inside them, to feel compassion for other men. Once a man opens his eyes to the pain of other men, the world is filled with paralyzing darkness and overwhelming urgency.
>
> An MRA is no longer a part of the "tribe." You have no friends and no political patronage. Your resources are depleted because you are outcast, at the same time that your eyes are open to millions of silent screams that nobody on Earth cares about. There is nothing harder than advocating for the voiceless. There is nothing harder than being a men's rights advocate. (Schroeder, May 3, 2012)

This citation illustrates the belief that being an MRA, in this case, is not something that men typically choose to take part in by noting that it is "heartbreaking" and isolating, thus doing so requires valor. In essence, to identify with the movement is more a concession of vulnerability. AVFM continues with this anti-zeitgeist theme by embracing an acerbic approach to discussing men's issues and masculinity. By drawing comparisons to heavy metal music in the 1980's, AVFM notes that men's movements will likely be marginalized but receive adequate attention by creating noise through aggressive and blunt language. One way this has been done is through satirical parodies of feminist works that make misogynist claims. This tactic of switching sexes in feminist narratives is used, in part, to activate apathetic men to the cause.

Bringing apathetic men into most of these movement organizations is based on the idea that masculinity is something that is socially under attack. When the *under attack* belief is echoed, it is not done so with the belief that masculine behavior is harmful to men, but rather that

it is harmful to women. This view that changes are required to benefit women is a critique that comes from either pro-feminist sites or something that permeates from a larger social narrative. Male culpability for rampant misogyny and other social ills are seen as being a result of an overly gynocentric approach to discussing masculinity.

The Blame Game.

Perhaps the simplest way male culpability is evident is in discussions regarding rape and sexual violence. The image (Figure 16) is one of a series of posters offered by the site MCSR that expects the issue to be men's responsibility to resolve by focusing on them as being the sole perpetrators of gender based crimes. According to the site, eliminating rape and sexual violence is contingent on the altering of hegemonic masculine attitudes that values the subjugation of women. This is where the terms *men* and *masculinity* become unmistakably joined and are the same. The difficulty with the connection of these terms is that discussions regarding masculinity moves from a nebulous concept of social structure to a distinct group of people who are meant to be the embodiment of those structures. This shift allows for a clear perpetrator-victim dichotomy that provides a base for movement organizations to choose either side of discourses regarding masculinity.

With the understanding that masculinity equates to men, anti-feminist men point to cases where activities typically viewed as being enjoyed by men, are deemed insidious. Frequently, this critique comes from criticisms of pornography, male sexuality, or video games. Articles or interviews that appear in mainstream media offer ample opportunity for men to respond to the opinion that these areas in particular must be addressed in some way so boys can mature into better men. The concern is that generations of boys are being raised to be socially insulated and understand the world as being a violent one that objectifies women. It is argued that such forms

of entertainment encourage and preserve an unhealthy dominant masculinity. One MCSR poster (Figure 17) addresses the harm of boys bullying boys in preserving this power structure (while still slipping into sexual assault where women are the subject for protection). This is an attempt to suggest physical strength should be used to protect and not dominate. Here issue is taken with this insinuation that bullying is a male-only activity.

Unmanly Ridicule.

We are familiar with the "failure to launch" and "grown man living in his parent's basement" narratives that almost exclusively target men. These stereotypes appear because some men do not embrace dominant masculine roles. Social pressures emphasizing professional success and leadership lead to forms of ridicule that are levied by men and women towards those who do not embody it. What is important to understand is that for any change to occur, we must look beyond men as being the sole agents for change. Women are expected to take an active role seeing they contribute to the narratives upholding hegemonic masculine norms. Unlike the poster examples earlier in this section that seemingly indicate that women are only passive social participants, other sites do a better job of incorporating women into the dialogue and emphasize women having power in helping maintain hegemonic masculine norms. A GMP comment explains this when discussing his use of pornography and video games:

> I started watching porn at the age of 10. It's been a daily and multiple times a day thing every day since that time. I think I've gone more than 4 days without watching porn once in my entire life. It is not inherently a problem, but it gives boys an outlet they would not otherwise have. Whether we admit it or not, boys (and men) are expected and required to do the lion's share of approaching and initiating. In junior high and high school, your options are limited. If you strike out a bunch of times, you quickly lose any opportunity

> to get a date or a girlfriend and you quickly earn the label of socially awkward loser. I cannot begin to describe the pain and suffering that comes from serial rejection from women at such a young age. How does a boy get confidence socially when he is perpetually rejected by women and that rejection is used as a tool to humiliate him by his peers? If you combine this with say, absentee parents who don't regularly demonstrate affection towards their children, then you have a recipe for a child who feels they do not have any inherent self-worth because they are being told by the world that they do not have any self-worth. You can't tell a teenage boy that the reason his parents and women and peers are rejecting him is a problem with them and not a problem with him. He won't believe you.
>
> He will have friends with whom he plays games, who are also having the same sort of social issues. It becomes a sort of band of brothers; a group of boys who have been rejected by the world who escape into video games where they can feel in control and good about themselves. Where they can have accomplishments. (GMP, June 23, 2012)

Not surprisingly, the women on this message board have a different approach to the topic, looking at video games and pornography in a similar, delinquent, light as society as a whole claim to. Much of the debate circulates around the idea women are not afforded similar escapes or fantasies. As one female poster notes, "But we all know that porn is primarily made and consumed for male pleasure first. What does that say about female sexuality too? It's a very jumbled up confusing issue." This lead to another comment that:

> You're not giving much agency to these women who willingly look at porn, in fact it's quite insulting. Ever think that maybe they don't see it ALL as degrading and they

> consume porn of a decent nature (that is infact quite plentiful). Who's to say they are buying into their own sexual objectification? You do realize many adults do see women as more than just sexual beings, and many of those also look at porn?
>
> I fear there are women who are so focused on one aspect of porn that they conflate it to being representative of most/all porn, who feel so objectified and degraded by it that it is biasing their judgment of an absolutely massive medium that can't be defined by one genre or type. I find it as silly as those who want to ban video games because of the existence of GTA. I see quite a few of these women who seem to think when men say they look at porn, that pretty much every one of those men is looking at porn that is degrading, violent, and misogynist. But it's an assumption that judges these men without having a clue as to what they look at. How is that at all helpful? (GMP, June 23, 2012)

Views such as this are evident on other anti-feminist sites, with a notable exception being The Promise Keepers who claim that "Pornography is winning the battle for men's minds." The point to come away with here is, despite the face-value arguments that are made to demonize some "masculine" attractions, they may actually be symptoms that develop as a result of the power women have over men.

New World Men.

Up to this point, it would seem as if anti-feminist sites would seek to establish a position where hegemonic masculinity is preserved and resist attempts by pro-feminist men and women to promote change. Delving deeper into this topic, however, this is not the case. The greatest surprise in this analysis is perhaps that nearly all of these men's movement sites, regardless of their position towards feminism, promote changes in what is considered as being the masculine

norm. It is in the best interest of these groups to find such changes desirable in order to garner greater support for and add more dimensions to the arguments they advocate. In doing so, many of these sites tend to act as advocates for gay men.

In a sense, homosexual men have become a bit of a middle ground for pro and anti-feminist men. Both sides claim to welcome and fight for them. Pro-feminist men look at homosexual men as fitting into subordinate masculinity, in Connell's terms, and view them as being no different than women when it comes to being marginalized and dominated by men who take on the hegemonic or complicit masculine roles. Anti-feminist men, on the other hand, view homosexual men as being men like themselves, which would therefore mean that the concerns and troubles that face the homosexual community are treated as their own. In fact, the gay community is sometimes credited with loosening the demands placed on other men when it comes to how a man is expected to act. Angry Harry addresses this when asked about his own sexuality:

> No, I am Not gay, but my view is that it was gay activists, mostly, who helped to dilute society's traditional expectations that all men had to behave like 'real men' in order to be men.
>
> And I am old enough to remember a time wherein gentle men - perhaps those who were opposed to violence - or weak men were regarded as non-men: and, probably, gay.
>
> To be a man, you had to be tough.
>
> And if you were not tough, then you were regarded as being less than a man. (Witness also the derogatory way in which computer geeks were treated and portrayed not so long ago.)

> Gay activism has helped enormously to loosen the powerful constraints that bound men into certain roles and it has reduced the pressure on men to behave in a very limited and strongly circumscribed manner. (Angry Harry, n.d., Your Emails)

This is not a peculiar view across anti-feminist sites. In fact, pro-feminists and feminists are accused by these sites of using the gay community as pawns in a game of gender politics, with the occasional gay man commenting on how feminism does not speak for them. This is an important turn in acknowledging how men, as a group, are victims of hegemonic expectations and that change is desirable.

The successful promotion for change requires anti-feminist men to highlight the perils of modern dominant masculinity. This must be accomplished by anti-feminist men because they are looked upon as being a lone ally to men who understand the need to be humanized without being criticized for acting as agents for feminism. Recognizing and discussing the emotions that come with the burden of masculinity, at the very least, entices others to discuss the problems and make it a responsibility for all, men and women, to alter men's expectations. One group, the ManKind Project, recognizes the need for men to look inward to do this:

> One of the most powerful choices you can make as a man is the choice to care for yourself. Men are often reluctant to seek the help they need because of cultural messages that we are supposed to somehow be indestructible. We're not. Fear and Shame can be powerful motivators to stay stuck in old behaviors that no longer help you. Today, you can take a big step toward changing that old pattern. (The ManKind Project, April 25, 2013)

The step that is referenced is a retreat where men meet to talk to one another about the struggles they face. These retreats are reminiscent of those promoted by Richard Bly in his mythopoetic

movements. One major difference is the ManKind project retreats seek to alter that which is acceptable masculinity, not reclaim traditional masculinity. The irony, however, is the ManKind project retreats are referred to as "New Warrior Training Adventures," which harkens back to the very image they claim to resist.

Disposability.

Often, men are seen, as a group, referenced as being like that of a social soldier. The metaphor of soldier is used as a compendium of what it is to be a man in Western society: Men as anonymous; Men as unfeeling; Men as uncaring; and, Men as aggressive. Unlike the approach adopted by the ManKind Project that asks men to look inward, others cite a broader social narrative about men that requires changing. One NCFM contributor sums this problem in this manner:

> To a lesser degree, these are the very symptoms that we have recognized and criticized in powerful men (and increasingly women) in industry, finance and politics. Historically, men have been expected to take on the role of protector and savior, sacrificing their own psychological and physical welfare for the sake of homeland, home, wife, and children. Particularly in the last century, men have been drafted into the unrecognized and unappreciated status of civilian soldier in a constant and increasingly demanding low-level economic warfare. Men, from a young age, in school and home and peer group, learn and absorb the memes of "sucking it up", not showing emotion, never crying, and ruthless competition in sports and classes and then in the workplace.
>
> It is no wonder that men exhibit many of the same signs of traumatization as soldiers. Addiction and domestic violence – both forms of pathological narcissism – are

> the fallout. And these outcomes are not by any means exclusive to men in our society as "liberated" women take on soldiering roles as well. (NCFM, April 17, 2012)

Not only is soldier spoken metaphorically, but literally, as well. With forced conscription in many nations and selective service in the United States (although a proposition to include women has been made), all the aspects of being a soldier are applied when describing how men (although not exclusively as mentioned above) are stripped of autonomy and individuality in everyday life. The larger idea of masculinity from this belief is that of male disposability.

The idea of the disposable male is central to discussions of masculinity on men's sites, particularly on anti-feminist sites. Pro-feminist men touch on this to a degree, but only reference disposability in terms of male-on-male crime, which is done to emphasize the violent aspect of masculinity. One example that exemplifies the attitude the mainstream media and society have towards this idea is through the made-to-be humorous "zombie attack" that took place in Florida. The incident is recalled in an article on the GMP (Schroeder, June 1, 2012). Briefly described, a homeless man was attacked and had his face bitten and ripped apart while the perpetrator, Rudy Eugene, was high on bath salts. The story received national attention as being a real life buttress to popular zombie television shows. Despite the horror of the incident, it was largely told and referenced as a point of humor. No regard for the humanity for the nameless, homeless man is provided. He was expendable and only acted as a prop to a popular, timely meme. The zombie was just another deranged, mindless man taking part in a heinous act. This incident, as unusual as it is, fits well with how working class men are referenced in popular culture.

One of the most lamented aspects of disposable masculinity is the working class male. Fitting into this role is a choice that is stripped from men as they become a part of a capitalist, profit-driven system. Being a stay-at-home parent is not an acceptable option. Although attitudes

are slowly changing, men who choose to raise children often find themselves ridiculed by men and women for not holding a job outside the home. The primary function for men is to be a provider, and little more.

When entering the workforce, men are typically the lone shareholders of the most perilous jobs. It is often cited that men make up the vast preponderance of job related deaths (I say often here because some professions do place women in similar conditions). Jobs in the fields of mining and construction, to only name a couple, are dominated by males not because they are closed to women, but because women are largely excluded from any expectation of holding them. This is a result of what one NCFM writer, Jim Goldich, calls the *glass floor.* Just as feminists reference the concept of a *glass ceiling* that prevents women from climbing the corporate ladder to obtain positions of power, Goldich comes up with the *glass floor* concept as the idea that women are protected from the most insidious of human conditions . Goldich explains it in this way:

> As the Glass Ceiling, in myriad ways both nebulous and concrete, has always tended to thwart Woman's rise to the top, so the Glass Floor, in myriad ways both nebulous and concrete, has always tended to safeguard her from sinking to the extreme bottom.
>
> Throughout history, the Glass Floor has protected women from sinking to the bottoms of mine shafts, prison cells, and foxholes. The Glass Floor has acted as partial insulation between women and the dark side of the world and human nature as well as insulation between women and most of life on earth's most deeply brutal, filthy, arduous, corrupting, and hazardous realities. (Goldich, May 6, 2012)

What is important , is the lack of denial of the *glass ceiling.* Goldich presents this as a reality. What he does, however, is drop the zero-sum approach to workplace success, and in this case,

failure. The perception of the *glass floor*, which is often discussed, but not necessarily by name, provides an interesting question for these anti-feminists movements, who is to blame for it? By all indications, according to the opinions of many on these sites, it is men of power.

Hegemonic masculinity places an emphasis on power, both over women and other men. The problem with distinguishing who epitomizes this power was discussed in chapter 2, is it the tough and strong worker, or is it the physically less imposing business executive? This is not to limit masculinity to physical traits, but rather between those who exploit and those who are exploited. Men are often exploited the same way that women are, by being used as replaceable grunts who, in the end, do not matter as far as individual contributions are concerned, except that men take on different and more dangerous roles. Based on these concerns, however, there would seem to be less of an apprehension to the so-called Marxist position that many men feel feminists hold. It would be men who benefit as much as women from the empowerment of the working class.

Again, there is a paradox here: Men on anti-feminist sites shunning any idea that has a resemblance of what they feel to be Marxism or socialism not because they will not benefit them, but because of the connotation they have with feminism. This is the conservative aspect of these movement organizations. However, the same men despise their own lack of autonomy and sense of disposability and urge others to accept that men may need to express themselves emotionally and have a desire to care for their own wellbeing. What is required, then, is a change in the attitudes women hold towards men and men have of themselves. Men and women need to *get it* without the incursion of some government agency or policy forcing them to recognize it. This is, ultimately, where the conflict with feminism occurs, the perceived belief that all change must be political. How can a progressive form of masculinity develop that men will want to embrace if

the only acceptable voices promoting dialogues regarding gender are feminist? How can the issues important to men, such as father's rights, men's health, male suicide, workplace safety, and a growing education gap, be addressed if they are not even recognized by some feminist and pro-feminist men's sites as being problems? The group that acts as a barrier resulting in such questions is men in positions of power, which is discussed in the following topic.

Intersections.

The intersections regarding masculinity are perhaps the easiest to recognize given that both anti and pro-feminist factions seem to desire re-visiting the social construct of masculinity. Most every site, with the exception of the Promise Keepers, promotes a re-conceptualization of what it means to be a man lessening the impact of the term. Doing this is viewed as a way for men to more easily open up to each other in confronting social issues that negatively impact them while, at the same time, achieving gender parity in regard to women's rights. The two types of intersections identified here that move the discussion in this direction are benevolence and encumbrance.

Benevolence, as it is meant at this juncture, refers to the desire of the men on these sites to reject the need to carry on the traditional masculine façade and allow for others to understand that it is worthwhile for them to do so as well. Additionally, it is also an invitation for other men to accept that their (the site's) specific way of addressing masculinity is most desirable. This distinction accounts for the different approaches taken by the sites. Despite the different strategies and tactics, there is a common "reaching out" that is taking place.

As previously mentioned, homosexual men are courted by many of these sites because of their unique place in gender politics. Incorporating homosexuals into the discussion turns some of the attention away from economic or political systems that exploit and provides a place for

these movement organizations to focus more on a human approach. This is particularly true for anti-feminist sites. Gay men are praised for acting as examples that men need not be constrained by social norms dictating masculinity. The Angry Harry quote in the "New World Men" theme emphasizes this point. But having homosexual men speak for themselves on these boards provides more credence. It is not very frequently that gay men discuss the fact they are gay, but in one case, it was a central point when it came to why one poster chooses to align himself with an anti-feminist site while reacting to an article on AVFM titled "Feminists 'Allies'":

> Being gay protects me from a lot that my straight twin brother experiences - except for the blistering hatred of feminists.
>
> Feminists cannot disguise this hatred of men for any length of time. It doesn't take much to make it rise to the surface. Those of us who refuse to be manipulated by adherents to this hate movement soon realize that we are just as despised as our straight brethren. Feminists are the most venomous homophobes I've ever encountered.
>
> Mr Phil is absolutely correct to mention how much feminists resent our financial independence from women. Some of them readily make snide remarks about what I do with my money as though it were any of their damn business. I am not wealthy and I work very hard, but I have a very uncomfortable sense of fems greedily eyeing my assets, as though they were entitled to them.
>
> Don't be misled by the Rainbow Brigade sellouts who clamber into the back seats of the feminist victim bus. Most gay men see feminists as BS spewing bullies who seek the destruction of that which we value very highly – men. (AVFM, May 16, 2012)

So, this poster expresses the feeling that simply identifying as a man is reason enough for gay men to find the site AVFM ideal to support. It should also be noted, however, there is an instance

where a gay female also contributes to a site that is not pro-feminist. Heather N. on the GMP, is openly homosexual and has contributed to the site in ways to make readers more aware of LGBT viewpoints, even going so far as to create a "Queer Dictionary" in a two-part post. Heather N. does, however, also act as a bit of a self-proclaimed expert on feminism in academia when presenting ideas to other readers on the site, which inevitably causes some friction when criticisms of feminism arise on the forums. Her presence once again emphasizes that the GMP acts as a bridge between anti and pro-feminist sites.

For pro-feminist organizations, gay men act as an example of how hegemonic masculine norms take hold by acting as a reference point of what is un-masculine. As with anti-feminist men's sites, pro-feminist sites position themselves as the ideal place for gay men to align. The site NOMAS, for example, looks at homosexuality as acting as a vehicle to change, referring to the position of being gay/LGBT affirmative in that:

> This is the greatest challenge to our integrity, and one of our greatest opportunities to make a real difference in people's lives; to create positive social change. The homophobia of the majority of American men can hardly be underestimated. We speak out for Gay Rights, even in light of frightening and alienating the majority of men before they can hear anything else we have to say, not only because gays are among the most oppressed minorities in the world today, or because gay men and women have been a vital part of our movement, but, because the oppression (heterosexism) of gays is tightly linked to sexism- which is unquestionably the most potent single factor which makes most heterosexual men afraid to deviate from the traditional male sex role. We advocate for Gay Rights to heal the incalculable damage that homophobia, and the fear and confusion that it engenders, has done to both homosexual and heterosexual men. From

> this position, it is natural to cite and dispel the popular myths about homosexuality, to mention the incredible fear and suffering and anxiety that oppression inflicts on gay Americans, and to staunchly advocate an end to all discrimination based on sexual orientation. (NOMAS, n.d., Tenants)

In both cases of anti and pro-feminist men, embracing issues pertaining to homosexuality is not only used for the sake of the LGBT community, but also as an example of how all men can benefit from the protection and acceptance of the LGBT community's way of life.

At the center, is the emphasis on the need to challenge hegemonic masculine norms, which all sites except the Promise Keepers advocate. One site discussed earlier, The ManKind Project, chooses the approach that men should be more self-reflective in allowing for their own escape from repressive social expectations of men. This self-reflexivity demands a more active role be taken by men to create change rather than push for others to take part in change saying that:

> We're looking for men who want to be powerful Leaders and Role Models. Men willing to step through fear and into the challenge of their lives. Men not afraid to revolt against repressive social norms, take off their masks and break through their personal barriers. Men ready to take real risks and step into their full power. Men not afraid to inhabit ALL the characteristics required of men in changing times; resiliency, integrity, courage, creativity, innovation, adaptability, compassion, empathy, radical self-responsibility, inclusiveness, generosity and respect. (The ManKind Project, n.d., What Does it Mean to be a Modern, Mature Man?)

In a sense, The ManKind Project is more like the organizations NOMAS and MCSR in that they prefer an in-person approach to addressing these issues rather than active online forums through

the use of "warrior retreats." NOMAS and MCSR advertise workshops for men to address the treatment of women in the hope it will also bring about awareness of other social issues.

The buttressing of men's movement organizations with those of other movements and causes also plays into the benevolence intersection in that it hints at the interconnectivity of issues related to masculinity. As mentioned in the literature review, Connell suggests that a men's movement is not the preferred way to approach masculinity, but rather through other movements such as women's movements and environmental movements. This does not go unrecognized among the sites analyzed here. The idea of all oppressions being connected is shared on NOMAS and XY, but other than appeals to women's movements, little is provided to show how this is true. MCSR does more by way of manifest links evident in Figure 18. Anti-feminist sites, likewise, attempt to show how other types of social conditions which have movements connected to them have a detrimental impact on men, however anti-feminist sites typically choose to address those conditions solely through the lens of how men are impacted. This may, in part, have to do with the apprehension to the embracement of movements that may appear too "liberal". Despite this apprehension, they do hint at a possible need to provide some degree of attention to what exogenous movements have to say.

Perhaps the site that best illustrates the true interconnectedness of movements and oppressions is mensnewsdaily.com (MND). MND is a definitively anti-feminist site that incorporates articles that pertain to politics and the environment, with such examples of articles titled, "The Making of Kurdistan: Oil, Investment and a Turkish Gamble" and "Just How Green is Google?" Many of the articles that appear on the site do not make clear references to how they pertain to masculinity, but certainly stress the "disposability" theme by showing ways in which natural resources are used by the powerful to exploit and provide justification for conflict. The

site's penchant for doing this is apparently bewildering to many of its readers due to articles such as those mentioned above generating no comments. This lack of poster participation leads one to believe the approach does not resonate as well with movement participants as hoped.

For as unrecognizable as the approach taken by MND is, there is another overarching type of intersection that is unmistakable across all these movement organizations, and that is encumbrance. Encumbrance refers to all the burdens of masculinity that each of these organizations claim a desire to ease. The intersection of encumbrance is evident in the themes "the blame game," "unmanly ridicule," and "disposability." Again, the way in which encumbrance is approached differs between anti and pro-feminist organizations, but is, nonetheless, a central point of concern among them.

When pro-feminists speak of the burdens of masculinity, the sites NOMAS, XY, and MCSR are typically referring to issues of conformity and a "tough guy" image. The contributors of these sites view themselves as providing examples of how men should behave in social settings and be mindful of how homosocial behavior reinforces traditional masculinity. Specifically, these sites are concerned with the expectation of violence that men force upon each other. MCSR, for example, facilitate "Men of Strength" clubs in various cities across the United States that urge men to use their strength to end violence, particularly against women. Through the employment of "bystander intervention strategies," MCSR suggest that men take action when they see violent outbursts by physically acting as a barrier to individuals in conflict, but not take part in the physical altercation. A story referencing a video of a fight between a man and woman on a subway provided MCSR a real-life example of how their intervention strategy works. In the video, a male bystander moves to diffuse the situation while stoically eating a bag of potato chips

(thus leading him to be referred to as "Chip Man" in the story). MCSR contributor Jared Watkins explains Chip Man's method in relation to hegemonic masculinity:

> Chip Man's intervention is an example of a counterstory of masculinity, a story which is in opposition to the dominant story of masculinity. When talking about being an active bystander, most people might imagine a person taking over a situation and preventing harm through her/his sheer force of will. Chip Man shows that sometimes the most effective intervention strategies are the most passive. He didn't make a grandiose speech about the wrongness of violence, he didn't judge either party, he just recognized that the most important action was to stop the fight and get them both away from each other. Granted, this strategy might be too dangerous in other situations (I certainly wouldn't advise standing in the middle and calmly eating chips as a way to break up most fights), but that's why we refer to intervention strategies as being part of a bystander intervention toolbox. You don't need a hammer for every job, you don't need a screwdriver for every fix, but you have those tools available to you in case you need them. (Watkins, April 18, 2012)

This way of handling conflict is not one that is familiar to most men because it does not fit masculine norms that they grow up with. The penchant for violence is viewed as one of the largest burdens men carry, and it begins young.

Michael Kimmel of NOMAS suggests that the way we raise boys in our society leads to the acceptability of gun violence in the United States. In his article "Manhood and Violence: The Deadliest Equation" Kimmel emphasizes that violence is not innate, but taught:

> The belief that violence is manly is not a trait carried on any chromosome. It is not soldered into the wiring of the right or left hemisphere. It is not juiced by testosterone

> (half of all boys don't fight, most don't carry weapons, and very few actually kill). It is, unfortunately, taught to our boys.
>
> It is taught by their fathers, nearly half of whom own a gun. It is taught by a media that glorifies it, by sports heroes who commit felonies and get big contracts, by a culture saturated in images of heroic and redemptive violence. It is taught and reinforced by their peers.
>
> And this horrible education is made more lethal in states where gun control laws are most lax, where gunlobbyists are most powerful because all available evidence suggests that all the increases in the deadliness of school violence is attributable to guns. Boys have resorted to violence for a long time, but sticks and fists and even the occasional switchblade do not create the bloodbaths of the past few years. Nearly 90% of all homicides among boys aged 15 to 19 are firearm related, and 80% of the victims are boys. If the rumble in West Side Story were to take place today, the death toll would not be just Riff and Bernardo, but all the Sharks and all the Jets and probably several dozen bystanders.
>
> Some will throw up their hands and sigh that "boys will be boys." In the face of these tragic killings, such resignation is unacceptable. And it doesn't answer the policy question; it begs the question: if boys have a natural propensity towards violence and aggression, do we organize society to maximize that tendency, or to minimize it? (Kimmel, n.d., Manhood and Violence: The Deadliest Equation)

Encumbrance, as it relates to the two excerpts above, is incorporated in two ways. First, it has become an expectation of sorts for boys and men to be assertive and likely act in ways that they would otherwise not choose. As a result, death rates due to physical violence for males far

exceed those of females, all for holding up an image. Second, pro-feminist sites place the burden on men to act as leaders to alter the way in which boys are raised to promote violence. Ironically, pro-feminist organizations seek to reduce one burden and keep in place another which suggests it is only men who contribute to a culture of violence and must be the ones to alter it. In this sense, pro-feminists place men in a position of power that is similar to the Promise Keepers, suggesting men act as the head of the family.

The perception of toughness and violence is also lamented on anti-feminist sites. Typically, when violence is addressed, it is presented through the theme of disposability. Disposability incorporates the men-as-soldier or muscle narrative that helps form the social expectation that accepts men as being violent, so long as it serves the needs of leaders. Where this approach differs is that the teaching of violence is looked upon as being utilized by a larger system which seeks to exploit and disproportionally target men and boys. This does not mean anti-feminist ignore social repercussions. Male suicide, for example, is a topic frequently discussed, as in the Kimmel article cited above, but anti-feminist sites focus on other pressures placed on men that contribute to suicide such as being alienated from their families. The Spearhead contributor W.F. Price shares a divorce experience that left him bitter and ponders the impact divorce has on men in general:

> The abandonment of men in contemporary society is so comprehensive that a man who has lost a wife or lover not only suffers from the loss of that deep personal connection, but from a fairly comprehensive rejection by society in general. First you lose your wife, then your kids, and then even your own family turns against you in many cases (this is a lot more common than most people realize — American men's own mothers very often blame them and side with the ex in what is usually a futile effort to maintain contact with

> the grandchildren). The thrashing you get from the police and courts is just gratuitous abuse; in many cases guys are simply numb to additional pain by that time. (Price, April 12, 2012)

An example such as this illustrates the added component anti-feminist provide to the equation that goes beyond the mere teaching of masculine norms from fathers to sons. Conditions that are pressed upon men are also looked upon as being detrimental to fostering a healthy form of masculinity.

Violence is not the only form of encumbrance men experience. As mentioned in the themes above, undesirable and dangerous occupations, general views of male past times as deviant, and poor representations of men as untrustworthy and incompetent in mass media are all mentioned as conditions that identifies men and masculinity as being *under attack.* What this means, then, is that anti-feminist men's organizations generally look at a larger picture of social constructs that dictate how men behave or feel which goes beyond the self-reflective approach pro-feminist men's organizations promote. The reason for this difference is due to the next topic, the perception of having (or not having) power.

Power

As widely known, much of the discussion related to men and masculinity is predicated on men having power over women. The power men hold is said to be nearly omnipresent, be it socially, in the home, or in the political realm. This view is promoted by pro-feminist men who look to masculinity as wielding power that promotes threats toward women, homosexual men, and other subordinate and complicit men. Likewise, altering masculine attitudes potentially acts as a panacea for attitudes and actions that are socially detrimental. Although there are many aspects of power that one may point to (war, relationships, business, organizational and social

hierarchy, to name a few), pro-feminist men primarily choose to focus their discussion of power on matters of violence. Again, by taking this approach, we are left with a rather simple and dichotomous "men as perpetrator, women as victim" narrative.

What Patriarchy?

Pro-feminist sites refer to a patriarchy in a nearly in matter-of-fact way that seems to leave no room for doubt. Anti-feminist men also recognize power structures, but not in a way that presents them as being exercised and enjoyed exclusively by men. Women are viewed as being just as capable of and being successful at establishing systems in which they can share and even exert power over men. Therefore, it is not necessary for the power figure or figures to be female, although it is increasingly becoming the case, but that the product of the power structure is found to be in their favor. There are three primary areas discussed throughout these themes where anti-feminist men express that women do have power and privilege over men: legally, socially, and politically.

The legal system is frequently accused of being "rigged" to come down harder on men than women. One example where this is the case is the "war on drugs". But just as pro-feminist men utilize the issue of domestic violence, so, too, do anti-feminist men's sites when illustrating how when it comes to legal action, men are at a disadvantage. The wording of the VAWA serves as a specific example of a larger problem of promoting and utilizing questionable statistics in order to position men as reasonably culpable. Numerous independent studies are cited on men's sites that emphasize the prevalence of male-on-female violence. However, faults in the methodologies and agenda behind the studies are frequently pointed out and discussed. One such example is provided by NCFM contributor, Joe Manthey, while rebutting a study conducted by

Jacques Reid of the Family Justice Center who concluded that domestic violence is the number one cause of injury for women in the United States. Upon his own research, Manthey found that:

> The actual research behind this factoid is based on a survey of one emergency room. The facts, as reported in a U.S. Department of Justice study, are that all violence is responsible for about 3 percent of women's injury-related visits to emergency rooms with domestic violence accounting for about 1 percent of such. By comparison, Centers for Disease and Control numbers show that more than twice as many women visit emergency rooms due to being injured by an animal than by a male partner. (Manthey, April 20, 2012)

In the same article, Manthey takes on a claim made by United States Attorney General in 2010 that the leading cause of death for African-American women ages 15-45 is intimate partner homicide. Manthey counters:

> Yet, according to the CDC and the Justice Department's own Bureau of Justice Statistics, the leading causes of death for African-American women between the ages 15–45 are cancer, heart disease, unintentional injuries such as car accidents, and HIV disease. Homicide comes in fifth — and includes murders by strangers. In 2006 (the latest year for which full statistics are available), several hundred African-American women died from intimate partner homicide — each one a tragedy, but far fewer than the approximately 6,800 African-American women who died of the other leading causes. (Manthey, April 20, 2012)

The attempt to draw the widespread reporting of domestic violence as being a common and frequently ignored crime into question is a primary objective for contributors to these sites. This is especially true when the topic of rape arises.

Controlling the Courts.

Rape is a crime that is approached with some skepticism within anti-feminist men's movements. The issue is not whether rape occurs, but rather if it occurs at the rate that is often claimed. A favorite topic of anti-feminist sites pertains to false rape allegations. It is too frequently the case, according to these groups, that men are put on trial and risk the loss of family and career as a result of a woman's word. At the time this text was collected, the case of Brian Banks became a popular topic of discussion.

Brian Banks, a standout football player for Polytechnic High School in Long Beach, California, was arrested in 2002 for allegedly raping a 15-year-old classmate, Wanetta Gibson. Banks accepted a plea deal to reduce a potential 41 years to life term to five years in prison and five years on probation. Gibson later sued the school for 1.5 million dollars for providing an unsafe environment. In 2012, the conviction was overturned after Gibson confessed to fabricating the story to Banks in a conversation he recorded. What makes this story desirable for many men's groups to reference is that Banks has essentially lost a potential career as a professional football player. In 2002, Banks had committed to play at the University of Southern California, but lost the opportunity due to the conviction. The high profile nature of this case provides an opportunity to see how the legal system deals with a false allegation of rape. NCFM Secretary Al Rava voices such a concern:

> Gibson admitted to falsely accusing Banks. Regardless of whether the incriminating tape recording is admissible in a criminal or civil action, she should be charged with appropriate crimes. Charging her with perjury, filing a false police report, and whatever else applies at least establishes a criminal record.

> Banks deserves some justice. Gibson deserves to be held accountable. Society deserves protection from such women. It is inconceivable that no effort will be made to recover Gibson's ill-gotten gains. Whoever in the District Attorney's Office decided not to prosecute Gibson should be fired. (Rava, May 29, 2012)

Similar situations are found across sites such as AVFM, mensactivism.org, and standyourground.com. Such cases act as both a warning of what can happen to all men if they are found in the wrong situation and as an illustration of how the legal system is potentially predisposed to siding with women by altering with whom the burden of proof rests.

Instant culpability is something that many men are cognizant of. The perception of a hostile legal system can potentially place many men, and in turn women, in precarious positions. A GMP article about a man in Providence, Rhode Island who recorded, but did not intervene in, a fight between teenage girls provides a disturbing example. Instead of physically taking action to break up the fight, the man posted the video to *YouTube*. The incident raises questions about how a man is expected to act in a situation where physical action may be needed when involving women. Some, such as this GMP poster, understand the man abstaining from interfering:

> Never intervene when violence involves a female; you WILL wind up accused of sexual assault.
>
> Be a citizen-journalist instead; document the incident for the authorities to use in redressing the problem.
>
> Side note to guys: It's no longer our job to be protectors and white knights of females, at risk to ourselves. Equality's a wonderful thing. (Radcliffe, April 3, 2012)

Another responding poster does not view the situation as not being so clear:

> You got a point here. There is a possibility of getting arrested for something when you're trying to help.
>
> But how would you feel if your sister/wife/female friend was beaten and people just watched or videotaped the incident? I'd feel differently then.
>
> I'd rather be arrested for trying to help, than finding out someone was seriously injured or killed and I did nothing. I could not sleep at night with that. (Radcliffe, April 3, 2012)

Throughout the thread sampled here, the posters go back-and-forth whether the man should have stepped in, however, there is a large difference how men and women perceived the incident. Men largely expressed hesitancy in what they would have done in a similar situation. Women, on the other hand, were rather insistent that the man should have stepped in between the girls and stopped the fight.

Shady Characters.

What the previous example shows is a level of awareness, or lack of, for the potential legal repercussions someone faces for an action based on his or her sex. Many of the assumptions made by the men on the fighting thread are based on the growing social perception that men, in general, are to be seen as a threat. Similar concerns even arise when a discussion regarding breast feeding in public is brought up. The vast majority of men on these sites have no problem with the practice itself, but rather have a problem with the potential of finding themselves in such a position by unknowingly sharing a space with a woman who is breastfeeding. The unknown factor that brings pause to these men, as the argument goes, is if a man makes eye contact with the breastfeeding woman in any way that can be construed to the women as harassing. What are the legal repercussions? What requirements are to be placed on

others sharing the room to divert their vision? Much like creep shaming discussed earlier, a man's culpability lies solely on the discretion and perception of others.

No story makes the social anxiety many have towards men more clear than an incident that occurred in a Barnes & Noble in Scottsdale, Arizona. On May 4, 2012, Omar Amin went into the bookstore to buy books for his two grandchildren who lived out-of-state. Amin was escorted out of the store after he was informed that "men alone cannot be by themselves in the Children's area". According to Barnes & Noble, store employees were also responding to a concern expressed by another patron regarding Amin. Predictably, posters on Standyourground.com (the site which this story appeared) expressed concern that Amin is on his own when he said he was considering legal action, with one poster stating, "I'm pretty sure the Arizona chapter of ACLU will not take this on" (SYG, June 4, 2012). Another chimed in to say:

> What I find interesting is how people will complain about blacks treated like this and argue rapidly how wrong it is to do but the exact same people I argue with saying suddenly change their positions. When you mention how all men are looked at with suspicion as abusers and child molestors they suddenly have tons of statisitcs to note it is justified somehow and acceptable to protect people. Now if I pulled out the exact same kinds of studies and the rest showing that blacks are more dangerous, suddenly I would be racist and it would be unwarrented.
>
> I refuse to go to that level and have only tried to point it out to a few of them but usually it ends with me being called every name in the book and it has not been worth it except to show others the double standards they use. (SYG, June 4, 2012)

This post leads to an issue that is often ignored within these movement sites, race.

Although race is rarely mentioned, it is important for the purpose of distinguishing that the view of men in a negative manner has more to do with them being men than it does them being men of color or other ethnicities. When the war on drugs comes up for discussion, sex rather than race was the primary focus. In the case of Brian Banks, there was little mention of him being an African-American. Only briefly in the story of Omar Amin was it mentioned that he was born in Egypt. More emphasis was placed on the fact Amin had graduated with a doctorate from Arizona State University and is a professional. Despite the opportunity to incorporate issues of race into these discussions, the opening is passed on in order to place all men as targets of suspicion. Much of the suspicion of men becomes clear when it comes to children and life at home.

Queens of the Castle.

Unsurprisingly with much of this text being collected over Father's Day, a good deal of attention is given to fatherhood. There is no shortage on advice about how to raise daughters and sons and what every father should know about their children; basically, how to be a good dad. What may be surprising is position some of the sites take regarding father's roles. The choice and ability to become a stay-at-home father is a role that is embraced by most who participate in anti-feminist men's site dialogue. A number of men find themselves on these sites because they feel marginalized for taking on such a role. After being the targets of "Mr. Mom" jokes, a sympathetic cohort is available for these fathers to relate to. Despite this place in the home, a common theme that is present among these men is that they are far from calling the shots.

When it comes to power within the home, women are said to be in control whether they are the financial providers or not. Despite putting in the work that mothers have long been

praised for with no monetary reward, fathers on these sites often lament the role of forced subservience they are placed in. This makes one NCFM poster explain:

> Men are rebelling because what's in it for them when she determines what furniture or food or music is on. When she determines when sex is available. When she determines whose parents you spend Christmas with or where you go on vacation. And if you don't think women are calling those shots in MOST relationships than you haven't been paying attention. After males jump through the hoops to get married they are a phone call away from getting kicked out because if it's not as "fulfilling" for BOTH of them, she knows that she gets "the stuff" and he gets the boot and pays the bills and MIGHT get to be a visitor if he kisses enough butt first. And no, I am not a disgruntled man. My wife is very good, hard working and takes good care of me. I do almost as well in return. (NCFM, April 14, 2012)

Despite the assumption this poster is in a rather egalitarian relationship, the descriptions of home life generally gloss over these types of relationships in favor of more conflict oriented discussion. By no means is there a suggestion that there must be conflict. In fact, shared responsibility is desirable to anti-feminist site contributors.

What this expression of imbalance of power in the home has done, however, is create an extreme faction within anti-feminist men's movements who suggest men go their own way (MGTOW). These men do not define these movements but a few promoters of this view can be found within just about every anti-feminist site visited. Oftentimes, these men refer to themselves as if MGTOW is a movement in its own right. MGTOW is by no means widely accepted, as there is debate on the legitimacy and reality of the approach. What this faction does

seems confrontational on the part of men who counter feminist arguments for female autonomy at the cost of family.

Unfortunately, little text is offered by pro-feminist men regarding the home. But what little was offered regarding the role of fathers on the NOMAS site is a bit surprising. In an article titled, "The Daddy Balance" for Father's Day, contributor Doug Gertner offers advice for fathers to construct more time for their families. Using the masculine desire for professional achievement, Gertner suggests an altering of priorities in order to achieve a work/life balance. Although well meaning, this article contrasts with other "in praise of dad" Father's Day articles by following the pro-feminist narrative of men needing to change their behaviors. Nowhere here is it suggested that men have the option to be stay-at-home parents, but rather Gertner reinforces a rather traditional claim that "Fathers shoulder the responsibility of providing for and protecting their families. Everyone looks to dad for support – both financial and emotional – and dads deliver" (Gertner, n.d., The Daddy Balance). Oddly enough, there is some reconciliation between this and a conservative group such as Promise Keepers who suggest that fathers are the spiritual head of the family by which others will follow and that fathers can help reduce the number of abortions "by keeping sexual intercourse within the bond of marriage" (Promise Keepers, n.d., FAQs--Controversy). More specifically, both groups manage to simultaneously diminish the role of women and emphasize fault in men.

Another aspect of many of these Father's Day articles is how the social dialogue regarding gender views men through the needs of women. Much like in the academic language discussed in the views of feminism section, articles both published within and linked to these sites that are targeted towards men are actually done so for the purpose of bettering the lives of women. Common advice given to fathers with sons is to model behavior that will make their

sons respect women. For fathers with daughters, a father's behavior should be as such to set an example for what women should expect of men. Of course, we can see examples beyond parenthood. Video games and Internet pornography consumption are popular topics that are geared towards boys with initial concern being their social and educational well-being. Predictably, articles with such themes eventually turn to concerns of how women are viewed. A GMP article expands on this when talking about the link between video games, pornography, and education by concluding, "If boys continue to drop out of school at the rate they are, it affects national productivity, national success. Plus, it's creating a new generation of men who are not suitable mates" (Good Men Project, June 3, 2012). This statement made one GMP poster wonder, "Why does society feel the need to find an adverse effect on women or girls in order to justify assisting men or boys?" (Good Men Project, June 3, 2012).

Sketchy Schools.

When it comes to education, video games and pornography are far from being the only culprits for boys legging behind girls scholastically. Issues of political power are largely believed to be to blame. Changes in education, such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which prompted a rise in standardized testing is cited as anti-male in that it promotes teaching methods boys typically do not excel in. This legislation coupled with a teaching field that is predominantly female is even more problematic. It is argued that female teachers typically select books and readings that do not match the interest of boys, and therefore, boys lose interest and fail. Reasons such as these lead some site posters to reach the conclusion similar to this Mensactivism.com poster's:

> No Child Left Behind needs to go! It may look good, but like this reading thing in the article it is all punitive and does nothing to address the real issues. For me the issue is: do

> the schools teach and test to boys' development level and skill strengths? I don't think so. I do not want boys punished for not learning or testing the way girls do. That's what holding them back does, or requiring them to give up other stuff like recess or elective classes in order to pass someone's high stakes test.
>
> High stakes testing punishes teachers and schools for not getting students to pass the test. What you get is teaching to the test, and not a well-rounded education. Children, especially elementary ages, are very unique and can be all over the scale developmentally, and not all of them respond to the same testing methods. (Mensactivism.org, June 28, 2012)

This contributor elaborates by illustrating political ties that existed between the George W. Bush administration and the McGraw family who owns McGraw Hill testing and textbooks as a possible catalyst to the passage of NCLB. Although the result for boys and others is far from intentional, little has been done politically to address the problem.

As men move onto college, the situation seems to improve very little. Men are largely outnumbered on college campuses across the United States and the United Kingdom, and the gap is widening. The gender gap in colleges and universities is viewed as problematic seeing students have greater voice in the policies and practices on campuses. There have been many cases where the creation of men's groups and spaces have been resisted, but a GMP poster explains and provides examples of how this is actually policy for at least one student group in the U.K.:

> Suppression of Men's Associations at Universities is official policy of the National Union of Students, (NUS).
>
> http://therightsofman.typepad.co.uk/files/motion-no-803_mens-officer.pdf (link to original in document)

> http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/asset/news/6078/I-Will-.pdf (just past 1/2 way)
>
> http://preview.tinyurl.com/8xvuh88
>
> The NUS has been dominated by the political far left for decades and realises that like minded people gathering together is how movements are formed. People of power and influence tend to come from Universities and the Mens movement will take off in a significant way once it gets a foot in Universities. I find the attitude of the NUS insidious. (GMP, September 18, 2012)

When it comes to higher education, campuses are apparently becoming increasingly hostile towards male students. Between obsequious faculty that typically align with politically "left" leaning parties and policies created by "right" leaning parties that ignore the needs of boys and men and who seek to only maximize political capital, anti-feminist men describe a world where men ignorantly suffer. This belief leads to confusion and debate as to with whom ant-feminist men should politically align.

One AVFM article, "Is the Right Sympathetic to the MRA?" best encapsulates this debate. In the article, the author (who goes by the pseudonym barbarossaaaa) focuses primarily on Republicans in the U.S. being neglectful towards issues related to men. He (assuming this saying that he thinks of himself more as a MGTOW) challenges the notion that men's movement members, MRA's more specifically, should adopt a Republican platform as a response to an overarching view that all Democrats are feminists who desire a large and intrusive government. The author points out, however, the hypocrisy in this thinking:

> This is a standard of scrutiny that "right is right"ers unfortunately do not apply to themselves. When conservative MRA's are confronted with the blatant misandry and male disposability in their political infrastructure, they eagerly tell you about their special

> brand of conservative libertarianism they espouse in theory, but very rarely in practice. In appraising whether or not one political party benefits men more than any other we must extend to all prospects the same methodology we apply to left wing politics – Likewise the GOP, the conglomerate that makes up right Wing politics must be similarly appraised.
>
> One does not get to judge the left collective, as they should be judged and hand pick their personal brand of right wing politics when a critiuqe is leveled at their political leanings. I make the accusation that the right also perpetuates misandry as frequently as the left does (albeit in different form). In analyzing the tendencies of collective right wing politics, i claim that we will find a predilection for statism and big government rivaling that of the left, as well as a good amount of misandry to boot. (AVFM, June 3, 2012)

Male disposability in war and the legal system become the primary basis for his argument. Despite the article's pessimism, it does urge MRA's to push and politicize their agenda with the warning that it may just become lost and just another assimilated and diffused faction to join a major political party. One of the more active posters on the AVFM site responds:

> THERE WILL NEVER BE A POLITICAL PARTY THAT WILL OPENLY EMBRACE A MEN'S MOVEMENT OF ANY KIND...or even mentions it in passing.
> And by inferring that Republicans are just as bad for not acknowledging it (or standing more firmly against feminist causes), means that you do not understand how our political system works, and how social movements actually come to power and GET SHIT DONE.

> As long as the nascent MRM stays stridently Apolitical, whether you're left or right, -- it will remain right where it is. Because. lemme tell ya fellas, the work here and elsewhere on the New Media front is going to break this thing open, and you're going to HAVE TO get political - and it ain't gonna be The Party of Women, or Liberal politicans on the side against Misandry.
>
> Straining to become yet another oppressed Special Interest Victim Group, among all the other groups that hold your group as the actual oppressor is, and always will be, a non-starter and is why the MRM is counted among the lunatic fringe social movement groups, along with the Nazi Party et al. (AVFM. June 3, 2012)

What this poster then points to is a crisis that exists in forming a socially palatable identity, a type of marketing issue. Only until this happens will we see a major political party openly embrace movements such as these.

Intersections.

It is not surprising that power structures are essential to discussions among men's movement organizations. This issue is a bit tricky for many organizations, particularly anti-feminists, due to the desire to not embrace labels which may appear to endorse socialist ideals. For other pro-feminist organizations, structures that purely focus on gender power dynamics suffice. Regardless of this difference among men's movement organizations, there is a shared emphasis on incapacity, the dominant intersection in the issue of power that drives the discourse. Two primary types of power structures are referenced or described across these sites to convey the perception of incapacity, patriarchy and oligarchy. The recognition of these types of structures indirectly leads another type of intersection to be discussed later, obsequiousness.

Pro-feminist organizations view of power is relatively straight forward that we live in a patriarchal system where men systematically benefit from the oppression and subjugation of women. This view of a patriarchy is extremely simplistic and does not take into consideration discussions of how patriarchy and capitalism, for example, are intertwined. Pro-feminists generally resist the tendency to present overly nuanced descriptions of how feminism explains patriarchy. Instead, the three pro-feminist sites in this analysis opt to focus on specific ways in how women are prohibited from experiencing social parity with men. Social parity refers to the way in which men and women interact, be it in a work setting or otherwise, where neither feel threatened by the presence or actions of the other. This route is perhaps preferred by these movement organizations because the intended audience is men and presenting oppression in this way is the best method in which men can feel they are able to actively partake in altering behaviors detrimental to women.

Incapacity as it relates to patriarchy in this analysis acts in a couple different ways. First, it is recognized that women are in a position where they are constantly expected to be compliant to men and find it difficult to combat social expectations where men exert power over women. The most familiar way men hold such power is through sexual assault or rape and domestic violence. Articles confronting these topics dominate the discussion on NOMAS, XY, and MCSR and emphasize the interpersonal aspect of oppression, but are done so in a way where they speak to men on behalf of women.

The second way a patriarchy relates to incapacity on pro-feminist sites is through institutional oppression. Despite being far less common, attempts to educate men on how they approach their careers and social life negatively impacts women, and to a lesser extent, themselves. One XY article titled, “Dear Mr. Patriarch: Just what, exactly, did you accomplish

with your life?" describes how male competitiveness to get ahead in careers is detrimental to others as men willingly take advantage of their unrecognized privilege in the workplace. Bill Patrick, the writer who created the fictitious scenario of two men moving through their careers concludes:

> Although the fading patriarchs of whom I write are not overtly politically conservative – and certainly not as conservative as was the American thinker William F. Buckley – they are indeed very rigid when it comes to social power relations. On some level both men believe that they are superior to women. And they have both opposed expanding opportunities for people of color. The only thing they were ever interested in was maintaining a status quo power system that had unfairly privileged them.
>
> Which again leads me back to my initial question: Just what, exactly, unkind sirs, did you accomplish with your lives? From my perspective, it seems that you merely stood in the way of other people. And for a while you were able to prevent them from advancing. But those who oppose equal rights for others (for women, for people of color, for sexual and gender minorities, for example) will always find themselves fighting a losing battle. (Patrick, April 23, 2012)

This is probably an in-depth an example of how institutional patriarchy benefits men on pro-feminist sites. The article does not act as a prescriptive piece to allow for women to get ahead, but only as a way to suggest that, despite good intentions, men undermine or prohibit the advancement of others. Occupational success also closely ties into life within the home.

Doug Gertner from NOMAS writes a Father's Day article warning men that a parochial focus on their career is a sure way to never achieve a proper work-life balance. Gertner's article, "The Daddy Balance" moves from the incapacity of women towards that of men, explaining:

Whoever said *you can't have it all* was not looking at life from a positive, clear, and planned perspective. By clarifying what is most important in our lives, and reflecting on how we have learned to get our deepest values and needs met, it is possible to move toward leading a life that is at once well-balanced, satisfying, and also highly productive in all aspects of our lives, including work, family, and community (n.d., The Daddy Balance).

The importance of this article is that it is one of the few clear examples on pro-feminist sites related to how a social structure that embraces the male role of "breadwinner" is harmful to men, but does little to suggest ways to challenge that expectation. The stripping of choice that many men perceive is argued to be a product of the very system that benefits them. This view of patriarchy is the paradox that pro-feminist movement organizations seek to convey hoping men will recognize rejecting such a power structure will ease the burden of traditional masculinity.

Anti-feminist men, on the other hand, generally look at incapacity through a socioeconomic status lens, or an oligarchy. Here, both men and women who are not among the social elite are exploited by those men and women who do have power. What occurs, then, are indirect critiques of capitalist systems that just miss embracing some feminist thought. Gertner's, "The Daddy Balance" article, for example, is one piece that anti-feminist organization members should embrace to an extent that it describes a workplace that makes it difficult for men to spend time with their families.

Due to the belief that those in power rely on the appeal to gender norms for the status quo to persist, this exploitation is not solely economic. Politicians, high ranking and powerful executives, and academics are all believed by anti-feminist to benefit from gender based conflicts. These are men who hardly fit the John Wayne image of hegemonic masculinity that

Connell says comes to mind. What they are, however, are men who have other men at their disposal professionally and men who are willing to use and disparage other men for their own individual gain. Men who are able to, as many of these sites fear, advance a feminist narrative that makes men culpable for social problems so long as they remain absolved of all the charges they make.

When jobs are referenced for men to use as a female oppression narrative, it is done to suggest that many men capitalize on the "business of oppression". By convincing women they are helpless and oppressed in a patriarchal culture, dependence is created where some men can adopt a position to act as a "good guy" voice and come to the rescue (hence the "white knight" label). A standyourground.com poster voices concern over this stating that "hundreds of thousands of rent seeking professionals and socialist workers depend on this type of woman's dependency and domestic strife for their own daily bread and sinful wage" (SYG, June 22, 2012). But in what industries are these men speaking of this occurring? Law enforcement is a frequently cited profession where this occurs.

The willingness, and even desire, to break-up traditional American families is the central concern surrounding how men in power are used to marginalize other men. Family court judges are continuously targeted as succumbing to social pressures by granting the mothers custody of children in divorces. This leads to the often-discussed parental alienation syndrome that severely impacts the social development of children who are separated from their fathers. The fathers, on the other hand, are more frequently provided a large financial burden in the form of child support that uses the majority of their paycheck. This has two results. One, it leads to non-payment of the child support. With failure to make child support payments comes the socially insidious label of *deadbeat.* This marginalizes men by creating a stigma that is nearly unshakeable and widely

distributed as fodder for news outlets. The stories and comments that refer to this type of *tough luck* situation do not condone the behavior, but questions the process that leads to this as many of the men may not even be the recipient's biological fathers. Second, with some child support being paid on a progressive scale, it provided men little desire to advance professionally. This is far less frequently the case and is, primarily, spoken hypothetically.

Law enforcement is generally viewed as acting as a "cash cow" for some industries. Sex trafficking and prostitution are often cited for this. Reported statistics related to sex trafficking in the United States are often strikingly high and more frequently reported linked to large sporting events that attract thousands of men to a single location. Groups exist that rely on these numbers for the sake of becoming professional activists. One GMP contributor describes the problem in this way:

> Everyone and everybody is a pimp. These groups make up lies, and false statistics that no one bothers to check. A big reason they do this is because it provides high paying jobs for them. They get big donations, and grants from the government, charity, churches, etc. to have these groups, and pay these high salaries of the anti-prostitution workers. (GMP, June 26, 2012)

With the larger narrative being that women are sexually dominated by men, inflated sex trafficking statistics, at the very least, become plausible in the eyes of lawmakers and the public. Domestic violence is also frequently discussed as an area where men are disproportionately targeted for many of the same reasons, those being disputed inflated statistics and the creation of law agencies that depend on those statistics in order to make them financially viable. The willingness of men in power to exploit through the use of gender politics is addressed in another type of intersection found within the topic of power, obsequiousness.

Obsequiousness plays a rather important role in understanding how men's movement organization contributors and followers view themselves and others. As a great divide exists among men's movement organizations in regard to feminism, it is no surprise that the apparent concession to the ideology is an important topic of discussion that appears on many anti-feminist sites. Often referred to as white knights or manginas, men who take a feminist approach to the view and critique of masculinity most prevalent in the academic literature cited in chapter two, are often accused of pandering to women for acceptance. Ironically, despite these labels that are meant to feminize certain men, being too "manly" can lead to the same result an opinion echoed in the opening of the masculinity section. It mentioned that getting involved in a men's movement may be considered un-masculine. References are made to having to *wake men up,* Southern men in particular, who still hold on to hegemonic masculine norms believing they wield power, suggesting that obstinate men are playing right into the hands of pro-feminists and feminists. It is apparent, then, that positions related to feminism and masculinity play into obsequiousness by moving towards feminist descriptions of social power.

Due to the pro-feminist sites primarily being driven from those in academia, the university system is charged with acting as a haven for white knights. The situation found in academia is similar to law enforcement in that, according to many who write for anti-feminist sites, pressure is placed upon the academy as a whole through the establishment of specific departments that focus on gender. The proliferation of women's studies and gender studies departments have created a nearly uncontested environment where any who dispute the claims they produce are quickly silenced or labeled as misogynist. Many requests are made for the creation of departments for the study of men or masculinity; however, two obstacles are often blamed for preventing this. The first is the threat of backlash from established women's and

gender studies departments. One example of this was the inability of a group of Simon Fraser University students in Canada to create a men's center after a similar center was created for women. The reasoning for rejecting the men's center was that such a space was not necessary because the rest of the university acted as a male space. Similar fates are mentioned regarding other spaces and organizations set to be established for male students at universities and colleges.

The second obstacle is the assimilation of the primary issue for exploration, masculinity. Most every discussion of masculinity in academics occurs under the feminist umbrella. Making this even more difficult to challenge is men leading the way in such studies. This places a restriction on the need for other departments to add to research in this field. Much of the reason for this is the feeling that the men's interests are addressed under current curriculums. In response to an article by Chloe Angyal where she tries to explain how men benefit from feminism, one AVFM poster notes:

> Well of course some men do flock to get on board and Angyal quotes one such male born feminist, Michael Kimmel and describes him as "a leading thinker in masculinity studies." Nope sorry, calling bullshit on this one. Masculinities as a branch of gender studies, which is a branch of feminism, might be the breeding ground for white knights such as Kimmel and our very own Michael Flood[8], who wish to engineer modern men into servile androgynous drones of women but they know little about the realities and challenges facing ordinary modern men. It is only through the MRM and initiatives such as New Male Studies[9] that these challenges will be addressed. (Canning, June 13, 2012)

Clearly, for this contributor and many other men, the presence of men alone is not enough to ensure the study of masculinity is done without a feminist driven agenda.

A perspective of how men experience and perceive masculinity is of greater importance. Without this addition to the discussion, places of higher education can become seemingly hostile environments as parochial views of masculinity infiltrate other fields. One, The Spearhead, poster echoed this feeling saying such conditions:

> Sum up my undergraduate experience precisely, not to mention working in academia. If you go to the right school and stick with the hard sciences you can avoid much of this, but I made the mistake of wandering into a communications department in one of my jobs…. whoops! Got the f*ck out of there. (The Spearhead, April 13, 2012)

The message relayed here, in short, is that if men want to succeed in the humanities in academia, it is best that they adopt and promote a pro-feminist position within their research.

It is important to note that obsequious behavior is not discussed through all of these sites, but it is at the very least demonstrated. Some causes taken by many pro-feminist men act as a case-in-point for many anti-feminist men's sites of succumbing to social and professional pressures placed upon them. As noted in the "tenants" or "about" sections of sites like NOMAS, XY online, and MCSR, the overt call for men as a group to alter their behavior for a safer society, primarily for women, raise the suspicion of many participants of other men's sites. In part due to the penchant of pro-feminist men to focus their dialogues on parochial causes such as sexual violence, the appearance of "speaking as women" is given which results in these groups acting as targets for being an extension of feminism. As for the women who contribute, they may be exonerated from such charges, perhaps by the fact they are women. One would expect a woman to be a bit of a contrarian in these forums. However, their role does create a bit of a problem in how some sites are perceived.

As mentioned earlier, the GMP is the site with the greatest number of female contributors. Some of these women have provided a sense that feminism is a bit more nuanced than typically presented and that it is not something that should be viewed in an exclusively negative way. Despite similar discussions involving masculinity and issues relevant to men, the GMP is met with a high degree of skepticism from other men's sites. One site, Men's Rights Blog, features this post providing readers with this warning:

> I would like to warn people about a fake men's rights site by the name The Good Men Project. You may think they are legit but there are a feminist front specifically fronted by Ms. magazine. Feminists are not on our side and they are trying to derail the MRM. Think about it,if they were on our side they would have never championed Lorena Bobbitt and condoned what she did. If they were on our side they wouldn't have started "take your daughter to work day" while ignoring boys or worse indoctrinating them with feminist filth,making them feel guilty to be males. If they were on our side they wouldn't use skewed DV stats that paint men as the aggressors and women as victims. If they were on our side they wouldn't have championed VAWA. The thing is they are not on our side and they will never be on our side and if you have any doubts read feminist quotes by feminists held in high regard amongst their peers and endorsed by major feminist organizations. These quotes should show exactly how feminists view men and what they would like to do to men. If you don't believe me other REAL MRA's such as Paul Elam and Bernard Chapin can confirm it. (MRB, March 19, 2011)

This opinion is not shared by all, nor is it even agreed upon by others on the same site. This post was rebutted by another poster with the view that the GMP is a balanced site with a bit of a feminist agenda, but not so much that it distracts from other men's issues discussed on the site. If

a strong feminist slant is present, another poster suggests that the mere exposure to the discussions will draw readers to other "real" men's sites where they (usually men) find that they are not alone in their concerns in regard to masculinity and issues of importance to men. Such a belief illustrates the importance of latent links to movements such as this.

In a similar vein, men's acting as protectors of women is the concern over an image that became popular all over social media (Figure 19). The image depicts a visibly strong, angry man with the saying next to him "REAL MEN NEVER BEAT WOMEN…THEY BEAT THE ASSHOLES WHO DO." What is concerning to most men is not the insinuation that women should not be the targets of violence, but that violence is excused when targeted towards men by other men. Violence is acceptable so long as the violence it carried out on the behalf of women. At the center of this use of violence, and ultimately the theme of obsequiousness, is the motivation behind men accepting such a position. AVFM founder Paul Elam explains that blame needs not be squarely placed on women for this:

> No, I am not angry at them. My real anger is saved for the phony, sanctimonious White Knight pricks who don't know the difference between what they see in the mirror and Dudley Dooright. It is not that they want to do right, they want to do women.

He continues:

> The white knight wraps all of his obsequious agreement with The Collective Woman in a shroud of "social enlightenment," or just as bad, "traditional values." Whether he is a male feminist or a mindless tradcon, he will tell you he does not argue with women because he values them so and appreciates their wisdom. The truth is that he does not argue with them because the idea of their rejection scares the living shit out of him. He lacks the skills or courage to argue with a woman at all.

> The fact is that he does not have a woman's excuse. As a man, he has been exposed his entire life to the expectations of personal accountability, reason and justness. He abandons all of that to act as a thug, either intellectually or physically, in hopes of female approval. Even if he knows what he is doing is wrong, he lacks the spine to do anything about it.
>
> To him, the disapproval of a woman, and even worse the disapproval of women collectively, is more emotional upheaval than he has the courage or skills to manage. He knows that by most of the standards for men in this culture, he has failed. Undaunted, he uses the pats on the head of approval he gets from women who generally hate men as evidence that he is at least the kind of man which women who hate men will approve. It is all he has. (Elam, May 23, 2012)

Elam provides an opinion reflecting what many men's movements believe, that some men willingly ignore issues impacting themselves and other men for the purpose of gaining female approval. However, self-preservation in many forms plays just as large of a role.

What is interesting about Elam not mentioning the need for self-preservation driving obsequiousness is that it is a practice widely present among writers and posters on anti-feminist sites. Users frequently use pseudonyms instead of their real names whenever posting. Mentioned from time-to-time are threats that posters receive when expressing their opinions regarding gender related issues in public forums, be it internet or print. Fearing that anti-feminist positions are not tolerated, using real names could result in the loss of a job, academic standing, or being blocked in groups that supposedly exist to foster discussions regarding gender. The question that remains is, does anonymity undermine these men's movements and, in fact, make them just as culpable of surrendering to the very same conditions they criticize others for? One indication

they are is the fact that men on pro-feminist sites freely use their names, as well do women. The GMP is one place where it is more common that men and women refrain from using pseudonyms. Whether this is a result of more women taking part in their discussions is a point for consideration.

So each of these topics, view of feminism, masculinity, and power each refer to how different movement organizations that focus on masculinities can potentially network. How anti-feminist sites can network with one another and how pro-feminist sites can do likewise, appears to be clear. The themes act as counter-positional spaces for sites within these two major factions which keeps them in conflict with each other. Despite the seemingly incompatible positions of pro-feminist and anti-feminist men's groups as a result of these themes, the intersections within each topic indicate that some degree of commensurability is possible. The intersections act as potentially binding conditions within the topics for latent discussion threads that are shared, but not always necessarily agreed upon. Intersections, then, are only commonalities which exist that provide an avenue for conflicting movement organizations to potentially engage in and move in a common direction. In the case of men's movement organizations, two conditions may need to be met for any hope for engagement between them.

The first condition is the need for a greater degree of interactivity afforded to users, particularly among pro-feminist sites. Anti-feminist sites like Angry Harry and the Promise Keepers are certainly guilty of prohibiting a broad range of content, but other sites are open to those who may hold similar views. This is not so for pro-feminist sites. Sites like NOMAS and XY reduce discussion to a parochial set of issues that focus more on the concerns of women and actions of men through the contributions of a few. By allowing for more contributors and posters, an influx of a greater number of opinions pertaining to issues that are of importance to

men is possible. As the GMP perfectly illustrates, allowing for more participation in dialogue construction does not necessarily have to lead an organization towards adopting only extremist views. For this happen, there must be a correct mix of contributors and posters that includes women and a willingness to at least recognize the linguistic propensities utilized by other movement organizations. An expanded dialogue would provide for a greater chance of intersecting points of interest between pro and anti-feminists through the shared experience of being men.

The second condition is that both pro and anti-feminist men come to an understanding that both factions are generally advocating for a progressive form of and a change in the social view of masculinity. It is at this point where the progressive/conservative dichotomy is essentially useless when viewing and discussing men's movements. This is so because, in the end, what these men's groups want is closer to each other than most realize or would like to admit. We can look at the example earlier of the GMP being looked upon as a *fake* men's site on the Men's Rights Blog. Despite this sentiment towards the GMP, the discussions and views that appear on the site resemble those found on AVFM, The Spearhead, or the Men's Rights Blog. So, even among anti-feminist sites, the reality that the dialogues produced between these sites are similar is not recognized.

An important missing component that prohibits both sides from approaching one another is a workable and agreed upon lexicon. Even in this analysis, the primary factions are referred to as "pro-feminists and anti-feminists" men. To suggest that these movements only exist with feminism acting as the lone referent would be false. These movements exist on their own terms with their own purposes and issues of interest. The very use of the term "feminism", for example, causes immediate tension for those who do not identify with it. As a result, MRA's,

MGTOW, and father's rights advocates fall under a more unifying anti-feminist label. Pro-feminists, on the other hand, identify themselves as such perhaps due to the dominance and adoption of feminist thought in any discussion regarding gender. As it stands, the lexicon in use only focuses on the discussion in an inter-sex manner rather than accounting for intra-sex differences, which positions men and women having little in common.

What is required is truly gender neutral language where men and women can identify with a system of values that are free of gender connotations. As long as the constructs of masculinity and patriarchy are shaped by feminist and pro-feminists, it is unlikely that any positive dialogue can occur between these competing movements due to the all-encompassing nature of the terms which place some degree of culpability (or at least the perception of) on one group. By not focusing on terms such as feminism and patriarchy there will be a greater chance that participants will drop a short-hand method of group identification and involve themselves in dialogues based more on merits. AVFM has taken a step towards doing this by incorporating the term "humanist" into their name and mission. It could be argued that they are just merely capitalizing on the positive connotation of the term seeing they still primarily focus on men's issues. Regardless, the use of the term humanist indicates some degree of realization that there is a problem in the overall identification of these movement organizations. When the "us versus them" approach is abandoned due to group labels, it will be more likely that the relative progressiveness of the dialogues is recognized.

These conditions are also salient to the second part of the first research question, which is can those networks also bridge men's and women's movement groups that focus on masculinities? The possibility of these types of networks existing rests on the ability to place more of an emphasis on the underlying message that binds the men's groups. The difference here

is that there is a need to unveil the benefit for both women and men in the discourse. Despite the men as the subject nature of the emergent themes, there are a couple important places where women fit into the equation.

The first is that both pro and anti-feminist men claim to act in the best interest of women. In the case of pro-feminist men, it is more obvious that they position themselves as benefiting women more with men as a secondary beneficiary. Through methods of instruction by way of posters and articles that emphasize the proper treatment of women by men, it is easy to see why pro-feminist men's groups are able to make connections to women's movement groups. The screen shot of manifest links from the site MCSR (Figure 18) clearly illustrates that this is already the case. In the screen shot, MCSR align themselves with sites like AAUW, Girls for Gender Equality, Jewish Women International, and Whiteribbon.ca. Here, the job of abridging movements already seems to be done. However, these men refer to themselves as pro-feminist and are reluctant to adopt the feminist label. This distinction could be problematic in that a recognized or perceived inability to fully identify with a feminist worldview places a self-excluding condition that makes a full integration between pro-feminist men's organizations and feminist organizations unlikely. The adoption of gender-exclusive language such as pro-feminist places a barrier that fits under the obsequiousness intersection which insulates pro-feminist organizations from completely assimilating with feminist groups run by women.

Work is also needed to fit anti-feminist men's groups into this equation. Anti-feminist men's groups established themselves to primarily benefit men and women act as a secondary beneficiary. By taking this approach, it is argued, women are provided agency that is denied by feminists. Part of the process of bringing men's issues to light and attempting to make them a priority is to eliminate the *damsels in distress* narrative that many men's groups feel feminism

promotes. Within the themes discussed, we can easily see the belief that women are already empowered. For women to give into the belief that all men are potential perpetrators of crimes against them and usurp power to limit their professional advancement is to succumb to an anxiety and fear that places women in a perpetual state of "need" which sustains a professional, profit driven movement that feminism is claimed to be.

The first primary research question is similar; there is room for women's and men's groups to find common ground when discussing masculinities. Both care for progressive forms of the concept and can point to cases where members of the opposite sex can identify with what each is trying to promote. It is perhaps at this juncture, between pro-feminist men and anti-feminist women, where the most progress can be made in some reconciliation of the movements groups. By valuing the ability to identify with the concerns of the opposite sex, these individuals may be best able to construct a communicative link due to having a more comprehensive perspective and lived experience in navigating across gender narratives. The contributors on the GMP site illustrate an ability to occupy a pivotal-performative space where they have the ability to be inter-movement actors because they can simultaneously identify as feminist and connect with men's movement organizations non-confrontationally. The presence of these individuals certainly does not guarantee perfect understanding in terms of perspective between movement organizations. Again, language constraints prohibit this. This was clear when a female GMP contributor was unable to fully place the term "creep" as pertaining to men on the same plain as "slut" does to women, despite many men saying that creep should be viewed the same way. Regardless, the attempt to understand will hopefully lead to what Warren Farrell, a former self-proclaimed pro-feminist and a father of various anti-feminist men's movements, wishes as being "neither a women's movement blaming men nor a men's movement blaming women, but a

gender transition movement." Sites like the GMP, which seem to mirror this approach, must be embraced by both sides as a model for achieving this end.

The second research question posed for this analysis is: *Do such pan-movement networks shape the rhetorical strategies to challenge ideographs by online men's movement groups? If so, how?* In order to address this question, the findings and parameters set in the answer to the first research question must quickly be revisited. Since reference is made to a "pan-movement network" here, it must be noted that a progressive form of masculinity is the large issue that acts as a potential unifying factor which extends between different men's movement groups. This finding provides a basis to begin discussing this second question because it acknowledges the possibility for a network to exist in the first place.

As with the first question, feminism and the adherence to feminist thought acts as the primary demarcation point between the various men's groups that, ultimately, lead to differing rhetorical strategies. To illustrate this point, three ideographs will be discussed: equality, rape/sexual assault, and victim. These three ideographs act as major schisms which broadly divide men's groups. While views of feminism provide an easy reference by way of dividing men's groups, these ideographs afford some insight into the dominant rhetorical strategies in how they conduct and justify their position within the network. Within these ideographs we see competing approaches that largely result from a lack of unifying language which was apparent in the first research question. Each of these ideographs emerged from the general topics previously discussed, view of feminism, masculinity, and power.

In discussing approaches when challenging ideographs, the focus in this study is on binaries present within each that provide movement organizations the ability to differentiate themselves from others that reduces commensurability. This is important to discuss because it

provides a degree of precision in identifying how pro and anti-feminist groups position themselves to prevent opportunities for reconciliation. Doing this extends beyond the topics and themes that move across groups of movements and instead shows why there are stark contrasts between the online approaches implemented by pro-feminist and anti-feminist groups. Despite these ideographs being separated below, overlap between them by way of utilization by different men's social movement organizations will be present. After brief discussions of these ideographs and their impact on these strategies, I will connect them to the larger picture of how they form the overall approaches taken by men's groups as they look towards online outlets as alternative media outlets in a final "Implications" section.

Equality

As one would expect, equality is an important term to use in discussions of gender. Perhaps not as obvious is how men's movements approach equality in their narratives regarding gender. Despite all groups claiming they primarily stand for gender equality, and genuinely so, the approaches are vastly different. Two broad categories to describe this are: absolute and guarded.

The term "absolute" is not used to refer to the obliteration of recognizable difference between the sexes or even choice of gender roles. Rather, absolute is in reference to similarity and consistency in opportunity, cost, and responsibility shared between men and women. These are meant to stretch across all social and cultural conditions. However, there are conditions that are exempt from inclusion in this approach to equality given seemingly obvious differences between the sexes such as childbearing and physical strength, although this notion is challenged in one specific article on NOMAS in an article by Bill Patrick (June 5, 2012). This view of equality is largely identified in connection to anti-feminist men's groups.

An appropriate starting point would be with the site Angry Harry which, perhaps appropriately given the name, states in a section title that “Equality between Men and Women is not Achievable” (Angry Harry, n.d., Equality between Men and Women is Not Achievable). As insidious as the title is, the logic behind it is not. In the view of Angry Harry, equality is a term used by groups to instill discord and discontent by pitting women and men against each other. Happiness, in his view, is what we should all strive for and is a form of equality. “Propaganda”, it is argued, is used to question anyone who is content with the current social state of things (propaganda surely being a reference to feminism). As much as this seems to diverge from the overall narrative that is discussed among these types of movements, it is provided as a slight warning that equality may not be anything that will ever be agreed upon by insinuating that men and women are innately different. Therefore, discussions regarding equality are perpetual. Provided the approaches about to be discussed here, there may be little reason to believe this is indeed the case.

Despite Angry Harry’s dire outlook, calls for equality are, nonetheless, made on other anti-feminist sites. Nowhere is this clearer than a post that appeared on AVFM:

> I am comfortable referring to myself as an "equalist", rather than looking my daughter in the face and telling here I am a Men's Rights supporter, or telling my son I support feminism as long as it doesn't interfere with his rights...not to mention there are men demanding preferential treatment and entitlements over other men because of race, sexual preference, or physical ablilites...
>
> All any of us have the right to demand is equality. Equal opportunity and equal treatment under the law is really what the Men's Rights Movement is all about.

> I'm an Equalist. I support an unqualified Equal Rights Movement. (AVFM, June 26, 2012)

This statement is consistent with how most anti-feminist men's groups approach the issue of equality. First, it is implicated that men must seek both inter and intra gender equality. This is frequently mentioned as being a point of concern within the themes and topics discussed in the first research question. Second, there is a focus on the ends of equality, that is, a final end point that ensures both men and women are following the same set of rules and given the opportunity to do so. This is part of the *absolute* approach to this view of equality. There is no negotiation of peculiarity of needs between genders, but rather an emphasis on sameness. It is this second point that dominates the strategy of anti-feminist men when it comes to equality. The response to this post immediately makes this clear as it advances the thought:

> Equalist - to my mind, that is an excellent label.
>
> Equal rights under the law.
>
> Equal responsibility under the law.
>
> Equal treatment on the job - meaning that if you can't pass the fitness test, you don't get a watered-down version. If you can't tote the hose you don't get to ride on the fire-engine. If you can't shoulder the load, you don't get the job. If you're doing 'apprentice/helper' tasks on a work site, you get 'apprentice/helper' pay, not journeyman's pay. And your pay is based on the amount and quality of the work you do, not on your anatomy.
>
> Equal opportunity to be killed or maimed on the job. Men suffer 94% of all workplace deaths? Do I smell discrimination here, or what?
>
> Equal treatment by the courts, especially 'Family Court.'
>
> Equal rights and responsibilities as a parent.

> Equal chances of being hauled off for Domestic Violence; equal treatment (shelter, counseling, lawyers, etc.) for battered men.
>
> I like that label, and I'm adopting it for myself. Thank you for pointing it out.
>
> (AVFM, June 26, 2012)

This tit-for-tat type of approach that emerges here more accurately represents the absolute nature of these sites. However, there is an obvious paradox that exists here which speaks to the Angry Harry excerpt earlier.

As mentioned, sameness in the ends of equality is repeatedly emphasized, while at the same time there is recognition of innate differences between men and women. Undeniably, when a poster like the one above demands that equality should also entail similar metrics when it comes to physical ability (he makes a reference to firefighter fitness tests) it is done so questioning the possibility of it ever being achieved. Therefore, this absolute form of equality comes with some caveats related to innate qualities. The question of choice, likewise, fits into such a conundrum as job related deaths are likely a function of the desire of men to engage in higher risk professions despite the opportunity being available to women. Equality as it relates to choice then becomes a problematic issue to address for anti-feminist men. When the perils of equality are evaded by women who choose to avoid dangerous work is discussed (this is not to diminish the perils that come with being a school teacher given school shooting incidents), that exercise of choice is construed as women willingly rejecting the absolute version of equality based on the expectation of negative consequences. The reason this is important is equality is not discussed here in a way that would allow men to share in the ability to be exonerated from the expectation of holding dangerous jobs as women are, but to place the expectation upon women to accept that burden.

This focus on consequences and accountability becomes essential to the view of equality on the part of anti-feminist men's groups. It is often the view of contributors on sites such as The Spearhead, Men's Rights Blog, and AVFM that being selective of where equality is to be achieved is what prevents women from being equal with men by other measures such as finding themselves in positions of leadership and equal pay. One Spearhead poster sums this sentiment up in this way:

> The interesting thing about women becoming increasingly exempt from consequences is that it is precisely this that keeps them so far behind men in terms of achievement and contributing to civilization. Men's greatness isn't derived from being leaders, board directors, scientists etc – it comes from them being held accountable for their actions. Without this, nothing great is possible. Yet women, especially feminists, shrink from this almost violently. It's very easy to come to the conclusion that women's advocates haven't really been interested in rising to become men's equals, but have instead only formulated ways of securing status and wealth for themselves. (The Spearhead, April 2, 2012)

We can look at this excerpt and easily be reminded of the "buffet ideology" in the view of feminism topic addressed in the first research question. It is here that we see problems understanding "equality". Another Spearhead poster describes this ideograph in terms of "ends versus means" by explaining, "(c)onservatives care about end results, and making sure those turn out OK. Liberals care about means, or the way they are treated, and they put the consequences of their actions secondary to those means" (The Spearhead, April 19, 2012). Clearly, being an anti-feminist site, conservative thought is positioned on the correct side of this issue. Political labels aside, the apparent desire to embrace end results when looking at how men and women share

positions of power, be it in the home, workplace, or through wealth, is the desired means of measuring equality.

Perhaps the most overt instance where this position manifests itself is through an email that is posted on the Men's Rights Blog. The email is designed to prod candidates running for a seat in the United States Senate from California to express their positions on men's issues. The text of the email includes the following:

> I am a men's rights activist or MRA and I advocate for men's issues and concerns. I was just at your website and I was wondering where you stand on issues that effect men. For instance: 1. When men and women are arrested for the same crime the man receives a harsher sentence than the woman or if she has teamed up with a man she can play the victim and testify against him even though they are equals. Not only that but when the death penalty is on the table women are spared the death penalty while men are not. Also women's prisons are much nicer than men's prisons. Does this sound fair to you? It doesn't to us. 2. Only men are required to sign up for selective service while women are exempt. So men are the only ones who may have to die to get benefits that women get without any obligations. Does this sound fair to you? It doesn't to us. 3. In the military the fitness requirements are lower for women than for men. Also women have it easier at the men's expense. Does this sound fair to you? It doesn't to us.4. When it comes to anti-male laws such as VAWA only men are arrested and prosecuted while female batterers go free, also male victims are ignored. Does this sound fair to you? It doesn't to us. (MRB, March 11, 2013)

What stands out is the very clear focus placed on the sharing of consequences between men and women. Through the warning of equality coming at a price, the concern is not that women are

enjoying the same benefits of an equal social structure, but rather women are not suffering for the undesirable positions that men find themselves in as a result of their "privilege". This is the predominant approach to equality throughout anti-feminist men's sites.

Pro-feminist men's sites, on the other hand, adopt a "guarded" approach to equality. A guarded approach to equality is established through a careful navigation of issues that requires the assumption there is virtually no cost to being a man and subsequently eliminating discussion of peculiar topics that may suggest otherwise. Extracting this is a bit tricky in that attention must be provided to what is not present in the discourse as much as what is. By ignoring issues such as infant male circumcision, forced military conscription, or disproportionately high male suicide rates and minimizing male rape victims or male victims of domestic violence, pro-feminist men's organizations largely approach equality as a need exclusive to women. These are the conditions which lead to the "guarded" label used here. To reiterate, all of these men's sites have a goal to make life better for men, albeit through different approaches. Anti-feminist men's sites focus on specific issues that are salient to men, whereas pro-feminist men's sites tend to cite the improvement of conditions for women as being improvement for everyone by challenging hegemonic masculine norms that burden men. Much of this approach is predicated on both the denial of claims made by anti-feminist men and exclusivity of protection for women.

No place is this difference clearer than discussions surrounding the VAWA. As stated earlier, anti-feminist men's sites express the desire for gender neutral language to be included so that everyone gets equal protection in cases of domestic disputes. This notion is rejected by pro-feminist men. Preservation of the current gynocentric language is done through the denial of men as victims of domestic violence. Much like anti-feminist men express suspicion of statistics associated with the non-reporting of rape, pro-feminist men, likewise, are skeptical of domestic

violence statistics that suggest men are silent about their being abused. In fact, NOMAS contributor Jack C. Straton is clear that abuse against men is a non-issue in his article, "The Myth of 'Battered Husband Syndrome'" (2012). In his article, Stanton points to methodological flaws in studies that suggest men as victims and that, "Men have never before been shy in making their needs known, so it is peculiar that in 17 years, this supposedly huge contingent of 'battered men' has never revealed itself in the flesh. Could it be that it simply does not exist?" (Equality p. 29). This statement contradicting the notion that men desire the appearance to remain in control aside, it is a clear attempt to reject any necessitation of gender-neutral language and preserve the idea that legislation regarding domestic violence need only focus on women for any hope of equal protection. In short, this is equality by exclusion.

The primary mechanism for excluding men is a zero-sum approach to the construction of the discussion. Much like Straton's article mentioned above, another NOMAS statement titled, "Not a Two-Way street: Men are NOT the victims of what is meant by Domestic Violence and Abuse," it is made clear that the claims made by other groups that men are victims of domestic violence is simply false. The article does little to entertain the possibility of such violence occurring, but laments that others with disbelief:

> Incredibly, in response to these claims, some funding for battered women's programs has been reduced, on the grounds that equal funding should go to battered men. More indirectly, some authors and agencies and legislators have sought to linguistically de-gender the crime, describe it in phrases like "family violence," and obfuscate the reality that this is a crime that men commit against women. (NOMAS, n.d., Not a two-way street: men are NOT the victims of what is meant by domestic violence and abuse)

As the initial sentence indicates, rejecting the need for protection being provided to men seems to be the reason for employing the zero-sum approach typically found in debates over resources for programs. Interestingly, in rejecting the claims made by other men's organizations, NOMAS accepts a position related to domestic violence that they are critical of anti-feminist groups for taking in regard to other issues related to equality.

Many of the discussions on pro-feminist men's sites involve the need to promote programs for the sake of equality based on the "unseen." When it comes to issues such as workplace discrimination, the wage gap, harassment, and rape, it is emphasized on NOMAS, XY, and MCSR that these issues are not obvious as being problems because they may not take place in ways that are noticeable to us as passive observers. This position contradicts the absolute equality promoted by anti-feminist men's sites. However, pro-feminists disregard the hidden nature of violence and oppression when it serves their message. In the NOMAS position article on domestic violence, they state:

> But there is an adage in journalism that "When a dog bites a man, that's not News; but when a man bites a dog, that's News!" So perhaps on that impulse, the national press has always had a seeming fascination with the lurid possibility of "battered husbands" and frequently run articles with quotes and citations suggesting that this is a real but hidden problem. Many of these originate from so-called "Men's Rights" groups, which proclaim that there are just as many battered husbands as battered wives. (The problem is not seen they say because the battered husbands are always just too embarrassed to tell anyone. As if women aren't!) ((NOMAS, n.d., Not a two-way street: men are NOT the victims of what is meant by domestic violence and abuse)

Here, the flip-flop between the desires of men's movement organizations to indicate "hidden problems" is clear. From the pro-feminist men's view, when an issue impacts women, the problem is worse than it empirically seems. When the focus shifts to men, we can take the issue at face-value. Such positioning of the discourse is essential for this guarded push for equality.

MCSR also takes part of the guarded view of equality through their numerous posters, which will be highlighted in discussions of rape and victim, that position men as predators from which women must be afforded protection. The site is relatively overt in this position by stating among their core values that "men must join with women as allies in creating an equitable and just world for all genders in order to end men's violence against women" (Equality, p. 32). Given the parameters for study here, the focus on crimes seems to be the basis for which equality is judged for pro-feminist men. Consequently, other possible measures for equality are missed.

When looking at the XY site, a slight shift is evident that in there is a focus on getting men to recognize a position of privilege in their push for equality. Although attention is still provided to some legislative protections regarding crime, XY seeks to expose the more nefarious, but legal, practices of men. Articles on the treatment of women in the workplace, the difference in social acceptance of sexuality between men and women, "menophobia" (the fear of the menstrual cycle), and even the exploits of the Lingerie Football League, attempt to shift the onus of recognizing and rectifying inequality to men for the benefit of women.

Rape/Sexual Assault

It may seem unusual that a crime is understood to be an ideograph, but rape and sexual assault act as one. This decision is based on the perception that the crime is constructed to demonize while others work on creating an understanding on how we need to recognize what is meant by these crimes in order to protect. Rape and sexual assault are combined to be discussed

as one in this instance because of the tendency for many sites to conflate the terms. Despite this interchangeability, the nature of what is described is placed in a similar category of analysis.

Where problems arise in the understanding of rape/sexual assault, is in empirical versus conceptual views of the crime. Anti-feminist men tend to focus on the observable and statistical ways in which rape/sexual assault is understood, primarily in the news and popular culture. Pro-feminists take a more conceptual approach by working on what defines rape/sexual assault. This is a point of great tension between the two primary factions due to the amount of fear created in positioning men as perpetrators and women as victims. This also leads to the question of who can be or is raped.

Who the victims of rape/sexual assault are is a primary point of diversion. While anti-feminist men do not deny women are the primary victims of rape/sexual assault, they do contend the statistics that proclaim it as being more common a crime than it actually is. For instance, the one-in-five female campus rape victim statistic that frequently appears in the news is rejected on the grounds that no college or university can produce numbers that agree with it and that the number is produced by groups that have ties to women's and gender studies departments. Statistics such as this have led to a "rape culture" narrative which suggests misogynistic social norms lead to the normalization of rape. The idea of a rape culture is rejected by sites such as,The Spearhead, AVFM, NCFM, National Center for Men, Men's Rights Blog, and even GMP due to the use of dubious statistics and the idea that it supports a simple male perpetrator/female victim narrative. It is also contended that male victims are excluded.

Adam Sandler's movie, "That's My Boy" is a case-in-point because it was released during the time of this text collection. In the movie, Adam Sandler plays Donnie, a 14-year-old boy who has a fling with one of his teachers which results in her pregnancy. This

accomplishment is celebrated by Donnie and his friends as he fulfilled every boy's fantasy. Donnie grows up to become an irresponsible and juvenile adult who seeks the help from his son whom the teacher gave birth. All the while, the statutory rape which took place is used as a point of humor and accomplishment. Sites such as AVFM, GMP, and NCFM, point to this movie as an example of how women are socially exonerated for crimes that men would otherwise be scorned for. For the male victim, he was not raped, he was lucky. So this leads to the obvious question, when can we accept that a male rape victim exists?

The answer may be found in another story that was dominating the headlines at the time of this text collection, the trial of Jerry Sandusky. Sandusky, and assistant football coach at Penn State, stood accused of numerous counts of sexual assault involving young boys while hosting camps at the university. Public outcry over the incident resulted in continuous coverage of the case and led to the eventual firing of football coaching icon Joe Paterno for covering up the incident. So why the outrage for these male victims? GMP contributor Eirik Rogers draws parallels between the Adam Sandler movie and the Jerry Sandusky case:

> This movie will open just ten days after the trial of Jerry Sandusky is scheduled to begin. Many young boys were subjected to the seduction of an adult in that case. Both the teacher in this movie and Jerry Sandusky were mentors to their victims, and both manipulated their young charges into selfish and destructive behaviors, leaving those kids holding secrets and responsibilities beyond their developmental maturity. (Rogers, June 17, 2012)

What makes the Sandusky incident different, according to Paul Elam from AVFM, is that the perpetrator was male, and that is enough to induce anger. When the crime is committed by a male, the victim is viewed as being helpless, whereas female perpetrators are not perceived as

holding such power. We do not fully understand how to interpret situations of rape/sexual assault when it is a female committing the crime, according to Elam. It is even more difficult to deal with male-on-male cases of rape.

Prison rape is frequently brought up as a topic of discussion on anti-feminist sites, particularly AVFM, in order to complicate the issue of rape/sexual assault. They seemingly do this because when the perpetrator and victim are both male, this issue seems to be conveniently discarded in the media, but embraced by comedians. It stands as a challenge to the proponents of a rape culture that they include all rape regardless of the roles of those involved. By ignoring this form of rape, then, it is not truly rape they claim to be opposed to, but rather only male-on-female rape. This is not to say the issue is completely ignored. The Men's Rights Blog highlighted a story noting that the Obama administration ordered prisons on all levels to "adopt zero tolerance for prison rape as it issued mandatory screening, enforcement and prevention regulations designed to reduce the number of inmates who suffer sexual victimization at the hands of other prisoners and prison staff" (MRB, May 23, 2012). By providing attention to this particular angle of rape/sexual assault, emphasis is placed on the needs of the victim regardless of the sex of the person committing the crime.

Pro-feminist men's groups, particularly MCSR, also include male victims of rape, but only to an extent. Figure 20 illustrates how the site MCSR approaches this topic. Much like the concerns expressed about the movie, "That's My Boy," the poster emphasizes that men and boys are reluctant to discuss the fact that they are victims and that they may act out in ways different from female victims. However, the twist is that the MCSR poster does as much to place the blame for male rape victims on other males. There is a special section doing just that titled, "Can a woman sexually assault a man?" Here, a point is made to mention that males are responsible

for 86% of the rapes of other males. Additionally, the issue of male rape victims is discussed only in terms of comparison to female victims by stating that “tens of thousands of boys and men assaulted each year alongside hundreds of thousands of girls and women.” Despite these points, this pamphlet acts as a lone example across pro-feminist sites that provide attention to male victims of rape/sexual assault.

The bulk of the discourse concerning rape/sexual assault on pro-feminist men’s sites revolves around setting the parameters of what constitutes rape/sexual assault. This is where the conceptual approach is evident. Again, an example from the MCSR site provides the easiest starting point to show how this is done. In figure 21, it is clear that a compendium is formed geared towards men in attempting to clarify the conditions and requisites to prevent a rape from occurring. Despite this attempt, there are obvious problems.

The first point on the pamphlet is clear in providing a general legal definition of what rape is. This definition aligns with how anti-feminist men’s sites approach the issue of rape/sexual assault in that it is relatively clear and understood. There are definite actions that a would-be perpetrator should not commit and it is generally observable when consent has been breached, which is covered in the third point. From there, however, the issue becomes somewhat obfuscated to take the stance promoted by feminists. The reader is then asked to “look beyond the legal definition” of rape to include emotional forms of sexual violence and question what is meant by “consent”. These more nebulous terms prove to be points of contention as many court cases are discussed on anti-feminist men’s sites that deal with the question of when consent is given, and more importantly, withdrawn. Much of the discussion revolves around how realistic it is for a male (typically) to abide by requests made of them, explicitly or not, during the act of sexual intercourse. Issues have also been raised by some of the ability to withdraw consent after

the act has taken place. Regardless, these points are designed to place the onus of responsibility on the male. This is perhaps most apparent in the "Watch alcohol and drug intake" section where the impaired state of the female (presumably given the target of the pamphlet) only need be considered.

Similar parameters are expressed elsewhere. On the site XY, for example, contributor Bill Patrick discusses the Obama administration's decision to update the federal government's definition of rape. According to Patrick, the new definition includes male victims, a focus on requiring the consent of the victim, and consideration given to the inability to consent due to being impaired by drugs or alcohol. However, Patrick still takes issue with the update stating:

> While I am very glad that this second effort broadened how we define rape, I actually think the definition is still far too narrow. I much prefer the approach that many feminist anti-rape organizations use when it comes to addressing issues of sexual coercion. Rape, they argue, occurs when there is a failure to obtain meaningful consent before having sex with someone. And meaningful consent, they argue, not only must be clearly communicated, but it must also be given without fear or confusion. Meaningful consent simply cannot exist if a person is not in her (or his) right mind due to intoxication or other forms of confusion, and it cannot exist if a person is afraid of the outcome should she (or he) refuse to have sex. (Patrick, April 17, 2012)

As with the MCSR pamphlet, parallels are evident with the emphasis on *meaningful* consent. What is explicitly meant by this is not necessarily clear and perhaps dangerously left to interpretation. The interpretation of social practices is a big part of the feminist construction of rape/sexual assault.

An event at a country club in Virginia provides an example of how a contributor for NOMAS illustrates how rape/sexual assault become normalized in our society. In his article, Christopher Kilmartin describes an event called the "Vodka Challenge" where male members enjoyed vodka that was served out of an ice sculpture fountain of a naked woman shooting from between her spread legs (n.d., Men's Violence Against Women). The fountain, according to Kilmartin, symbolically acts as a way to dehumanize women and position them to act as an enemy of men, thus allowing for the justification of violent acts of rape against women. What this example does is reposition the act of rape/sexual assault to include a larger narrative placing men as a larger group in a culpable position when it comes to the crime. Therefore, even if you as a man have never physically raped, you contribute to the practice through participation in such demeaning events as the "vodka challenge." This leads Kilmartin to lament, "It's a sad state of affairs when so many men have behaved so irresponsibly that the rest of us have to carry the burden of understandable suspicion from women" (n.d., Men's Violence Against Women).

These expanded and more muddled ways of understanding rape/sexual assault are problematic for anti-feminist men in that they lead to anxiety over whether or not it places men in positions of guilt without intention. One poster on The Spearhead recalls a conversation he had with a Seattle police detective where he described a newly adopted local law that considered staring at a woman for thirty seconds or more as being "visual rape" (The Spearhead, April 7, 2012). Similar concerns are expressed when discussions of public breast feeding arise. Many commenters do not have a problem with the practice itself, but rather the position men are put in if a glance is taken the wrong way by the woman who is breast feeding. The argument goes that with the way rape/sexual assault is being understood, all men in the same space as a woman breast feeding is involuntarily being placed in a position where they can be guilty of the crime

based only on the subjectivity of the woman. It is ultimately this subjectivity that is at the heart of this schism involving rape/sexual assault.

Victim

As evident in the description of rape/sexual assault, it is predictable that a victim is an ideograph that is frequently alluded to. What is important to note is that while pro-feminists seem to emphasize that there is a clear set of victims when discussing gender politics, those being women, anti-feminist men periodically mention they refuse to embrace victim status for men. Despite these claims, the dialogue that takes place on anti-feminist men's sites simply does not coincide with rejecting victimization. Overwhelmingly, there is a tendency to perhaps overemphasize men as victims in an attempt to include themselves in larger social discussions related to gender. So the question is, who can claim victim status?

The answer to having the ability to claim victim status begins with another question, a victim of what? Clearly, being the victim of crimes such as rape or sexual assault is a point of contention in the previous section. While anti-feminist men push to get attitudes to change regarding the attitudes towards male victims and to even convince people there are male victims, pro-feminist men emphasize that although men can be victims, they are not as much so as women and, therefore, not the primary point of concern to their various movement organizations. This is the theme which continues to form the binary for victim, the push for recognizing men as victims and the desire to keep the focus on women through a zero-sum approach. To return to the "of what" question, this binary is found in discussions of crime, institutions, and social perceptions when gender is involved.

Throughout the discussions of the topics and themes that spread across social movement organizations, anti-feminist men's groups clearly position themselves to where they feel men are

targets of policies that are the product of a feminist agenda. The VAWA is an example of legislation that may actually create male victims through the protection of female victims of domestic violence. The specific denial of protection through gendered language, it is argued, places men in a vulnerable position in two ways. First, it rejects the notion they exist as domestic violence victims. This is a primary criticism of the Duluth model of domestic violence. According to the Duluth model, measurements of domestic violence incidents are predicated on the belief that domestic violence is the direct result of patriarchal social structures that allow men to dominate women. This language virtually eliminates the possibility of male victims existing. Such interpretations lead to the gendered language of the VAWA that is contested by anti-feminist men's organizations. Second, such gendered language forms a widespread belief that all men are potential perpetrators of crime and therefore subject to widespread suspicion and potential incarceration. One Standyourground.com poster expressed his concern for his sons this way:

> I have sons and a daughter. The sons have long been in dating age and the daughter is just entering dating age. I was much more concerned about the boys than the girl. The boys could be subjected to child support slavery at way too young of an age preventing them from reaching their potentials. They could be accused of serious crimes. Yes, the daughter could be abused but at least the law would be on her side. Most parents I have spoken with feel the same way. They are much more concerned about their sons than their daughters. I don't have personal knowledge of all the dynamics involved because I have not lived with my children full time during this phase of their lives. I have been told repeatedly by other parents that the girls aggressively pursue the boys now rather

> than the reverse. The boys at some level are smart enough to be careful. (SYG, June 12, 2012)

This post led to another board member to lament the general feeling that "feminism is a cult that tries to make both sexes equal by focusing solely on one of them" (SYG, June 12, 2012). Such responses exemplify how victimhood ties together. By being a victim of feminist influence on public policy, men, in turn, become victims of unfair law enforcement practices. Again, this is to emphasize the lack of control anti-feminist-men's organizations have over language when combating charges made upon men referencing ambiguous terms such as patriarchy.

This problem is not limited to the United States. Men in Australia combat initiatives such as the White Ribbon Campaign that paints a unilateral picture of domestic violence. The White Ribbon Foundation produced a document for its male Ambassadors in 2009 distribution that diminished the presence of male victims of domestic violence, and used public money to do so. This prompted the NCFM to issue the following response:

> Men's Health Australia – Australia's primary source of information about the social and psychological wellbeing of men and boys – contacted White Ribbon with its concerns about this document. Men's Health believes that violence prevention is not a competition: that governments and NGOs can work to prevent violence against women and violence against men. We believe it isn't necessary for White Ribbon to downplay, diminish or report incorrectly about male victims of violence in order to highlight the tragedy of female victims of violence. The horrific statistics about violence against women speak for themselves.
>
> Men's Health Australia are fully supportive of all attempts to reduce violence against women. However we believe it is essential that a high-profile organisation such as

> the White Ribbon Foundation provides its Ambassadors and the general public with an accurate picture of violence in Australian society, especially when in receipt of federal government funding. It is only when we start with an accurate picture of violence that we can take the necessary steps to reduce its incidence and impact. If we start with an inaccurate picture, our violence-prevention strategies are bound to be less effective, and could potentially cause harm – especially to children. (NCFM, April 4, 2012)

The point here is the inclusive nature of the language that is used to extend our understanding of domestic violence. It somewhat parallels the approach taken with rape/sexual assault. There is no denial of female victims, and this is made specifically known in comments on other anti-feminist men's sites. However, there are more male-specific angles to victimhood that arise due to gender-specific language.

One example is the creation of "silent victims". By being excluded from various dialogues of victimhood, it is possible that men convince themselves that they cannot be victims of any form of abuse because they have repeatedly been told they cannot be. Many posters express this form of silence, most coming on the GMP site, where being more forthcoming about such problems seems most common. During a discussion about the problem of female sex-trafficking, one male GMP poster mentioned the following:

> I know many people would see this type of gendered campaign and not see any problem with it. I mean, if it can keep anyone from being abused in any form then that's a good thing, right? Except, I can't help but wonder what is the cost of supporting one group of victims above another? When they assign a gender to the victim and/or the perpetrator they exclude those of us who don't fit within that very narrow definition. I know this because it was campaigns like this that I was forced to see my whole life, and as a result,

> it kept me silent about my own abuse. When I was confronted with messages that support such a narrowly defined group, I always felt like my own abuse didn't count or didn't matter. It took me until my 30s before I even told anyone about what happened to me. When I see campaigns like this it pains me to think of all the other people who are like me who continue to remain silent about their abuse because they can't relate to these gendered messages. I strongly believe that until we see most of the campaigns that are meant to prevent violence become gender neutral, they will continue to marginalize people like me and keep us silent.(GMP, June 26, 2012)

Although not specifically mentioned, the form of abuse suggested in this posting is likely sexual in nature due to the thread it is attached to. This should not be understood as being limited to sexual abuse, however. Among the many discussions that take place on the GMP, AVFM, Standyourground.com, Men's Rights Blog, Mensactivisim.org, and NCFM, are issues that are not frequently cited as being issues for men. Topics like the disproportionately high male suicide rate, mental and physical health, parental alienation by family courts, dropping secondary education rates, and exploitation in the workplace are frequently talked about as being points of concern where men are silenced due to the widespread belief they are in no way worse off than women in any situation.

This belief can be substantiated in the approach to victim taken by pro-feminist men's sites. On these sites, there is a clear attempt to exclude men as victims through the comparison of female victim status. The MCSR posters referred to earlier are examples of this. Although the focus is on male victims, a point was made to make the problem subservient to female rape victims and emphasize that males are usually victims to other males. This restricts the issue of rape as one only committed by men and deflecting responsibility to keeping it a male only

problem that needs addressing. In essence, this works to deny victim status through a form of gendered victim blaming, where it is a men and masculinity problem.

To return to the Jack C. Straton's article, "The Myth of the 'Battered Husband Syndrome'", he provides an example of this form of victim blaming. In the article, he notes that:

> This is not to say that men are not harmed in our society, but most often men are harmed by other men. Eighty-seven percent of men murdered in the U.S. are killed by other men. Those doing the killing in every major and minor war in this and previous centuries have mostly been men! Instead of attempting to undercut services for the enormous number of women who are terrorized by their mates, those who claim to care for men had better address our real enemies; ourselves. (Stranton, 2012).

Despite the statistics of men being killed during war, the point is to preserve women as a primary victim group when it comes to allocating services for battered spouses. By stating that men are the enemy of men, Stanton exonerates other social pressures that may contribute to this state and instead claims men's problems as being their own fault.

A large part of victim construction is the gendering of crime. Pro-feminists make a point to express the importance of this largely, as Stanton does above, to get government programs and legislation focused on the needs of women. Again, the VAWA proves to be salient to this point as NOMAS takes the position that such legislation needs to preserve the current language. One post on the NOMAS site states:

> More indirectly, some authors and agencies and legislators have sought to linguistically de-gender the crime, describe it in phrases like "family violence," and obfuscate the reality that this is a crime that men commit against women. (NOMAS, n.d., Not a two-way street: men are NOT the victims of what is meant by domestic violence and abuse)

"Domestic or family" violence, then, is not necessarily as important nor should be weighted similarly to violence against women. Critics charge this leaves husbands and children vulnerable to violent behavior. Despite such claims, some pro-feminist men are somewhat similar in how they are negatively impacted by other social pressures.

Bill Patrick, for example, has an article on the site XY which laments, "messages about men promote the vision of a universal heterosexual masculine identity that is limiting, insulting, and false" in the media (Patrick, May 3, 2012). Patrick explains how he takes pleasure in activities that are typically deemed "unmanly" and lists movies that would be enjoyable for both men and women. However, true to the overall angle of the site, there is a degree of guilt in that men are not burdened by such things as body image issues like women are, likely because it has not been decided how to capitalize monetarily on male insecurities. So even here, there is a hint of a "women have it worse" context.

There is one case where a focus is squarely placed on a male victim. During this text collection, the murder of a black teenager, Trayvon Martin, and the acquittal of the man who shot him, George Zimmerman, was making headlines. In a break from the gendered messages that typically appear on NOMAS, the contributors lent their names to a show of solidarity to condemning the court's decision to acquit Zimmerman of the murder. The message states that decision "at the individual level, it renders all young black men 'suspicious'. At the institutional level, it is particularly evident in the criminal justice system" (NOMAS, n.d., Racism in America: The Trayvon Martin Case). It is mentioned on the NOMAS site that it is believed all oppressions are linked, so this article would fit into the objective of the organization. However, the statement places an emphasis on race and not the fact he is male. Race is widely neglected across all the sites analyzed and is a major shortcoming of these movement organizations. When

race is manifested, for at least this pro-feminist group, it must be a consideration to focus on a male being a victim.

In another article related to the Trayvon Martin case, Mark Greene of the GMP focuses on how we allow ourselves to become divided by those who stand to profit from it. Race is the primary point of division in the article, but it turns to gender in the comments as posters produce gender discourses focusing exclusively on women. This leads Greene to respond:

> But I will say that too many men have been convinced that ONLY the male perspective is fully valid because it has been suppressed wholesale, and suppressed specifically by non-male interest groups. I hold this as a manufactured division, created by forces who seek to foster a divide and conquer strategy. (Greene, April 10, 2012)

This acts as a warning to what fighting over a victim can lead to, an inability to reconcile based on the narratives espoused by anti-feminist and pro-feminist groups described here. This ideograph is perhaps the most important in that the long-term survival of these men's organizations is dependent on the construction of victim.

Implications

These three ideographs are in no way exhaustive of those that can be found on these men's sites, nor are they necessarily mutually exclusive of one another. One can easily see the potential for overlap between victim and rape/sexual assault as far as which groups are the focal point of such discussions. Regardless, the three briefly reviewed above provide enough by way of the broad approaches undertaken by the general groups of anti-feminist and pro-feminist men's organizations. The way in which ideographs are discussed provides a base for understanding the rhetorical strategies and tactics taken by pan-movement networks.

Bowers et al. (2010) describe seven activist strategies movement organizations (agitators being the term they use) utilize: petition, promulgation, solidification, polarization, nonviolent resistance, escalation/confrontation, Gandhi and guerilla, and revolution. Each of these are representative of a broad goal associated with each strategy. For example, the petition strategy is used to first propose a change and acquire evidence to support the need for change, while the strategy of promulgation seeks public support for the desired change. Associated with each of these strategies are a series of tactics that movements use in order to meet the goals of the strategy. Movements do not necessarily find themselves maneuvering through the entire progression of strategies, nor do they implement one at a time. Some never get past the stage of polarization. This is the case with many of the men's movement organizations presented in this analysis, given their rather inchoate state.

As the ideographs described indicate, different movement organizations implement different tactics in order to challenge those ideographs. Many of these tactics are familiar and fit into the strategies Bowers et al. previously outlines. However, men's movement organizations are unique in that a divide exists among members seeking a rather similar goal. This divide rests in the perception of power men hold and their adherence, or lack of, to feminism. Because of this divide, it is suggested that another activist strategy drives the tactics anti-feminist and pro-feminist men utilize, negotiated mobilization.

Negotiated mobilization stems from the intersection of obsequiousness in the first research question. Obsequiousness is crucial to understanding men's movements because it is a condition that exerts force on movement organization members through the belief that there exists a cost to participating in these movement organizations if not done so in a certain way. This general approach leads to the strategy of negotiated mobilization. Negotiated mobilization

can simply be understood as the cautious formation and broadcasting of a message(s) by a movement organization that are shaped with consideration given to forces outside of the movement. Much of what this strategy addresses is, the process a movement organization takes in identifying a problem, identifying the reasons for the problem, and suggesting solutions to correct the problem. This recognition of outside forces impacting the way messages are constructed differentiates this strategy from others Bowers et al. describe. Strategies such as petition, promulgation, solidification, or polarization are described and explained is such a manner that they emphasize the goals of a movement as if they operate in isolation. With negotiated mobilization, the added component of awareness impacts the tactics. Men's movement organizations utilize tactics which are mindful of the way members identify with the larger movement and construct discourses to appeal those outside of the larger movement. By recognizing negotiated mobilization as a strategy and identifying associated tactics, more may evident on how movements navigate the multi-dimensionality of positions held within them. These tactics, in turn, point back to the overall strategy of how ideographs are challenged. The tactics associated with negotiated mobilization found here include the degree of separation between activists and audience, identifying who is in need of social justice, and the degree of interactivity allotted to shape discourse.

The first tactic, degree of separation, concerns the audience. Clearly, the intended target of all these sites is men. There are exceptions of course, as I have included excerpts from female posters and contributors. Surely some anti-feminist sites are hopeful for contributing female readers in order to explain different perspectives and gain more social credence to the positions taken within the discussions. Men, however, are the primary readers and participants. But how those men are addressed greatly differs between sites.

On all of the anti-feminist men's sites, men are generally referred to as a large cohesive group. These movement organizations come from the perspective that they are speaking to a group in which they, the contributors, administrators, and posters, all belong. The approach is a collective we or us. The topics and emergent themes indicate conditions that potentially impact all men. From the impact public policy has on men, to the way men are portrayed in media, making all men aware that they are impacted by (usually) negative portrayals and perceptions just as other groups are, is an objective among these organizations. These sites act as a platform to get men to acknowledge this and take part in a discussion in order to challenge social pressures and expectations that prevent men from enjoying full individual autonomy of expression.

When speaking for all men, anti-feminists also seek to include those who identify with pro-feminist men's groups. Part of the frustration anti-feminist men's groups express is the self-imposed undermining of work they intend to do by pro-feminist men. By ignoring social conditions peculiar to men, and even going so far as deny them, it is argued that pro-feminist men place themselves in potentially oppressive positions for the sake of career status or other forms of approval. This, in a sense, places pro-feminists on a similar plane as social elite males who oppress lower classes of men and keep these movements in a continuous state of conflict.

Women, despite not being present in most discussions, are also part of the larger social "we". When discussions of masculinity and other issues that are germane to men are presented, they are not done so as if they are solely for men to identify and take care of. For better or worse, women are viewed as taking an active part in creating the conditions that shape traditional masculinity and, therefore, able to participate in altering social expectations placed upon men. This is most evident in discussions regarding male disposability, but can also be found in those

about the homogeneity of Western men and their work. In short, anti-feminist men tend to look at the wholeness of what goes into the construction of masculinity.

Pro-feminist men's groups, on the other hand, take an approach where the contributors tend to separate themselves from "men" as a group. This is not immediately apparent, as in the mission statements found on the sites NOMAS, XY, and MCSR where it is believed to be the responsibility for all men to fight sexism because it indirectly impacts them by way of female friends and family. However, the tone and angle changes when looking into the texts produced by the sites. The contributors take on an instructional role for other men as they assume a position of benevolence. Men are then addressed as a "you" group that is distanced from these organizations.

The messages to other men are apparent on many of the pamphlets produced by MCSR. One is specifically geared towards student athletes to take an active role in curbing the abuse of women. Another implores men to not *be a jerk* towards women. These messages point to other types of men as posing a problem for the rest. Kilmartin's statement regarding the "vodka challenge" mentioned earlier where he is among the burdened group of men who carry the suspicion of women based on the actions of others stands as an explicit example. Each of these cases positions this group of men in direct opposition to others as they present themselves as examples of being resistant to traditional masculinity and act as models for others to follow. As a result, emphasis is placed only on men to change expectations of themselves without consideration of the role women play in traditional masculinity.

These we versus you approaches are closely tied to another tactic, identifying who is in need of social justice, which includes a dialogue of inclusion and exclusion. This tactic is perhaps unique to these types of movements in that members are in disagreement regarding their

own role as oppressor or the oppressed. Anti-feminist men, with perhaps the exception of Promise Keepers, find themselves in a position of frequent justification for why they need to exist as a set of movements. In nearly every topic, theme, and certainly though ideographs, these groups identify areas that marginalization or oppression occurs as a function of gender politics and places men in a shared position with women. Through finding reciprocal effects of gender politics and construction on men in relation to women, anti-feminist men seek to reduce the zero-sum aspect of how women are negatively impacted by sexism. Sexism is sought to be expanded upon, much like a victim, through the denial of patriarchal systems in order to open up the possibility of understanding men as being among oppressed groups. In order to do this, a focus on an oligarchy is preferred to emphasize that men and women are equally subservient to a few. This approach leads to cautious criticisms of capitalism while overtly embracing "conservative " values that causes some internal logical inconsistency.

In addition to attempting to include men in a position of needing similar protections and considerations as women, there is also a tendency for anti-feminist men to emphasize women as being potentially nefarious. Many of the manifest links that exist on men's sites focus on the criminal activities that are committed by women. This comes as a direct backlash to the established male-as-perpetrator/female-as-victim narrative that dominates news media and popular culture. This type of inclusion attempts to reduce perceived differences among the sexes to question the necessity of valuing one over the other when providing protections.

As much as anti-feminist men's groups seek to include men into discussions of gender, pro-feminist men seek to exclude them. This may seem counterintuitive seeing that pro-feminist men's organizations tailor their messages towards men, but these messages are done in a way to reduce the feeling that men need to focus on their own conditions and well-being. Through the

discussions of rape/sexual assault, victim, and need for social equality, men are either assumed to be free of any burden or explained as being insignificantly impacted by that burden, other than that of oppressor. Therefore, the concerns expressed by anti-feminist men are explained away as either anomalies or as a result of their own actions.

The adoption of feminist language by way of how systematic oppression is understood also acts as a tactic that limits the ability for retort. Patriarchy, for example, is generally understood as a system that is in place to benefit and favor men over women in society. Through persistent references to the wage gap, glass ceiling, underrepresentation in government, and sexist laws and legislation, pro-feminist position men as de facto beneficiaries of a structure that paves the way for them to succeed with minimal obstacles. Likewise, masculinity is constructed as a condition that limits the ability for men to achieve their own potential despite the establishment of a patriarchy. Of course, masculinity is an extremely fluid term in which these conflicts take place. As explained earlier, both pro and anti-feminist men strive for a similar form of masculinity, that which is progressive and benefits all members of a society, but only pro-feminists make use of the term on a consistent basis due to the desired establishment of what is meant by *masculinity* in academic literature. Anti-feminist men, then, have an inability to utilize such terms in their discussions because of the nuanced language used in literature related to the subjects of patriarchy and masculinity that, in their view, add a dimension of non-falsifiability that makes engagement difficult.

In a sense, this complexity of language leads to a final tactic worthy of mention, the degree of interactivity allotted to shape discourse. As explained earlier, there are great disparities in the level of interactivity afforded to readers across the sites analyzed by way of participation in the creation of the dialogue. Sites such as the GMP, AVFM, and The Spearhead are much

more robust when it comes to dialogue, largely due to participation from posters. Surprisingly, this does not lead to an increase in extreme views. These three sites are positioned closely when it comes to discussions of masculinity which indicates the presence of broader views regarding the subject and an overall desire for a progressive masculinity to be socially accepted. Unsurprisingly, the sites that rest in this space are anti-feminist in nature due to their adoption of a more layman approach to discussing gender politics as opposed to the more esoteric discussions found on pro-feminist sites.

Perhaps due to the perceived need to combat the lexical control by pro-feminists and a need to establish their own, many anti-feminists relinquish some control over the content found on their sites. Openness in dialogue leads to some rather acerbic language at times that masks the underlying progressive tones of the sites, this especially being the case on AVFM. Regardless, this need is apparent given that these forms of movements are without proper or consistent identifying labels. Terms such as *Men's Rights Activists, MGTOW, or Men's Humanist* are frequently used by those within and outside the movement organizations, but done so with little consideration or agreement as to whether they accurately describe them. This being the case, a bit of discord in the desired objectives among anti-feminist sites is present with little linguistic affordance to create an overtly cohesive message. This lack of an existing theoretical language available to anti-feminist groups leads to the perception they exist as backlash movements without grounds for standing alone on their own terms.

Despite the claim that anti-feminist men use a more layman approach, it should not be understood as being uneducated or inarticulate. Many of the threads analyzed on anti-feminist sites are well over fifty comments long and remain salient to the related article. Rather complex interpretations and explanations of issues salient to men and gender politics rest within these

comments. As some threads lengthen, the ideological positions of posters become more apparent and better articulated as they prod one another to justify their opinions. The fact that anti-feminist contributors are able to carry on such discussions without being able to engage on a level on par with pro-feminists acts as a barrier to the major factions realizing any common ground.

However, not all anti-feminist sites allow for similar discussions. Sites such as Promise Keepers, National Center for Men, Angry Harry, and Mensactivism.org, exercise more control over their content. Promise Keepers clearly place men as the head of the home or relationship, which upholds the place for traditional masculinity. The National Center for Men tends to focus on placing men in the role of victim, usually as a result of the attitudes of women. Mensactivism.org is the site most likely to provide manifest links that point to cases emphasizing the malice of women. Angry Harry controls his content largely, but not exclusively, to place men in the role of victim. The more parochial the intention, it seems, the less likely some anti-feminist men's groups allow for interactivity related to content. This does not mean comments are not posted or welcomed, but the content, especially with Angry Harry, seems highly screened to fit the purpose of the site's overall goal. This leads to the perception of more extreme views that are preserved by the administrators of these sites.

Similar reasoning can be observed via pro-feminist sites lack of interactivity. NOMAS, MCSR, and XY Online all provide little to no input from readers as posters. Each of these sites adopts a similar approach from an academic perspective and have ties to the academic community. MCSR, for example, has a very clear singular purpose, to prevent rape of (mostly) women. NOMAS and XY Online share a very academic style that resembles, and is an extension of, the literature found in the literature review section presented earlier. The site's contributors to

are the ones develop and referenced upon the language that is problematic for anti-feminist men. Looking at the ideographs outlined earlier, how the manipulation of these terms is largely in the hands of these authors and manifest themselves in public policy is apparent, thus indicating a greater narrative capacity. Therefore, the contributors of these sites are placed in the position of experts when it comes to discussions of gender and do not risk public dissent. Because of their ability to be more successful in challenging many ideographs due to the control over gendered language, there is little need for these sites to seek more input or approval from outsiders.

Even if opportunities were present for pro-feminist site readers to contribute, the complexity and nuances of feminist literature may prevent any constructive discussions that pro-feminist sites would desire. In this way, pro-feminist sites may come across as being "fringe" in terms of men's movements because of a lack of dialogue. This could be costly for these sites for adopting language it's visitors may not be able to engage with.

Despite the differences in tactics, all are the result of the perception of power men hold. It is clear that anti-feminist men feel there is unwillingness on the part of society as a whole to embrace their position of men lacking power at the hands of feminists, governments, and the social elite. For pro-feminists, there is a sense of subservience within their own inability to fully adopt the feminist label and an unwillingness to incorporate men (outside of homosexual men) into victim narratives through their assumed position of power. For these reasons, negotiated mobilization appears to be the binding activist strategy which appears to encourage the tactics used on men's movement organization sites online.

Summary

A survey of the men's movements online describes organizations that find themselves within two competing factions, pro-feminist men and anti-feminist men. Of the two factions,

anti-feminist organizations tend to make up the majority of discussion found in this medium due to the greater degree of interactivity available by way of discussion forums. Despite the labels, the vast majority of organizations in this analysis claim to represent positions that emphasize parity between the sexes. Through analysis of the discourses produced by these sites, it is apparent that both pro-feminist and anti-feminist organizations desire a new conceptualization of masculinity that breaks from traditional behaviors and social expectations placed upon men. This shift largely goes unrecognized between the two large factions provided the major topics, view of feminism, masculinity, and power, that arise on the sites. However, through the intersections that form along with the emergent themes within the topics of discussion, latent networks do exist that aid in abridging the major fissures between men's movement organizations.

A major reason for the tension that exists between pro-feminists and anti-feminists is uncovered through how groups challenge ideographs. A new rhetorical strategy, negotiated mobilization, is identified here as the two factions that utilize the tactics of degree of separation, identifying who is in need of social justice, and degree of interactivity allotted to shape discourse. This strategy illustrates cautiousness on the part of movement organization sites that limit the possibility of commensurability between them. Complicating this is the degree of linguistic capital that one side (pro-feminist) enjoy over the other (anti-feminist). As a result, anti-feminist men may be more likely to turn to interactive alternative media outlets in search of a like-minded cohort due to the frustration of a perceived lack of power. Pro-feminist men, on the other hand, may under-utilize interactive alternative media forums such as these as they assume positions of authority from an academic perspective while feeling they socially represent a position that is still in the minority. In both cases, the perception of a backlash shapes the rhetorical strategy and accompanying tactics employed.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

As shown in the previous chapter, it is possible to view men's movement organizations as a cohesive network with a common goal of reinterpreting masculinity when intersections within themes emerge. Negotiated mobilization being identified as a rhetorical strategy is perhaps a reason why this is not readily recognized and undermines the impact these groups may have in advancing their causes. The strategy is a necessary step that is overlooked by Bowers et al. (2010) by being one that has members identifying a common objective and approaches to achieving that objective that are not too disruptive for members participating in a movement organization. This can be a strategy of surveying and adjusting messages in reaction to both real and perceived responses from those in other movement organizations or completely outside the movement.

If we are to believe mainstream media, web blogs, or even much of the academic literature, an incomplete and possibly misconstrued description of many men's movement organizations forms. Misrepresentation is an obstacle new social movements typically face. A nearly unshakable stigma forms for movements in various mediums that constrains and marginalizes its members. For men's movement organizations, this largely appears in the form of a revivalist or resistance movement. Due to the clear anti-feminist stance of many participants, the movement as a whole is even labeled by some as a hate movement. These descriptions are clearly found to be incorrect as one delves into the discourses produced by contributors of these sites. In fact, for the most part, the men's movement organizations in this analysis are found to be innovative movements. What makes the innovative message difficult for many to recognize is it is not carried out in an overtly unified manner.

It becomes clear that the over-arching objective of the movement organizations in this analysis is to seek social acceptance for men to think and act in ways that allow a greater sense of autonomy free of the constraining social ideals of what it is to be a man. Intersections found among the themes substantiate the unified desire to re-conceptualize and contest traditional masculinity. However, this analysis confirms the unlikeliness that there is unity among several online groups when challenging a dominant narrative. Disagreement and dissent arise within the structure of social movements regularly. The move to create an alternative discourse, in this case in response to hegemonic masculinity, indicates a multiplicity in perspective that proves amicable to conflict. Such differences in perspective are why alternative media exist in the first place. Despite the creation of blogs, message boards, newsletters, or news aggregates, there is still the accusation that contributing activists do nothing more than reinforce or advance established dominate narratives of the group of interest. This is precisely the case here.

In essence, what is unveiled in this survey of men's movement organizations is they take part in a battle of language to determine the degree of culpability men should accept in the creation of conditions which oppress the sexes. What exists, then, is a rather self-sustaining circle of conflict that utilizes gender politics and socioeconomic status (in the form of patriarchy and oligarchy) to challenge ideographs which seek to place men, as a homogeneous group, in various positions of power. This is the result of two competing perspectives. The first is through the use of language utilized in feminist literature where some members position themselves as self-reflexive members of a large dominant group of men who urge others to better their lives by exercising a similar degree of self-reflexivity and recognizing their own oppressive behaviors. Although men are typically referenced here, a feminist approach invites numerous females to participate in this discussion lending to the possibility that more collaboration between men and

women's movement organizations can occur. The second perspective are those who do not accept the language that places men as a large dominant bloc, but rather explained that Western normative gender expectations are shaped and maintained by a ruling elite, while being resistant to adopting language that is in direct conflict with capitalism. What both have in common is the approaches they take lead them to employ a rhetorical strategy, negotiated mobilization that acknowledges the friction among movement organizations and how they are perceived outside the movement in general.

Despite the linguistic differences, it is still possible to uncover threads of conciliation. These connections are not immediately apparent when first approaching men's movements. The reason for this primarily has to do with three different factors: preconceptions of how the movement organizations are presented in the mainstream media, the initial identification of two major competing factions, and the difference in tone in how topics are approached among contributors. Thus, in order to recognize that all of these movement organizations advocate a similar reconceptualization of masculinity, it had to emerge from analysis of the texts. It is less-than likely that these organizations could have been viewed in a similar manner other than that the subject matter is men. Typically, new social movement literature discovers conflicts among groups with apparent or assumed similarities. In this case, we have the opposite situation, confrontational organizations that have a common underlying goal. Even with this being the case, what is uncovered still fits in with what is known of social activism and alternative media as they pertain to new social movements.

Alternative Media

As Dagron (2004) reminds us, what we understand alternative media to be is ever evolving and a somewhat elusive concept. If we are to follow Atton's (2002a) characteristics of

absence of excessive capital, absence of professional training, and absence of a professional setting when evaluating how these movement organization sites perform as alternative media outlets, they would undoubtedly fail. The fact they exist online has made it too easy to monetize the act of publishing or the related cause, in general. The GMP and AVFM, for example, sell a great deal of their screen space to advertisers. It is common practice among many of these groups, but can aid researchers in locating the ideological position of the organization, especially in cases of political advertising. Men's News Daily, for example, had a Ron Paul advertisement included on their site which acts as an endorsement to help confirm an "outsider" feeling experienced by the contributors of the site and the anti-feminist faction of movements, in general. It is now common for corporate advertisements to appear on these sites with little apparent impact on the discourse produced. Consequently, we may need to view companies that appear on the screen not as sponsors, but merely detached advertisers.

If we consider the Atton's professional setting condition, these organization sites are narrowly considered alternative. It is possible to identify locations where these sites operate from regardless of information technology's affordance of decentralization. There are some cases where organizations have different chapters in cities around the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The NCFM and MCSR can be indicated as examples of having satellite offices. Others organizations like NOMAS and XY hold conferences and seminars on college and university campuses. Consistent with the identification of a safe distance between activists and audiences within a negotiated mobilization rhetorical strategy, these locations act as places where the message pro-feminist groups are more likely to encounter a friendly reception. This configuration of academics also calls into question the professional aspect of these sites. Contributors to pro-feminist sites are largely researchers who have published works with gender

and masculinity as the focal point. With the growth of freelance journalism, it is more difficult to categorize contributors and site administrators as anything other than professional. It is not until the comment sections of articles (when available) are considered into the overall production of this discourse can we more definitively say there is a non-professional presence in the production of movement rhetoric online.

Where more agreement rests in these sites acting as alternative outlets is in their acting as a counter-discourse to dominant messages found in mainstream media; more precisely, the *perception* of being a counter-discourse. With these movement organizations being at odds with one another when it comes to how men are presented in the news or popular culture, there are clearly different perspectives that lead to alternate readings of similar texts. For pro-feminist men's groups, mainstream media acts as a place where a continuous reproduction of a patriarchic system is conveyed which is limiting and detrimental to men and women. These messages glorify violence towards women and demand men retain power over them. Pro-feminist groups seek to illustrate the taken-for-granted perspective in how narratives are produced and shaped that favor traditional hegemonic masculinity.

The taken-for-granted perspective of gender dynamics is what fuels anti-feminists, as well. On this end of the spectrum, more emphasis is placed on the social pitfalls men face as a result of a system that places expectations of power upon them. These conditions have been covered in the previous chapter, but what makes this alternate perspective germane to this particular section is that this is far less understood to be the case. When a group is looked upon as holding a position of power over others, the conditions that negatively impact that group are typically the last to be studied or understood (McNamara, 2006). When the move is made to begin such discussions regarding men, it is met with a great deal of resistance and simply labeled

as backlash. This is the case with anti-feminist men. As a result, anti-feminist men's groups tend to lose narrative control over their message and identity by mainstream media. Small radical, fringe revivalist groups comprised of men are erroneously lumped together with those who appear in this analysis beneath a rather nebulous "MRA" label.

The problem of group conflation by mainstream media organizations may be, in part, a self-inflicted problem for anti-feminist men's groups. More unprofessional nature in discourse production by these organizations may deter any strong and unified voice. Instead, organizations are just as likely to be viewed as the works of individual leaders who gather a following. Instead of AVFM, it is the work of Paul Elam. Instead of The Spearhead, it is the work of W.F. Price. Despite a list of contributors and administrators associated with these sites, a single figure may make it easy to portray these groups as radical. Having such figures may be a necessary evil as they provide a definitive center or point of reference for followers and outsiders to refer to when discussing a particular movement organization (Bob, 2005; Russell, 2005). Even these individuals find themselves losing control of their own narrative in the bigger picture of the overall movement as they open their sites to followers to shape the discourses found within them. In such cases, these identifiable site founders act as initiators and facilitators of discourse for a rather anonymous following.

Complicating this is the use of the terms "Men's Rights Activists" or "Men Going Their Own Way" and even a name such as Angry Harry. Use of these terms incites a sense of antagonism or detachment from the way we understand the world. It is a problem that is acknowledged by many within these groups, but the autonomous way in which they exist makes it unlikely they can agree on a more accurate collective identity. This specifies the negotiated mobilization strategy where the movements are in the process of "feeling out" their identity to us

prohibiting an effective way of combating the image. Therefore, when a mainstream news outlet inaccurately reports on a "men's movement", it is easily positioned as the word of respected professional reporters versus those of a few "loose cannons".

Misrepresentations aside, the way men's movement organizations operate alternative media outlets, collectively, indicate a constant state of conflict with the social constructs under which we live. Agreement exists on our ability to alter those constructs, and that they are not just to be accepted as a simple state of nature. Where the difference does exist is in the understanding of what type of systematic oppression we are experiencing. Depending on whether the problem is viewed as gender politics or socioeconomics seems to indicate the level in which movement organization identifiers participate in discourse construction related to masculinity. In a sense, the intersections that are found to exist between movement organizations suggest these different approaches act as a way to "fill in the gaps" of mainstream or commercial media (Atton, 2002a; Kenix, 2009). When news narratives appear involving men and masculinity, these sites can offer readers different ways of understanding how social norms are reinforced by news outlets. Seeing that all the sites move in a similar direction to re-conceptualize masculinity, movement organizations form a network. However, for this to be understood as being the case, it would require the reader to take time for recognize the latent links within and between sites. This is not likely, unfortunately, if sites or blogs are frequented only by like-minded individuals who view information from a particular site as being more trustworthy than others, as Kaye (2005) suggests. The negotiated mobilization strategy that is implemented to recognize and settle such differences is required before another type of strategy, solidification, is to take hold.

Some organizations are able to utilize alternative media to position themselves as an official movement discourse through self-produced video and podcasts. MCSR has produced a

series for YouTube called, Counter Stories, which highlights ways to "challenge masculinity". The GMP and ManKind Project likewise have YouTube channels that cover many of the topics found on their respective sites. Perhaps not so ironically, the number of subscribers to these sites also mirror the quantity of text retrieved from them, as both The GMP and ManKind Project have well over one thousand subscribers and MCSR receiving less than two hundred. As for podcasts, only AVFM seems to have found any type of success in this medium with three hundred episodes at over an hour-and-a-half in length. Additionally, frequent contributor/poster, Barbarossaaaa, has their own podcast titled, *Barbarossaaaa's Men Going Their Own Way Podcast* that has only produced twenty-two episodes. Again, this disparity in quantity of episodes indicates which organization carries the more dominant voice and more legitimacy to the feeling that the MGTOW faction of these movements acts as a more radical offshoot.

It is important to point out this evolution in the use of alternative media among these groups because it may be indicative of the level of self-efficacy that these organizations have that they have power within the movement to take on such projects. With rather few movement organizations taking part in newer mediums, there seems to be a hesitancy to take the next step. This may be a symptom of the negotiated mobilization strategy that prevents some participants to commit to such projects. The absence of many of these movement organizations from podcasts and a social network such as YouTube, could have some implications on the next section, networked activism.

Networked Activism

By shifting to the adoption of more recently developed mediums such as social media and podcasts, it would seem that men's movements can be over-simplified to only a few organizations. To do this would ignore both the larger rhetorical movement and the narratives

that lead the individual organizations to launch YouTube channels or Podcasts. Providing a conceptual "map" for new social movements is a difficult task given that they tend to focus on meaning making against a dominant narrative (McGee, 1980; Touraine, 1977) and are very decentralized (Pezullo, 2003). As is the case among men's movements, there is little hierarchical organization structure overlooking the rhetorical message of the movement as a whole. This does not necessarily mean a message cannot be similar between organizations, but they do not "fit" in a way that makes them obligated to one another. Consequently, it may be best to think of these movement organizations in terms of actor network theory.

In actor network theory, numerous nodes or centers exist that link together, but in a way where each acts in an autonomous manner. Some groups within a movement are more influential than others in terms of quantity of content. If we are to consider the fifteen sites that produced the texts for this analysis, AVFM, the GMP, and The Spearhead act as the dominant centers for shaping movement discourse and grabbing attention. In fact, since these texts were collected, The Spearhead site has been taken over and renamed "We Hunted the Mammoth" by a women's group who uses excerpts from past Spearhead articles to make the contributors appear as misogynists. This repurposing of the site indicates the discourses produced by some of these groups garner enough attention where others act as a response to them. Furthermore, the GMP has chosen to archive some of the articles from The Spearhead on their site. This move shows there is a certain level of awareness among the actors and they are in a state of flux where the narratives of one actor get absorbed by another. This may also imply some degree of a power structure or hierarchy between groups if one site deems another influential enough to take on its work. To understand this as being the norm of the larger movement, however, is misleading. True to a negotiated mobilization strategy, there is still the active search for a unified voice.

Recall from chapter four that the GMP was referred to as a "fake men's site," but has now taken on the texts of The Spearhead, a site some women felt needed to be removed for perceived misogynist messages. This state of flux fits actor network theory with the current rhetorical strategy that many men's movement organizations are currently in. As a movement organization finds itselve in the stage of negotiated mobilization, we can expect it to position and reposition within a network's discursive landscape. At this point, networks may be in their most active state.

A question remains regarding who the decision makers are in creating such a dynamic network. The importance of having identifiable leaders within these organizations is that those who ultimately allow for collaboration between them and recognize the congruency of the messages. As mentioned, some latent linking is evident in cases of Paul Elam of AVFM and Angry Harry or W.F. Price from The Spearhead and administrators from the GMP. These examples are atypical among these movements, however, and does not move these organizations beyond the managed spectatorship that Best (2005) suggests generally results on Internet forums. There is only the potential for narratives buttressing one another rather than working with each other in involving themselves in the democratic process. This support is not without benefit as it is part of the identification process that is an essential part of negotiated mobilization. For this process to really take hold, however, it is up to the contributors and posters to recognize some of the congruencies identified by some site administrators and create abridging dialogues to pull matching perspectives together.

What men's movement organizations lack is a general connectivity between them that result in a "do it yourself" politics that Ruiz (2005) describes. Individuals come onto these sites and contribute in ways that make the narratives regarding masculinity a conglomerate of issues

that that require us to organize and understand. Much like the globalization movement, Best (2005) discusses, the diversity of issues makes the unifying scope of the movement difficult for participants to define. Given that the texts here were collected only over the course of three months, it is difficult to say whether this is a result of a transient member base; and, is that the construction of a men's movement has little to show by way of a material world impact due to lack of activities or events. Negotiated mobilization may prevent such events due to the degree of anticipated acceptance. This is not to say nothing exists. There are cases of conferences and gatherings such as Walk a Mile In her Shoes which can be pointed to. However, even Walk a Mile In her Shoes has sympathetic men to ensure compliance and prevent disruptive dissent of the event.

How these events operate in terms of a men's movement organization is slightly different from others movement organizations. For instance, when Atkinson and Dougherty (2006) explain how anti-war protesters unite with an understood binding cause that acts as an umbrella topic, they find that how individuals interpret or understand individual issues related to that topic become divisive. Men's movement organizations work in the opposite way online. What happens here is that individuals identify various issues: rape, violence against women, father's rights, male suicide rates, representation of men in popular culture, or male disposability, and fail to recognize that all perspectives related to these topics culminate in a discussion and critique of hegemonic masculinity. In short, this is nonsummativity (Stewart, Smith, and Denton Jr., 2007) at work in men's movement organizations. The ideological breaks that exist among the participants make it nearly impossible for them to operate as a unified movement. This is where the negotiated mobilization strategy is recognized.

Groups often exist to address a topic with competing views on the issues that relate to it, leaving the factions unwilling to negotiate on an overarching cause. When Pickard (2006) includes tyranny of ideology as a concern regarding network construction, it can easily be applied to men's movement organizations in relation to the ways feminism, capitalism, and socialism divide them. The obstinacy on the part of different group members to mollify their positions in regard to these constructs prohibits their ability to negotiate between them. Members fully embrace or fully reject feminism as a platform, regardless of the stated end. Members position themselves as distinctly being capitalists over socialists without (for the most part, an example was provided to the contrary) allowing for the possibility of there being a benefit for adopting some socialist principles. It is the fear of being labeled that result in the adoption of the negotiated mobilization strategy. To some, being a feminist is radical. To others, being labeled a feminist is desirable or expected. Where this impacts on the discourse is the lack of desire for anyone to deviate from an established position for fear of being eschewed. In return, the recognition that there are potentially binding narratives is lost.

What results then are a series of actors, or nodes, existing within two different spheres of pro and anti-feminism that unwittingly take part in a similar grand discourse of masculinity. Within each sphere exist the connecting themes related to issues that loosely bind them. Not all actors take part in discourse construction with the same impact or intensity, nor do any truly act as a "hub" for information. When intersections in discourse occur between spheres, they act as potential avenues of conciliation. However, these avenues are met with resistance by the ideographs that create the division of spheres. In the case of men's movements related to the topic of masculinity, the tactics individual actors utilize related to the rhetorical strategy of negotiated mobilization seems dependent upon which sphere those actors rest.

In short, this analysis of men's movement organizations illustrates how we can apply past conceptualizations of movement networks to these groups. It is clear that they act as individual actors just short of a free scale network Barabasi (2009) describes because of the absence of solid identifiable links. The links between these actors are latent and require an emergent discourse to recognize (Altheide, 1996; Mayring, 2000). Despite the relatively unattached and autonomous state of these actors, they are not without boundaries as a rhizome metaphor may suggest (Eriksson, 2005). As understood here, the unifying narrative of masculinity acts as a constraining agent for these movement organizations online.

Beyond Men's Movements

Despite the unique nature of men's movement organizations as a result of the assumed positions of power held by the activists within them, they are not peculiar in their rhetorical tendencies and strategies in relation to other new social movements. The difficulties that movements may encounter in identity construction, realizing a common objective, or participating in various forms of activism can be easily identified in other movements outside of those focusing on men. A strategy such as negotiated mobilization, where movements are collectively trying to "figure things out," is rather common among those that find themselves in conflict with larger narratives and diversity in membership with different ideas on how those narratives are to be challenged. Parallels can be found looking at movements related to Humanism, Free and Open Source Software (FOSSM), the LBGT society, and African-American Civil Rights.

Although it may seem obvious that a movement is comprised of like-minded individuals who should be involved and in what capacity is frequently in question. Humanist movements, for example, find internal conflicts with the inclusion secular and, ironically given this analysis,

feminist organizations. LBGT organizations debate self-imposed labels that reinforce heteronormative structures which place them in positions of "outsiders." Despite the concern, LGBT movements are now typically referred to as LGBTQ movements reflecting the decision to expand the base they represent based on how one chooses to identify him or herself and expand the intersections within the movement. In these two cases, the concern of the movement organizations rests in how the movement feels they are generally perceived. For humanists' organizations, the question is how aggressively the philosophy of humanism clashes with various religions and places greater value on the perspectives of some groups over others. Adhering to the philosophies of new groups introduced into the larger movement complicates its make-up and, in the opinion of many, threatens to undermine the overall goals of the movement. For LGBT movements, a balance is necessary to convince the larger public of the normalization of the lifestyle while still acknowledging the differences among members.

These two examples of issues related to identity begin to merge with others pertaining to objectives and tactics. Who makes up a movement organization may be as telling of their goals as much as what they claim their objectives to be. However, an apparently homogeneous group may still find themselves in a state of conflict regardless of the assumption of a common goal. The African-American civil rights movement of the mid twentieth century acts as an example of this. For many outside the movement, the civil rights movement was simply about achieving "equality" from access to education to voting rights. The assumption is that this meant the disintegration of segregated systems. However, many African-Americans of the time took a position opposing integration in fear of falling victim to losing jobs and business to white interests. The larger issue, as far as the movement as a whole is concerned, is the disagreement in how to achieve equality. One of the greatest threats to the overall success of the civil rights

movement was the inability among organizations to agree upon the tactics that were to be used to push their agenda. Some organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People felt that the legal system was the best route. Others like the Student Nonviolence Coordinating Committee or Congress of Racial Equality chose tactics like "freedom rides" to test integration laws. Central to the debate regarding the different tactics is the speed in which they are viewed to work (many feeling the court system is too slow) and concern by some over the perception of the movement being too violent. It may not be clear if one tactic enjoyed more success over another, but the larger point here is such differences act as obstacles and give pause to the overarching movement as they come to evaluate their positions and/or tactics. This is not necessarily negative for social movements.

The molding of a message or the decision to participate in networked social activism needs to be recognized as the primary strength of a negotiated mobilization strategy. When applied within men's movements, negotiated mobilization is generally positioned here as a strategy that hinders activism rather than aiding it due to a fear of "giving in" to a competing narrative and appearing radical or hateful in fear of backlash. This is a characteristic of the strategy, however, that is ultimately beneficial for movement organizations. By taking the opportunity and time to recognize the latent links that potentially exist between movement organizations and refine the overall message movement's produce, negotiated mobilization acts as a precursor to the next natural strategy of solidification.

The FOSSM provides an example of how two competing factions within a movement reconcile their differences due to their recognition of a mutual goal and concern through negotiated mobilization. The movement is comprised of two general competing approaches to software development: an ethical view supported by free software movement advocates that the

drive for profit should be removed from software development, and a pragmatic approach advocated by the open software movement where the motive for profit can benefit development so long as coding systems are made available to improve upon. The FOSSM acronym alone illustrates how the groups have come to work together, but more importantly the overarching concern that closed software programming systems are detrimental to technological advancements and the ability for many to have access to those advancements. The recognition of this problem has created an environment allowing for collaboration on projects between the groups.

The negotiated mobilization rhetoric that takes place within and between social movement organizations can be every bit as messy and unsettling as taking part in the real world activism that we tend to see in the form of rallies or image events. Despite the potential existing for the strategy to slow down the overall growth or activity of a movement, it is necessary for some to find the right message and allow for members to act. After a long struggle for marriage equality, the LBGT community began to recognize widespread support through a bandwagon effect that was highly visible on social media platforms. As it became more acceptable to embrace the movement's cause, a greater sense of comfort for many in expressing their support for marriage equality emerged. This is the type of affordance that many men's movement organizations are possibly waiting to recognize and must utilize their online platforms to refine their message in the meantime.

Limitations and Future Research

Whenever research depends on the Internet for its text, it is likely to be met with some complication. The Internet and the individual sites are moving targets. What was once available to readers and researchers may not be the next. As site administrator's work to add content or

features to his or her organization sites, the way the site operates may be entirely different than at the moment the text was collected. When discussing the texts from the sites for this analysis it must be emphasized that these are the discussions and operating procedures that the chosen sites took part in at that time. Fortunately, only one site, The Spearhead, apparently had their domain expire. Where this interferes with this analysis is that a search for the texts that appeared on The Spearhead will now provide extremely divergent readings of the material. As mentioned, the GMP has archived some of the entire articles from The Spearhead while the site that took over, We Hunted the Mammoth, mainly provides excerpts from the articles or posts and create new narratives around those excerpts.

The Spearhead case illustrates another potential limitation with qualitative studies such as this, polysemy in the readings of the text. The fact that I chose this project indicates I place myself as a stakeholder in the issue at hand. After reading and referencing new social movement literature, I began to question whether the apparent incompatibility of different men's movements necessarily prohibited them from network formation. It could be argued that this led me to find or create intersections from the themes. In other words, I found what I wanted. This is not the case; however, as the intersections could not have been discovered until the themes emerged and are rather unpredictable. The surprisingly complex way the topics are discussed offered greater insight into the thinking of organization members and actually prevented over-simplistic readings of the positions held within the movements, such as discussions related to Marxism and gender.

As discussions of Marxism, socialism, and capitalism arise, they act as reminders of the very Western nature of the texts. With these sites operating out of the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia, little is said of masculinity as it pertains to other parts of the

world. With this biases that largely eliminate conditions related to race, ethnicity, or religion, arise. Very seldom throughout this analysis was the intersection of race and gender recognized. This is likely a function of a dearth of racial minority contributors to these sites. Despite the growing amount of literature focusing on masculinity and ethnic contexts, the issues germane to that area of interest are avoided across the sites researched here.

The sites that are referenced in this analysis pose some limitations by their selection. A couple concerns could impact the findings. First, asymmetry in the anti-feminist and pro-feminist sites; this analysis favored texts by anti-feminist organizations. This is perhaps results from the Internet being viewed as a safe haven for these types of sites to thrive. Because little else is done by way of actual material world activism, these sites offer ways to individually and anonymously voice their opinions. Second is the fact that this is far from an exhaustive sample. Given the way these sites were selected, there was less likely a chance that truly radical sites would have been selected, and with the Internet being as expansive as it is, they surely exist. Here the focus is on the more popular sites with greater traffic. There may be a whole discussion continuing online about masculinity and gender that exists on the fringes of these movements which does not resemble what was extracted here.

A final limitation pertains to the availability and use of language in identifying the overall terrain of the network of men's movement organizations. In this analysis, it was necessary to resort to a simple pro-feminist/anti-feminist dichotomy. Pro-feminists embrace the label they are provided here. They openly refer to themselves by that name. Anti-feminists, on the other hand, do not. I proceeded with this label only to provide an easy point of reference. Overall, those movements that are anti-feminist may not care for such a distinction due to their organizations' being positioned in respect to feminism as being the referent. These labels persist despite the fact

that all of these men's movement organizations move in the same general direction in regard to masculinity. Where this analysis falters is in not being able to identify inclusive language for the purpose of labeling the movements in such a way that does not hold the values of one faction over those of the other. This is a similar problem that I suggest exists within and between these men's movements. However, if not for this limitation, it may not have been possible for negotiated mobilization to be identified as a strategy since it primarily references the ways in which movements navigate such obstacles while being cognizant of the ways which they are perceived.

As mentioned in the first chapter, the role of social media as a viable alternative media outlet for social movement organization network construction is still a point of contention. The ability to easily broadcast messages provide movement organizations a way to easily reach a broad audience and garner some degree of support for their cause(s) (David, 2013). However, the messages that are received and even possibly shared by those on social media does little to guarantee any meaningful degree of identification with or commitment to the movement organization (Petray, 2011). In fact, this lack of connection between the passive activist on social media and the movement organization may have a detrimental effect on that organization as the autonomy or individualism of the activist is valued above the goals of the organization (Fenton & Barassi, 2011). If this analysis is to carry on into the realm of social media, the degree of impact of the social media participant will need to be established.

When looking towards future research, there are two aspects of this analysis that must be considered. The first is the evolution of men's movement organizations. Since these texts were collected, the use of social media has dramatically increased. This increase is in reference to the number of social media users and social media platforms available to users. Many of the

organizations included in this analysis have taken their causes to social media, Facebook being the most prominent. This move offers researchers a new way to understand how individuals contribute to the discourses found within these movements and measures the degree in which specific viewpoints are embraced through “liking” or “sharing” of posts.

What may be more important to understand is the difference that may be found in the type of posters who contribute between a website and a social media page. When a poster contributes to one of the sites in this analysis, they actively seek out that site, register to it, and take part in the discussion, recognizing that moderators review what they have to say before their contribution becomes public. Given this process, it can safely be assumed the poster is more vested in the movement and the position taken by that particular organization within the overall movement. This is in contrast to social media movement participation. On social media platforms, by choosing to follow a movement organization, the discourse of that movement organization finds the user. There is no active search for information nor is there any obstacle to add to the discourse by way of opinion. In this way, a passive observer is indistinguishable from a vested participant. In short, this is a more “lazy” form of participation.

At first read, this move to social media may indicate a negotiated mobilization strategy is not as salient to new social movements with the ease of access to movement organizations. However, a quick review of some men’s movement pages on social media reveals that a large number of the participants utilize phony accounts and pseudonyms to conceal their identity. This indicates that there is still apprehension that comes with identifying with some of these movements despite the appearance of increased participation. Hence, there are still problems with identity formation with these movements that is the result of the friction found in gender

politics between issues and topics related to masculinity, feminism, and equality that prevents participants from finding common ground and places them in conflict with one another.

Negotiated mobilization is a strategy where such conflicts are addressed, and is the second important consideration for future research. Specifically, how negotiated mobilization is a strategy utilized in other movements. It is important to remember that negotiated mobilization is partially borne out of the obsequiousness theme from the first research question. With this in mind, we can begin to observe how individuals become participants of a movement not for the purpose of solidification, but for the purpose of appearing progressive or open-minded. An example of this could be the marriage equality movement where social media users altered their profile pictures to show support for the movement. This is not to say these users were not genuine in their desire for marriage equality, but the question here is about motive for expressing it. It is a similar question that anti-feminists have of pro-feminists in this analysis. Those who opposed marriage equality in favor of a more traditional form of marriage may not have been as vocal for fear of being "shouted down" and labeled as social anachronisms. One side proceeds with a message because it may prove to be personal while others choose not to due to feared repercussions. How movements position and form their messages to the point of being confident in actively advocating them in unison is at the heart of negotiated mobilization. Discovering why and to what extent this happens in other movements is necessary for researchers to fully understand how social activism takes hold and achieves various levels of success.

And that is what we are witnessing with men's movement organizations, groups that have different perceived levels of success in respect to one another. So when we witness Walk a Mile in Her Shoes events that have become increasingly popular in North America, it is important to remember they are only representing a part of a larger movement that seeks to challenge

hegemonic masculine norms. The tension that is typically reported at these events is found to be between the participating men who feel free to carry on with the spectacle and those who feel powerless in suggesting the spectacle is misguided. This is a tension that will likely remain until both sides realize they are more alike than they care to admit.

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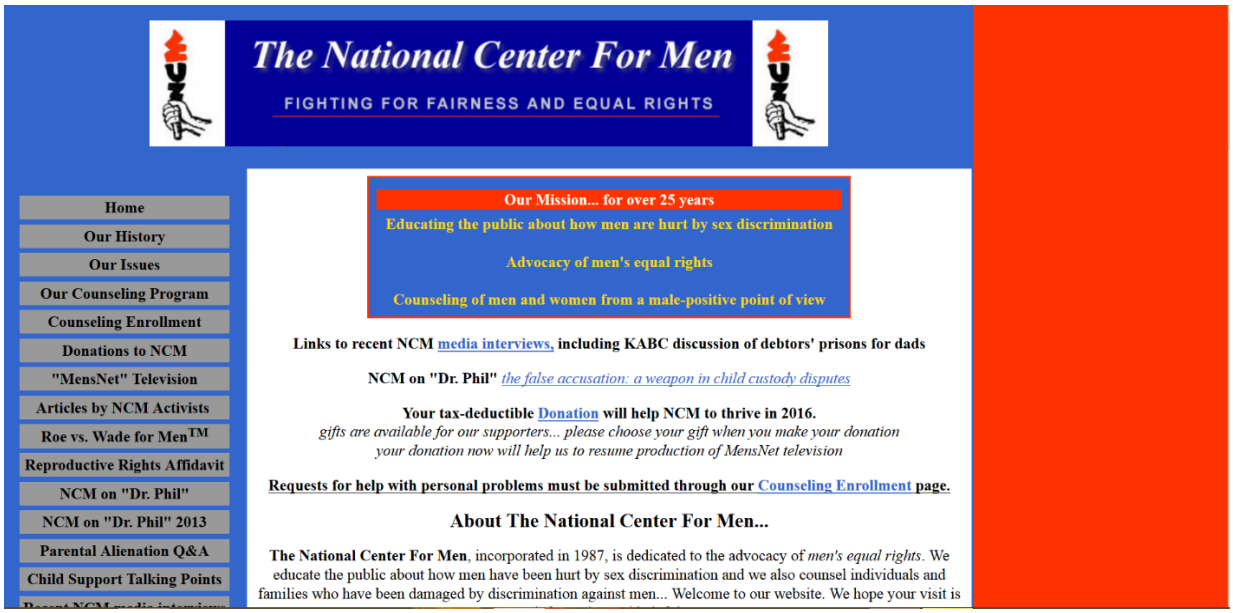
APPENDIX A: FIGURES

Figure: 1



Source: http://www.nationalcenterformen.org/

Figure: 2

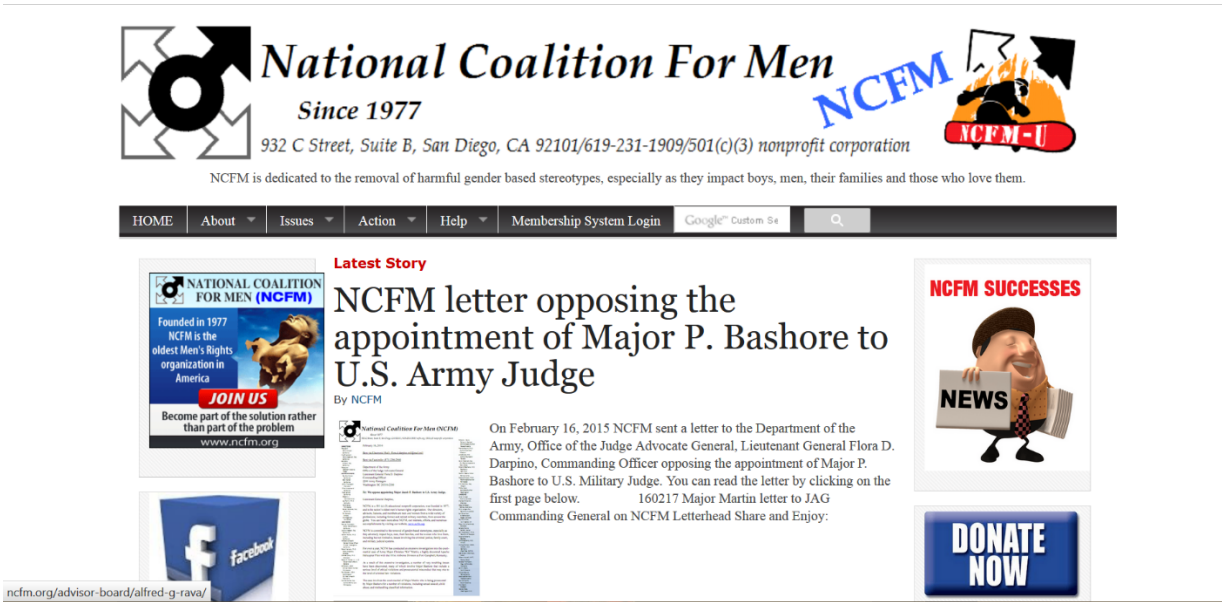


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Figure: 3

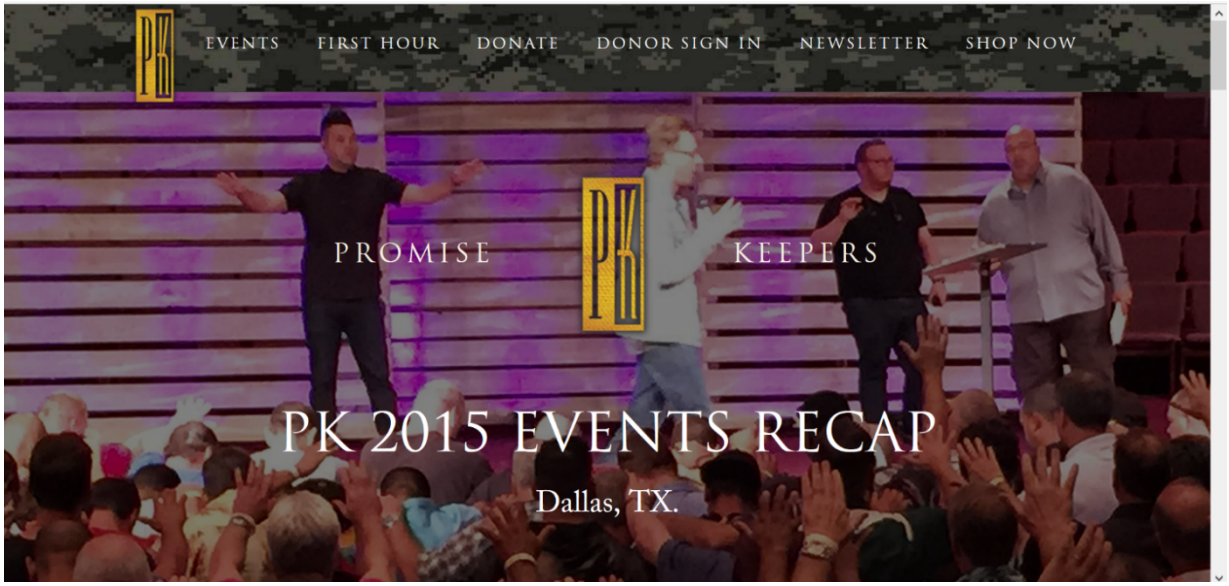

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Figure: 4

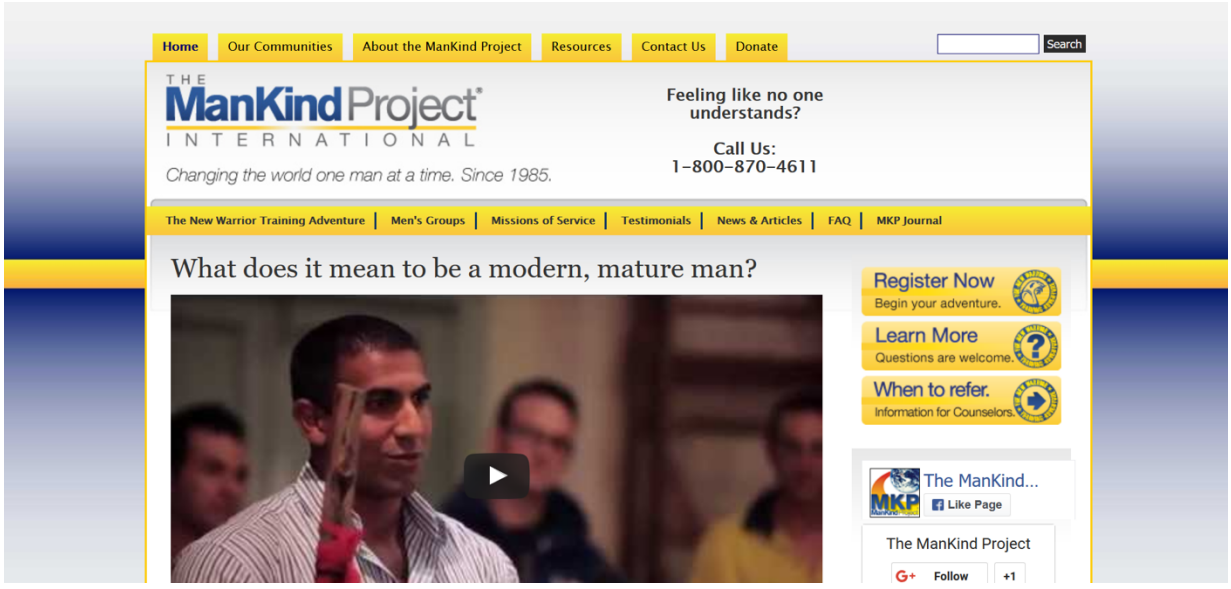

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Figure: 5

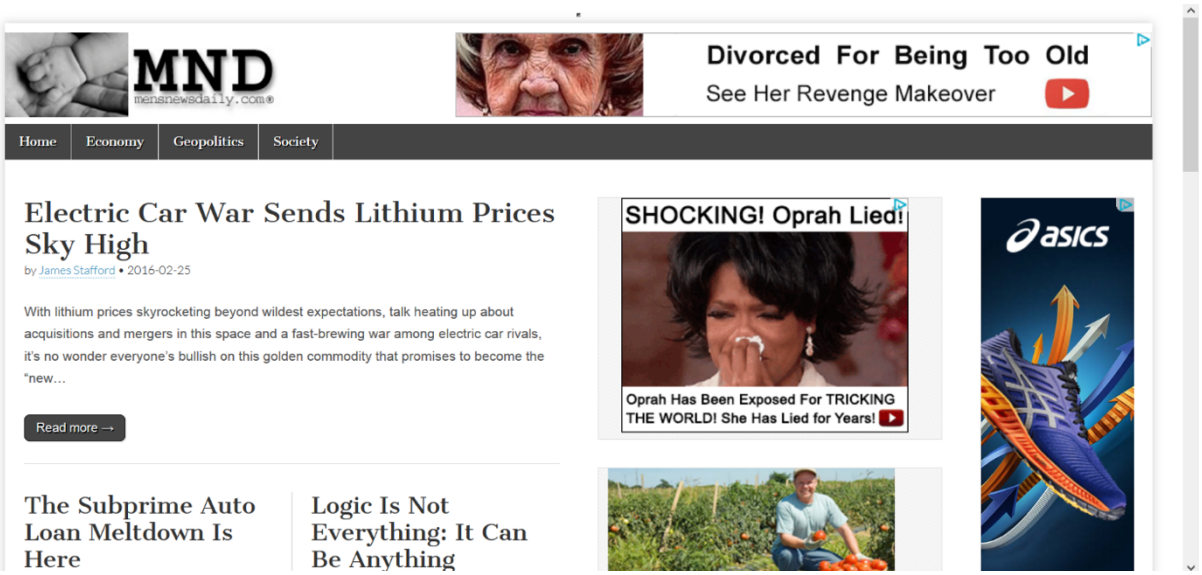

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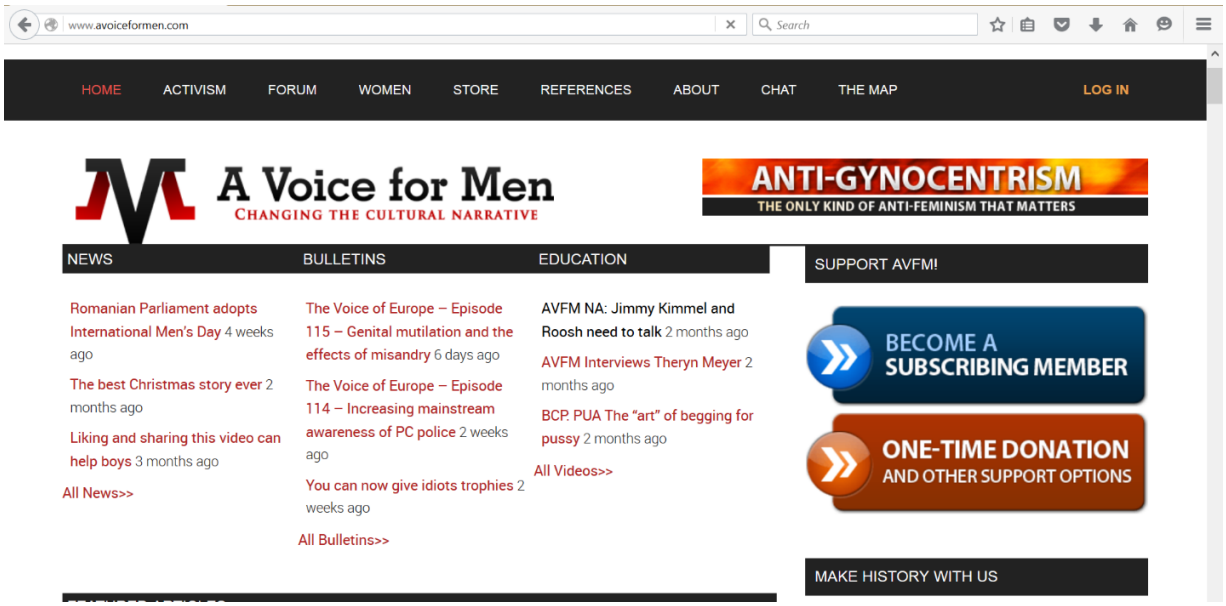
Figure: 6



Source: http://www.avoiceformen.com/

Figure: 7

Source: http://goodmenproject.com/

Figure: 8

Source: http://www.angryharry.com/

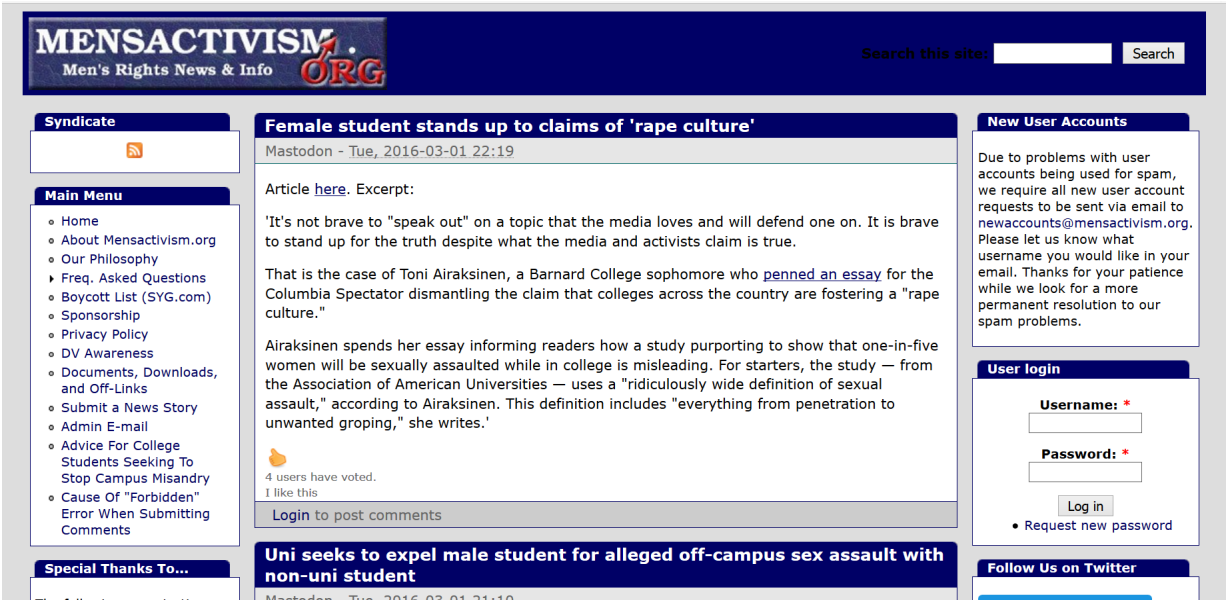
Figure: 9

Source: http://mensrightsboard.blogspot.com/

Figure: 10

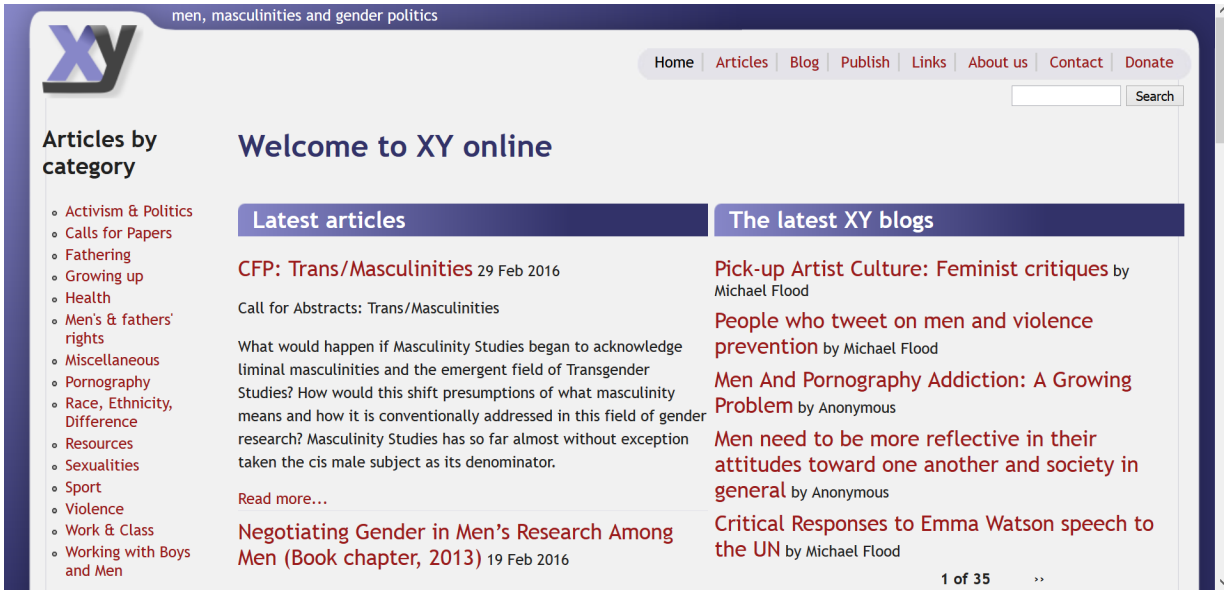
Source: http://standyourground.com/forums/index.php

Figure: 11



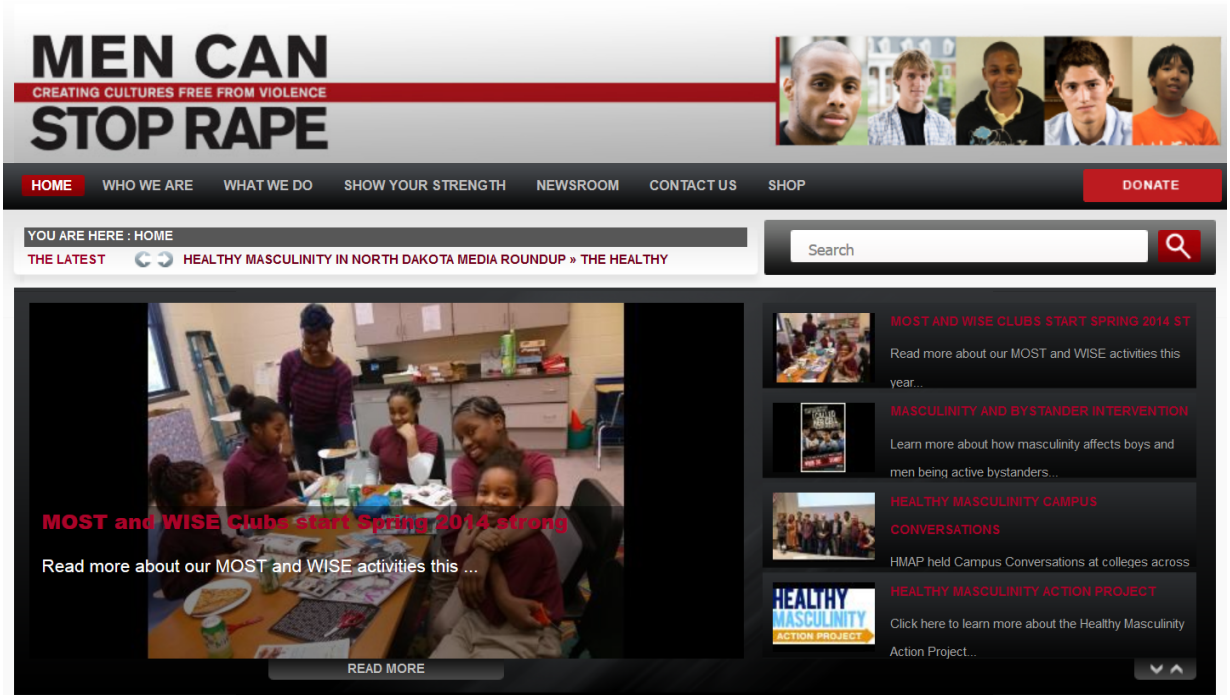
Source: http://news.mensactivism.org/

Figure: 12



Source: http://www.xyonline.net/

Figure: 13

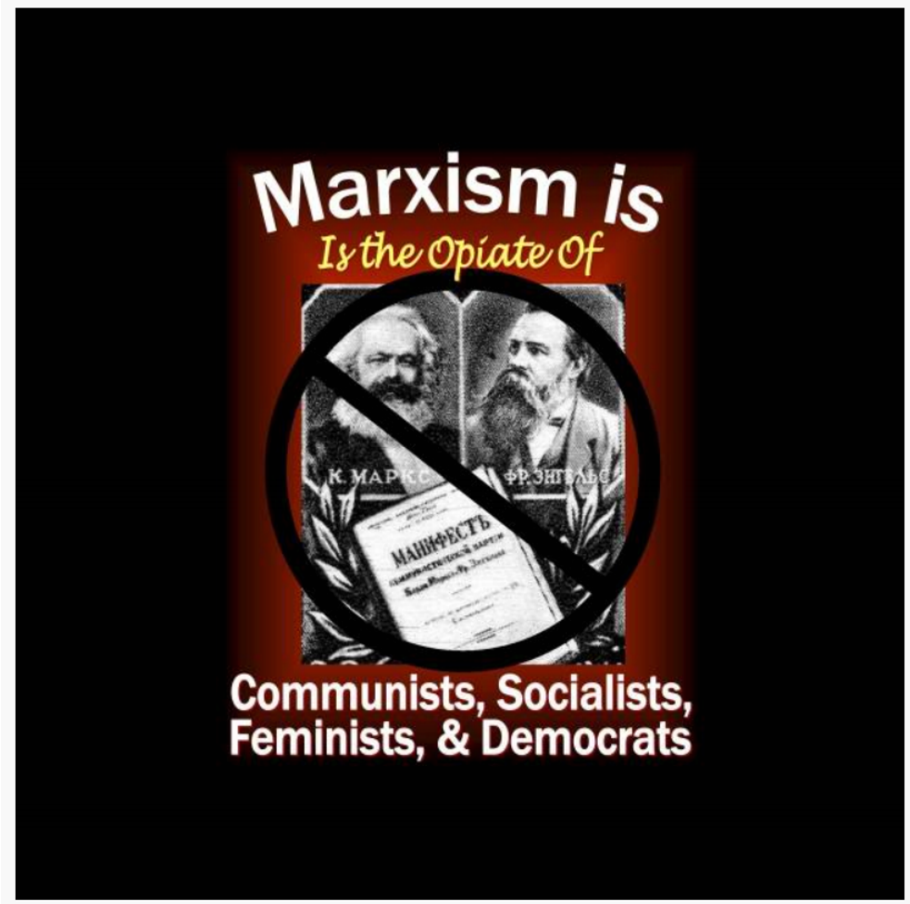


Source: http://www.mencanstoprape.org/

Figure: 14

Source: http://nomas.org/

Figure: 15



Source. http://standyourground.com/forums/index.php?topic=18006.0

Figure: 16

Source: http://www.mencanstoprape.org/Table/Handouts/

Figure: 17

WHAT YOUNG MEN CAN DO

TO PREVENT BULLYING & SEXUAL HARASSMENT

You might think you can't help prevent bullying and sexual harassment. Not true.

Read the list below to learn what you and your friends can do every day. It can be something small or large. Whatever you do, you're making a difference. **Don't stand on the sidelines!**

BE BOLD

Understand how you can help
Helping to prevent bullying and harassment is about small steps. You don't have to move a mountain. Decide what kinds of actions feel safe. Everyone taking small steps adds up to big steps.

Decide who you want to be
Consider whether messages like "stop acting like a little girl" lead young men to prove they *aren't* acting like a girl by bullying and harassing. Choose what kind of young man you want to be. We need positive role models like you.

Talk it over
Don't wait to deal with the problem after it's occurred. If you're troubled by bullying and harassment and want to do something about it, talk to a friend or a trusted adult. Two heads are better than one.

Get a different perspective
Ask young women how bullying and harassment affects their daily lives. Listen and learn from them about their experiences. Not only will they help you make better choices about your own behavior, they'll help you be more convincing when you're persuading your friends not to bullying and harass.

Show your strength
Don't bully or harass anyone. Make a pledge to be a young man whose strength is used for respect.

Learn more about [YMOST] Young Men of Strength at www.MenCanStopRape.org

BE STRONG

Ask guys
Ask other young men if they're bothered by bullying and harassment. You might think you're the only one, but it's more likely that plenty of other young men feel the same way you do.

Be aware of pop culture
We are surrounded daily by TV shows, music, magazines, video games, and movies that communicate messages about bullying, and harassment. Don't let images in popular culture decide your behavior.

TAKE ACTION!

Choose words carefully
When you use words to bully or harass someone, you support the belief that they are less than fully human. It is easier to ignore someone's well-being when they are seen as inferior. Choose language that respects people.

Speak out
Start with friends. Maybe you say you don't find it funny when a friend is making fun of someone. Maybe you say you don't like some disrespectful language a friend used. Speaking out to people you know will be good practice for speaking out to others you don't know as well.

Get involved!
Get involved in student government and become a spokesperson for anti-bullying and harassment at your school. Maybe there are already student groups that would care about preventing these behaviors. If not, start one.

Source: http://www.mencanstoprape.org/Handouts/what-young-men-can-do.html

Figure: 18

Source: http://www.mencanstoprape.org/Our-Partners/

Figure: 19

Source: http://www.avoiceformen.com/misandry/chivalry/the-failed-manhood-of-white-knights/

Figure: 20

MEN CAN STOP RAPE

CREATING CULTURES FREE FROM VIOLENCE

Male Survivors

INFORMATION SHEET

www.MenCanStopRape.org

Men Who Have Been Sexually Assaulted

Rape is a men's issue for many reasons. For one, we don't often talk about the fact that men are sexually assaulted. We need to start recognizing the presence of male survivors and acknowledging their unique experience.

The following questions and answers can help us all learn about male survivors so that we stop treating them as invisible and start helping them heal:

How often are men sexually assaulted?

While the numbers vary from study to study, most research suggests that **10 - 20%** of males will be sexually violated at some point in their lifetimes. That translates into tens of thousands of boys and men assaulted each year alongside hundreds of thousands of girls and women.

If there are so many male survivors, why don't I know any?

Like female survivors, most male survivors never report being assaulted. Perhaps worst of all, men fear being blamed for the assault because they were not "man enough" to protect themselves in the face of an attack.

Can a woman sexually assault a man?

Yes, but it's not nearly as common as male-on-male assault. A recent study shows that more than 86% of male survivors are sexually abused by another male. That is not to say, however, that we should overlook boys or men who are victimized by females. It may be tempting to dismiss such experiences as wanted sexual initiation (especially in the case of an older female assaulting a younger male), but the reality is that the impact of female-on-male assault can be just as damaging.

Don't only men in prison get raped?

While prison rape is a serious problem and a serious crime, many male survivors are assaulted in **everyday** environments often by **people they know** - friends, teammates, relatives, teachers, clergy, bosses, partners. As with female survivors, men are also sometimes raped by strangers. These situations tend to be more violent and more often involve a group of attackers rather than a single attacker.

How does rape affect men differently from women?

Rape affects men in many ways similar to women. Anxiety, anger, sadness, confusion, fear, numbness, self-blame, helplessness, hopelessness, suicidal feelings and shame are common reactions of both male and female survivors.

In some ways, though, men react uniquely to being sexually assaulted. Immediately after an assault, men may show more **hostility and aggression** rather than tearfulness and fear. Over time, they may also question their sexual identity, act out in a sexually aggressive manner, and even downplay the impact of the assault. **(Flip over page for more questions.)**

To learn how men can stop rape, go to www.MenCanStopRape.org
Learn more about our youth development programs, public education materials, and trainings for professionals.

Source: http://www.mencanstoprape.org/Handouts/male-survivors.html

Figure: 21

MEN CAN STOP RAPE

CREATING CULTURES FREE FROM VIOLENCE

Defining the Rules

INFORMATION SHEET

www.MenCanStopRape.org

Making Clear the **Difference** Between **Sex** & **Rape**

What would it be like to play football, soccer, basketball, golf, tennis, or any other sport if the rules weren't clearly defined? Wouldn't there be constant disputes, arguments, and conflicts?

It's sort of like that when it comes to **sexual violence**. We're surrounded daily by TV shows, music, magazines, video games, and movies that blur the lines between sex and rape, and so we all need some clear and shared understandings of the differences.

These aren't all the rules, but here are some to help you start drawing the lines between SEX and RAPE.

#1: Know the legal definition of RAPE.
Although there are many different definitions, often varying from state to state, most legal systems define **rape** as **any form of penetration (oral, anal, or vaginal) without consent** and **by force or threat of force.**

#2: Look BEYOND the legal definition.
While the legal definition clarifies rape in a court of law, it does not address **sexual violence**, which can be **physical** (grabbing, non-consensual touching), **emotional** (mind games), or **verbal** (verbal pressure).

#3: Know the legal definition of CONSENT.
Most legal systems define consent as **explicit assent** to a particular sexual act. However, an ***assumption*** of consent is **not enough.**

#4: Look BEYOND the legal definition.
The legal definition of consent doesn't capture what good sex is all about: mutual pleasure and enthusiasm. Better communication - **listening, stating desires clearly, and asking when a situation is unclear** - will ensure safe and healthy sex for everyone.

#5: Be clear about BODY LANGUAGE.
Does kissing mean that a person wants to have sex? How do you know? **Ask before you act.**

#6: Accept when consent is WITHDRAWN.
Even after a person has given their consent, that person can withdraw it **at any time**. Sex and sexual situations are sometimes confusing and anxiety-provoking. We all deserve the right to change our minds.

#7: Watch ALCOHOL and DRUG intake.
An incapacitated person (drunk, passed out, on drugs) cannot legally give consent. If a person is drunk and incapable of consenting with full awareness, **wait** until you both are in a state of mind to enthusiastically and clearly say yes.

#8: Understand the CONSEQUENCES.
The aftermath of rape starts with the survivor and expands outward, affecting more and more people. Common symptoms include sleeplessness, nightmares, loss of appetite, and an inability to concentrate. Noticing these symptoms in the survivor will in turn affect friends, relatives, co-workers, and others.

To learn how men can stop rape, go to www.MenCanStopRape.org
Learn more about our youth development programs, public education materials, and trainings for professionals.

Source: http://www.mencanstoprape.org/Handouts/defining-the-rules-between-sex-and-rape.html

APPENDIX B: TABLE

Table 1

Discussion of Themes by Movement Organization

	Movment Organization														
Theme	PK	MKP	SYG	NCenFM	AH	MensAct	MND	NCoalFM	MRB	The Spear	AVFM	GMP	NOMAS	XY	MCSR
View of Feminism (Topic)															
Damsels (and men)in Distress									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓
Pedantic Thugs			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
No More Mr. Tough Guy			✓		✓	✓				✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collateral Damage		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓			
Home-Wrecking Socialists			✓			✓	✓			✓✓	✓✓				
Masculinity (Topic)															
Unmanly Men	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓
The Blame Game	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Unmanly Ridicule		✓				✓				✓	✓	✓✓			
New World Men		✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓		✓
Disposability			✓		✓✓	✓		✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓		✓	
Power (Topic)															
What Patriarchy?		✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓			
Controlling the Courts			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	
Shady Characters		✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓
Queens of the Castle			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓✓	✓	✓			
Scetchy Schools						✓					✓	✓			

Note. Abbreviations for movement organization sites are as followed; PK = Promise Keepers, MKP = ManKind Project, SYG = Standyourground.com, NCenFM = National Center for Men AH = Angry Harry, MensAct = Mensactivism.org, MND = Men's News Daily, NCoalFM = National Coalition for Men, MRB = Men's Rights Blog, The Spear = The Spearhead, AVFM = A Voice for Men, GMP = Good Men Project, NOMAS = National Organization for Men Against Sexism, XY = XY Online, and MCSR = Men Can Stop Rape. The number of checkmarks indicate the intensity which the theme is addressed on the site.

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