

# ***Mobilizing Masculinity:*** **Women's Experiences of Men at Work:**

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# Raewyn Connell

- “Gender relations are always being made and remade in everyday life. If we don’t bring it into being, gender does not exist” (*Gender*, 2009, p. 73).

# Data Sources

- 50+ individual interviews
- Multiple group interviews, of women
- Participant observation in 'diversity training' sessions
- Observation of meetings
- Archival materials (newsletters, memos, policy documents, videos, transparencies)
- In 17 corporations, 9 of which are multi-national

## No. 19: Tom & Betsy Vignette

Tom and Betsy, vice-presidents in a Fortune 100 company, stood talking in a hallway after a meeting. Along the hallway were offices--that were not theirs. A phone started ringing in one office and after three or four rings, Tom said to Betsy, "*Why don't you get that (the phone)?*" Betsy was surprised by Tom's request but she answered the phone and Tom returned to his office.

Afterwards, Betsy found Tom to ask if he realized what he had done. "*I'm a vice-president too, Tom, and you treated me 'like a secretary.' What were you thinking?*"

[Ask interviewee: What was happening here? Have you ever heard about or seen an event like this?]

## No. 9: Tomaisa Vignette

(Japanese-born Ph. D. engineer regarding 'white' men)

*"I look at the white guys eating lunch together and feel I'm left out on important informal information. I feel left out, like something is going on that excludes me. Seeing them together makes me feel like an outsider. . . ."*

*"I went to lunch with the white guys for awhile but, eventually, I gave up."*

/Why was that?

*"Well, white guys just make statements!"*

/What does that mean?

*"I would ask a question and one of them would answer. But he never asked me a question back. Then he just made more statements."*

**[Ask interviewee:** /What do you think of this story? Have you ever seen or heard anything like this?]

# Standpoints:

## Angles of Vision on Women & Men at Work

A) PYM >> seeing women >> *seeing* men behave as men at work

B) PYM >> seeing men >> *seeing* women behave as women at work

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From: P. Y. Martin. 2001. Mobilizing Masculinities: Women's Experiences of Men at Work. *Organization* 8; also P. Y. Martin, J. Reynolds, and S. Keith. 2002. Gender bias and feminist consciousness among judges and lawyers: A standpoint theory analysis. *SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 27 (3):665-701.

# Gender as Social Institution

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- Is *extensive* relative to time & space
- Entails distinct *practices*, is *constituted through practice*
- Is profoundly *social*: created by people in groups
- Is *shaped by* narrative & physical *agency*
- Is *embodied*
- Is *incorporated into identities* (selves)
- Is *a set of social positions & relations*
- Has *structure* (in the form of recursive/cyclical practices)
- Is *a system of stratification*, entailing unequal power, resources, & opportunities
- Is *legitimated by ideology* (cognitive, normative claims)
- Is both *constraining & facilitating*
- Is *contradictory, conflicted, & changing*
- Is *mediated* by race/ethnicity, religion, age, social class, sexual orientation, nation, world region, able-bodiedness

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From P. Y. Martin. 2004. Gender as Social Institution. *Social Forces* 82 (June):1249-1273.

# Gendered Aspects of Organizational Structure

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- Gender composition: all-male, all-female, mixed
- Gendered labor markets
- Gendered occupations
- Gendered jobs (men's work, women's work; same work with different titles)
- Gendered management hierarchies
- Gendered job ladders (& differential opportunities)
- Gendered unions, including union leadership cadre
- Gendered work & peer (social) groups

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From: P. Y. Martin. 1992. Gender, Interaction, and Inequality in Organizations. In C. Ridgeway (ed.), *Gender, Interaction, and Inequality*. New York: Springer-Verlag.



# Gendered Organizational Dynamics

- Managers label tasks/activities as men's or women's
- Managers use women as cheap, flexible labor
- Managers preserve male privilege & jobs
- Men peers exclude women from jobs or groups
- Men workers refuse to accept dead-end, repetitive, place-bound, low-pay jobs
- Men display competitive (etc.) masculinity/ies
- Managers segregate men & women to facilitate different pay & reduce odds of comparison
- Men managers & workers *sexualize* women

From: P. Y. Martin. 1992. Gender, Interaction, and Inequality in Organizations. In C. Ridgeway (ed.), *Gender, Interaction, and Inequality*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

# GENDER AS PRACTICE: Four Views

**Candace West, Don Zimmerman, Sara Fenstermaker**

(sociologists, ethnomethodologists): *doing gender*, gender displays, doing difference, accountability dynamics

**Dorrine Kondo** (anthropologist, post-modernist): gender as *narrative rhetorical assertion*, as performance

**Judith Butler** (historian & comparative literature specialist): post-structuralist, gender as *performativity, reiteration, citation*

**R. W. Connell** (sociologist, social constructionist): gender as *configurations of practice* within a society's system of gender relations (masculinities & femininities)

From P. Y. Martin. 2003. "Said and done" vs. "saying and doing": Gendering practices, practicing gender at work. *Gender & Society* 17:342-366.

# Gender as Practice: A Definition

**Gender as discursive & material practices**— actions reflecting &/or constituting society's gender institution by invoking norms, stereotypes, empirical associations, meanings &/or interpretations (includes masculinities and femininities) that are culturally or socially associated with gender

P. Y. Martin. 2003. "Said and done" vs. "saying and doing": Gendering practices, practicing gender at work. *Gender & Society* 17:342-366; & P. Y. Martin 2006. Practicing Gender at Work: Further thoughts on reflexivity. *Gender, Work and Organization* 13 (3, May):254-275.

**Gender as discursive/narrative practices:**  
actions that are written, spoken, or tacit & that invoke  
the gender institution relative to conditions or claims  
(intended by the actor/agent or experienced by  
recipient or observer); includes accounts; are both  
individual & collective



## Gender as material/bodily practices--

actions reflecting or constituting a society's gender institution that involve the physical body of individuals (e.g., through displaying clothes, hair, stance; hitting, nursing a baby, fighting, managing, controlling) & of collectivities (waging war; playing on football team)



# **Women's Accounts of Men**

## ***Mobilizing Masculinity at Work***

- Story 1: Tom, Betsy & the telephone
- Story 2: Men “peacock” in meetings
- Story 3: Men protect each other
- Story 4: Valerie: “Not gregarious enough”

# Masculinity/ies at Work: Individual Doings & Collective Mobilizing

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Individual action

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Individual  
men's **doing**  
of masculinity/  
masculinities

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Collective action

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Men's collective  
**mobilizing** of  
masculinities  
(contesting, affiliating)

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*Masculinist* culture & structure that foster  
a preference for men & masculinities over women & femininities

# Men's Mobilizing of Masculinities: Contesting & Affiliating (in Women's Experience)

## Primary Audience

### Men

### Women

**Contesting** (oriented to establishing superiority or control over another; using another's labor to one's advantage):

Peacocking  
Self-promoting  
(Dominating)  
(Expropriating)

Dominating  
Expropriating

**Affiliating** (oriented to obtaining benefits or opportunities from another or offering same; deciding on basis of affect; showing positive affect to another):

Visiting  
Sucking-up  
Protecting  
Supporting  
Deciding based on  
liking or disliking  
Expressing fondness



# Contesting Masculinities: Four Varieties

**Peacocking** = men vying with each other for attention, time, the chance to talk in meetings, or claims to equal or superior status or skills; called "peacocking" (by Christine Jones)

**Self-promoting** = men's asserting that their talents, skills, or accomplishments are superior, exceptional, and special.

**Dominating** = men exercising control or dominion over another.

**Expropriating others' labor** = transferring others' labor or contributions to oneself (can be done to men & women). Primarily, a dynamic of processual power that expropriates labor without the worker's consent or without acknowledging that the transfer occurred. Took two forms: (a) Using others' labor for one's benefit or the benefit of the unit, e.g., team, program, organization; and (b) taking credit for work done by others.

P. Y. Martin. 2001. Mobilizing Masculinities: Women's Experiences of Men at Work.  
*Organization* 8.

# Affiliating Masculinities: Six Varieties

**Visiting** = men affiliating with each other by "visiting" with each other informally in the halls, at lunch, and in meetings; includes talking, discussing, chatting, joking, and kidding around about non-work topics like sports, corporate politics, current events (but can also include work-related topics)

**'Sucking up'** = men deferring, assuming a subordinate status, and/or being solicitous of and/or subservient to other men

**Protecting** = men preventing other men from suffering negative consequences due to poor job performance or incompetence by mobilizing a shielding form of masculinity

**Supporting** = men helping other men in ways that help them (the men) but that fail to advance work-related goals

**Deciding based on liking/disliking** = making decisions based on affect, rather than formal or official work-related criteria

**Expressing fondness** = men expressing positive sentiments of affection to or about each other

# Conflating Masculinities & Work Practices

**MOBILIZING MASCULINITY**  
(Dynamics & Relations)



**CONFLATING**  
of Masculinity & Working Dynamics



**WORKING**  
(Dynamics & Relations)

# Costs to Women of Men's Mobilizing of Masculinities

- Saps energy & wastes time
- Tells women men are concerned with something *other than work*
- Tells women they are 'different'
- Makes women feel frustrated, exhausted, & excluded
- Tells women they are women "first," workers "second"

# Men's Constructions of Women at Work

## ***Men's Actions Toward or With Women:***

- \* We don't think of women . . . at all.
- \* I always ask the women before I plan late meetings
- We don't 'rate' them anymore (with '10' as prettiest/sexyist)

## ***Men's Views of Women:***

- \* Women think it's gender when it's not
- \* If women request help politely, men help them out
- \* Women do not understand that work is politics
- Women think it's gender when it's not
- Women work too hard
- \* Women talk to people more & ask more questions

## ***Men's Views of What Women are Stereotypically Like:***

- \* Women are nice
- \* Women are sexual
- \* Women are helpers, helpmates for men
- \* Women are emotional
- \* Women are better at bringing people together, at getting consensus
- \* Women need protection

# Practices & Practicing— Gender as Two-sided Dynamic



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A distinction that matters?

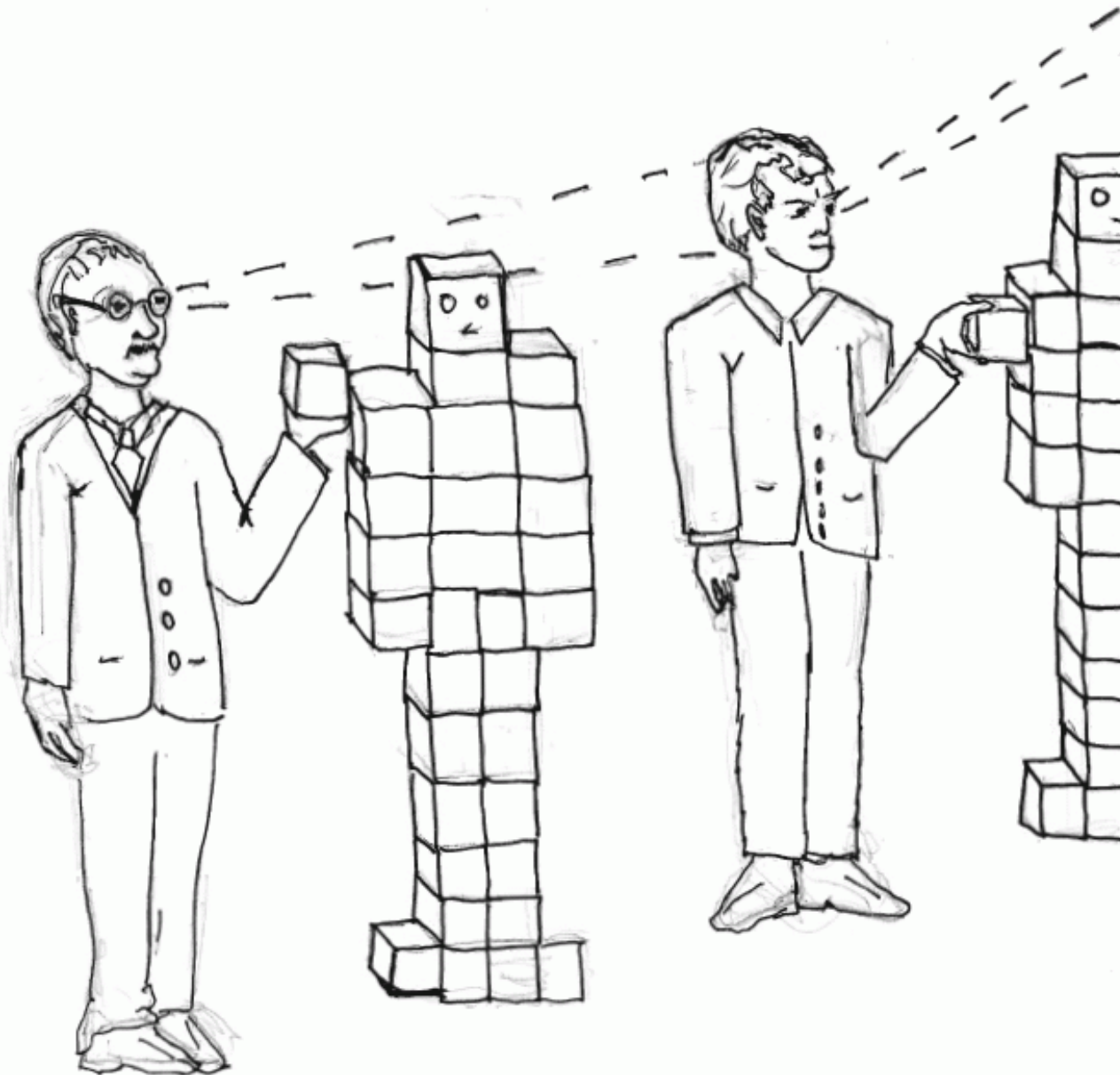
Women Constructing Men at Work

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Men Constructing Men at Work

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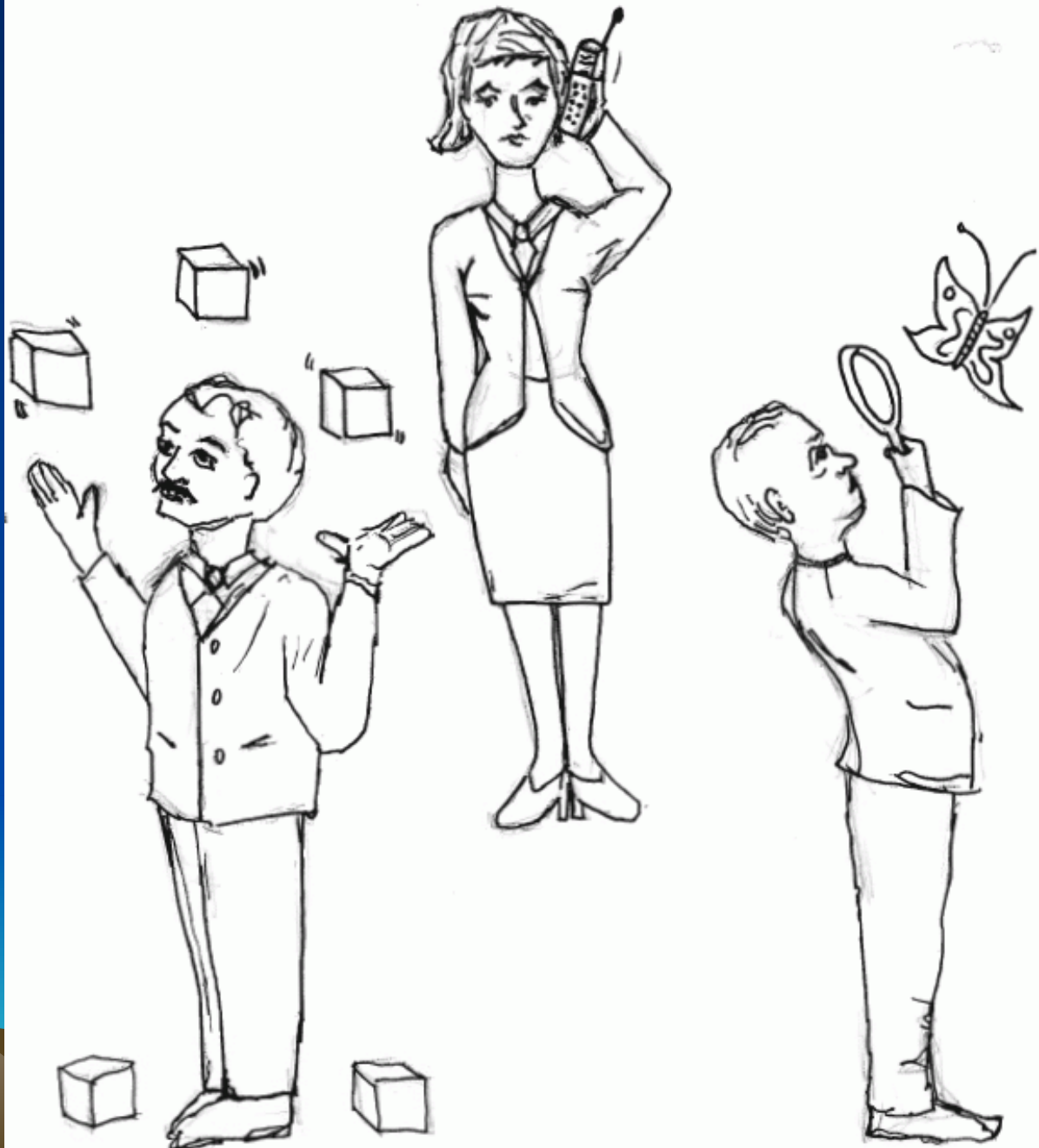
## Women *Constructing* Women at Work

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# Men Constructing Women at Work

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## The Spillover Hypothesis for Why Gender is in the Workplace

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*The Gender as Institution*  
*Hypothesis: The Workplace as*  
*Embedded in the Gender Institution*

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