

ABSTRACT

MACOMBER, KRISTINE CLAIRE. *Men as Allies: Mobilizing Men to End Violence Against Women*. (Under the direction of Dr. Michael Schwalbe)

Sociological theorizing on social movements has identified key processes in social movements, such as mobilization strategies, alliance building, and identity construction. Little attention, however, has been paid to how these key processes play out in ally movements specifically, where dominant group members are mobilized as allies to minority group members. In this study, I examine the recent efforts to mobilize men as allies in the movement to end men's violence against women—a historically women-led movement. Data from participant observation of men's anti-violence work, in-depth interviews with 31 activists, and archival data are used to develop an analysis of the micro-politics of mobilizing men in a gender-based movement. I argue that power differentials between women and men impacted three key movement processes: men's mobilization within the movement, confronting inequality and privilege internally, and ally identity construction. My research indicates that, although beneficial in some ways, efforts to mobilize men as allies inadvertently led to the reproduction of gender inequality. My findings also point to the need for more theoretical and empirical attention to how social movements mobilize dominant group members as allies.

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Men as Allies: Mobilizing Men to End Violence Against Women

by
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DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation in memory of Gail Burns-Smith. Her commitment to ending sexual assault inspired me. As did her love of coffee.

BIOGRAPHY

I was born in Providence, Rhode Island in the late summer of 1979 to my loving parents, Donna and Tom, and to my older brother Scott. I loved climbing trees, riding my bike, and playing baseball in the back yard with the neighborhood kids. Thanks to my parents' abundant sacrifices, I spent most of my youth playing sports. The smell of the basketball court on a Saturday morning. The rush of adrenaline when the first pitch was thrown. These were the things that filled my youth. Some of the other parents would say, "Wow, she's good. She plays like a boy." That never made sense to me. I was good. And I was a girl. In fact, the way I saw it, I was good *because I was a girl*.

During my college years at The University of Rhode Island, I rotated through several different majors before finding my home in Sociology and Women's and Gender Studies. I credit Dr. Helen Mederer and Dr. Donna Bickford for changing the course of my life. They inspired me to think differently about the world around me, and to see how the personal *was* political. They taught me about things like the gender wage gap, women's reproductive rights, the history of women's activism, men's violence against women, and other critical issues affecting women. I fell in love with learning and didn't want to stop. I couldn't get enough of the books they assigned and I stayed behind after class to ask more questions. I'll never forget the day I went to the library to check out a book for one of my women's studies classes. There I was, standing in the book aisle, looking at all the books about gender, inequality, and feminism. That feeling of adrenaline I used to get playing sports had been replaced by sociology and feminism.

In 2002, I moved to Raleigh, North Carolina to begin my graduate studies in

Sociology at North Carolina State University. In 2004, I earned my Masters in Sociology, and began teaching undergraduate sociology classes. I loved everything about teaching and fell in love again, this time with teaching.

Towards the end of my graduate years, I became a parent to a playful, loving and sweet child. It is through Kaden's eyes that I now see the world.

I am currently employed at the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence. As the Evaluation Specialist, I support local and state-level evaluation for intimate partner violence prevention programming. I also provide research support for the Child Advocacy Services Enhancement Project, which aims to improve services for children exposed to domestic violence in North Carolina.

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It takes a village to get a PhD and luckily my village is a loving and supporting one. Thank you to my family for believing in me and for supporting me. To Mom, Dad, Scott, Jeanne, my cousin David, Uncle Richard, Aunty Audrey, Grandma Antonelli and Grandma Macomber: your love and support means the world to me. I am so fortunate to have you all in my life.

My mother deserves an honorary PhD for the many years she spent listening to me

talk about my classes, my teaching, my research, my dissertation, and the life that swirled through all of it. Your unwavering support stabilized me during the tough times and motivated me during the good times. Your visits to North Carolina always brightened my spirit. I am deeply grateful for the friendship, love, and special bond that we share. Thank you, Mom, for believing in me. You are a light in my life and I cherish you with all my heart. Thank you, Dad, for always being my biggest fan. You nourished a confidence in me that guided me throughout my childhood and into my adult life. You taught me to believe in myself and to let nothing stand in the way of my goals. Thank you for always cheering me on and for supporting my dreams. I am proud to be your daughter. Thank you to my brother, Scott, for always being there for me. From fielding my questions about math, to getting fired up with me about politics, to laughing at silly things that only the two of us find funny, you have always been a source of balance in my life. I am grateful for the wonderful friendship we share and look forward to the many more years ahead. Thank you, Scott, for having my back for all these years.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I care deeply about women's equality and the things that threaten it, like the wage gap, the glass ceiling, the intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality, the sexual objectification of women, and most importantly, men's violence against women. Back in 2007, when I began thinking about dissertation topics, I knew I wanted to research something related to violence against women. For my comprehensive exam in social psychology, I wrote about the social-psychological causes and consequences of men's violence. It was clear from this literature that, despite the significant economic and political gains women have made, men still use violence to dominate and control women. Despite popular claims that we live in a postfeminist era, if you're paying attention, men's violence against women indicates otherwise.

Today, just like in the 1970s, the number one cause of severe injury to women in the U.S. is abuse by their male intimate partner (NCADV 2011). One in five women will be raped in their lifetime, and one in four women have been the victim of severe physical abuse by their intimate partner (CDC 2011). The Office of Violence Against Women recently declared teen dating violence a widespread public health problem (Carbon 2012). Conducting another study about the dynamics of violence against women seemed redundant to me. I wanted to move research in a different direction. But how?

Around the same time I was contemplating dissertation topics, I showed Jackson Katz's documentary *Tough Guise* to my undergraduate students. They loved it. One male

student said, “Every student on this campus should have to see this movie. If they realized what was going on, they’d do something about it.” In *Tough Guise*, Jackson Katz critiques our culture’s dominant expressions of masculinity, which is a masculinity that rewards displays of aggression, violence, and domination over others. Katz argues that we reward men for performing the “tough guise,” and that doing so promotes sexism, homophobia, and violence against women. Katz is a leading figure in the men’s anti-violence movement, which grew out of two women-led movements: the battered women’s movement and the rape crisis movement. Wait—that was it! I could study the men’s anti-violence movement. If I could examine how men got involved in anti-violence activism, and if I could examine the challenges they face, then I could move research in a different direction. I set out to answer two questions: What are men doing to help end violence against women, and how are they doing it?

I attended men’s anti-violence conferences and read pro-feminist men’s books, essays, and blogs. The books written by male anti-violence activists and educators, like Paul Kivel, John Stoltenberg, Bob Pease, Jackson Katz, and Rus Funk, among others, provided the theory behind the practice of what Paul Kivel calls “men’s work.” I learned that, at the core, men’s work involved critiquing the links between men, masculinity, power, and violence against women. Of course, women feminists had long critiqued these very things, but there was also a growing collective of men carrying the feminist torch, both in our local communities and as part of a national movement (Flood 2011).

I traveled to Seattle, Washington D.C., New York, Richmond, Boston, and other smaller cities and towns across the country to learn more about the men doing anti-violence

work. I soon had a long list of men I wanted to interview: men who worked as educators and trainers for men's anti-violence organizations, men who held university positions as rape prevention educators, men who worked as national speakers and educators, and men who worked for state coalitions against domestic and sexual violence. Not only had I found an exciting and important topic, but I was on a track and moving forward. I had collected an abundance of movement materials, including recruitment videos, training manuals and handbooks, conference programs, flyers, and posters representing the movement and the men who participated in it.

Much of what I asked men about in my interviews centered on their experiences as men doing anti-violence work with other *men*. I asked men how they dealt with resistance from other men. Based on what I had read about the experiences of men in the anti-violence movement, I expected them to describe how they dealt with threats to their identity as men because violence against women is typically considered a "women's issue." But, the answers I expected and the responses they gave did not match up.

I learned the lesson every qualitative researcher learns. The story you leave the field with is rarely the one you expected. The scope of my research changed during my interviews with male activists because when I asked them about dealing with resistance, they talked about the resistance they got from *women* in the movement, not other men. As movement veteran Lane said, "Working with women has been a fascinating interaction and a struggle in a lot of ways." Similarly, Paul said, "I know that, because I'm a man, I have privilege and access that women in this work don't have. And that's not fair. But I use that privilege and access to break down the walls that men have up all around them." Although I

set out to learn about men's experiences with other *men*, it was the nature of the "struggle" between women and men that Lane described, and the issue of male privilege that Paul described, that was emerging as the more salient story in my data.

I realized that I could not provide a sophisticated analysis of men's anti-violence work by focusing on male activists only, or only on the work they did with other men. Instead, I situated my analysis of men's activism within the broader movement to end violence against women, which was still overwhelmingly a women's movement. My dissertation research, then, examines men's involvement *as allies* in the broader movement to end violence against women.

METHOD & DATA COLLECTION

The data in this study derive from a multi-method qualitative research design. In creating this design I had three goals in mind. First, I wanted to learn about the personal experiences of women and men in MEVAW, which in-depth interviews helped capture. Second, I wanted to observe interactions between people in the movement, which I did through participant observation in different movement settings. While interviews and participant observation provided opportunities to learn the local meanings of movement insiders, I also wanted to learn about the broader organization of the movement—how the movement is simultaneously shaped by and responding to larger social systems and political arrangements. Archival materials provided a wealth of data to this end.

Participant Observation

Pioneered by University of Chicago sociologists in the 1930s, participant observation is the heart of ethnographic research. More than observing social life, participant observers integrate themselves, in intimate and sustained ways, to gain insider access to the local meanings that comprise the everyday lives and experiences of those they study (Emerson 2001). From August 2007-May 2009, I conducted participant observations of men's anti-violence work. Between those two years I observed and participated in eight men's anti-violence conferences, trainings, and workshops in five different states, including Washington, North Carolina, The District of Columbia, Virginia, and New York. These events were designed specifically to engage and train men in anti-violence work, and I was one of very few women present. Three of these conferences were multi-day trainings at which I received training certifications. I also observed a semester-long intimate partner violence peer education course on a college campus, including participation in a sexual violence training workshop at a fraternity. For six months, I observed the weekly meetings of a college men's anti-rape group on a college campus. I also attended several different activist events, including Take Back the Night rallies, community marches and rallies, and organizational fundraising events.

During my participant observations I recorded notes. By recording and writing fieldnotes, I was able to create a record of what happened in the field. My fieldnotes captured the events, situations, and dialogue in different movement settings. In some situations I was able to record verbatim dialogue (which is most often the case in larger settings, like conferences). In other, more intimate settings, I recorded jottings and then wrote fuller

fieldnotes as soon as I could. From my notes and jottings I developed descriptive field notes. From my fieldnotes, I developed “notes-on-notes,” which are analytic interpretations of the data collected. I then used my notes-on-notes to develop more analytically complex commentaries, or analytic memos (Charmaz 2007).

In-depth Interviews

Interviews provide insight into another person’s behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and relationships to others—things that are not always observable in field. The interviews I conducted were rich in detail and allowed me to understand the subjectivities of the people I interviewed (Blumer 1969; Seidman 1998). I conducted 31 in-depth interviews to explore anti-violence educators’ experiences, thoughts, and feelings in an open-ended way. Pairing participant observations with interviews allowed me to examine what people *say* they do, and what *they actually do*. This is important because, as Schwalbe (1996) suggests, “Often there is a huge gap between what people say they do and make happen, and what they actually do and make happen” (10).

I recruited a broad range of activists intended to represent the movement, including executive directors of domestic and sexual violence state coalitions; executive directors of rape crisis centers; staff at domestic and sexual violence organizations; men who work as educators, trainers, and speakers for men’s anti-violence organizations; women and men who work on college campuses as rape prevention education coordinators; men who are known primarily for speaking on the national lecture circuit; activists in local anti-violence groups. I interviewed movement veterans who founded organizations and authored books, activists

relatively new to the movement, and activists in-between these stages. See tables 1 and 2 for details about the interview sample.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics: Women

Name	Race	Age	Involvement
Angela	Black	52	Prevention Director for state domestic violence organization
Beth	White	33	Member Services Coordinator for sexual assault coalition
Morgan	White	35	Domestic violence court advocate
Tamara	Black	32	Executive Director of dual agency
Ava	Black	41	Director of crisis hotline at dual agency
Mel	White	30	Educator for state sexual assault coalition
Andrea	White	32	Rape Prevention Educator on college campus
Elsa	Latina	34	Prevention Specialist for state domestic violence coalition
Sheila	White	52	Executive Director of rape crisis center
Kendra	Black	29	Victim Advocate for dual agency
Chantal	Black	37	Executive Director of state sexual assault coalition
Linda	White	35	Executive Director of rape crisis center
Barbara	White	54	Author, educator, and national speaker
Sarah	White	33	Rape Prevention Educator on college campus
Audrey	White	55	Co-Director of dual state coalition
Donna	Black	47	Executive Director of state domestic violence coalition
Diane	White	58	Former Executive Director of state sexual assault coalition

Ruby	White	31	Prevention Specialist at sexual assault coalition
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Total=20

Table 2. Interviewee Demographics: Men

Name	Race	Age	Involvement
George	White	32	Prevention Specialist for dual state coalition
Brandon	White	50	National speaker, educator, author, and founder of anti-violence organization
Drew	Black	26	Educator for men's anti-violence organization
Paul	White	29	Rape Prevention Educator on college campus
Robby	White	28	Educator for men's anti-violence organization
Lane	White	39	Co-founder of men's anti-violence organization
Dave	Black	32	Educator for men's anti-violence organization
Greg	White	33	Educator, researcher, author
Scott	White	21	Prevention Specialist at state domestic violence agency
Tim	White	45	National speaker, author, educator
Phil	White	65	Author, national speaker
Steve	White	42	Researcher, educator, national speaker, founder of men's anti-violence organization
Ray	White	62	Author, national speaker, educator, and co-founder of men's anti-violence organization

Total=11

I met most of the people I interviewed by attending anti-violence conferences, trainings, and workshops. Attending these events aided my research dramatically because I was able to establish rapport with interviewees before I interviewed them. By building relationships with anti-violence activists, I gained insider access to networks within the movement and was able to interview prominent figures in the movement. Many interviewees spoke candidly to me because of the rapport I established with them, as well as with their fellow activists.

The length of interviews varied slightly; most were at least two hours, and several were over three hours. The shortest was an hour. I conducted thirty interviews in person and one over the phone. I interviewed activists in their homes, at their offices, inside airports, at restaurants and coffee shops, at conference gatherings, and on the rooftop of a NYC hotel. I recorded all interviews with a digital voice recorder and transcribed them in full later.

Archival Data

Textual and written artifacts within the movement told me a lot about what is important to anti-violence activists. I collected a variety of textual and visual materials relevant to anti-violence work, including: organization brochures and pamphlets, anti-violence campaign posters and postcards, flyers that advertise for conferences, power point presentations from several anti-violence trainings, anti-violence training manuals, organization training videos, e-mail data from four different anti-violence Listservs, transcripts and text logs from three web conferences, and other literature related to anti-violence education (i.e., fact sheets, lists of additional resources and research publications,

and more). Although much of these archival materials were created around the time of my research, I also collected a significant amount of historical data, dating back to the 1970s and 1980s.

ANALYSIS

I analyzed my data using a grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2001, 2007; Glaser and Strauss 1967). I simultaneously collected and analyzed data by writing fieldnotes, notes-on-notes, coding fieldnotes for emergent patterns and themes, and writing analytic memos that I used to develop my three analytic chapters. I developed conceptual codes for all of my data, based on patterns that emerged in my fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and archival data. Preliminary analysis of early codes informed my research in many ways, confirming how important it is to simultaneously collect and analyze data. For example, the theme “accountability” kept coming up in my early observations of men’s anti-violence work. During four different participant observations of men’s anti-violence work, male trainers urged other male participants to “show accountability to the women” in the movement. After observing this pattern, I developed interview questions to investigate what men’s accountability means to both women and men. After analyzing this data more, I found that the women I interviewed were *not* concerned with men being accountable to them. On the contrary, women wanted is for men to hold each other accountable, a finding also supported by archival data of women’s on-line forums. Therefore, my comparative analysis yielded an important finding that my early interviews with men did not.

I did systematic, conceptual coding to analyze my interview data so that I could

eventually develop and elaborate theoretical categories. I began with open coding, which allowed me to develop potential themes and categories within the data. For example, two early open codes I developed were “women’s claims that men make more money in the work,” and “women’s claims that men get more recognition than women.” During the open coding stage, these codes existed independently of each other. After open coding, I moved to focused coding, which is where I began interrogating key themes identified in open coding. During focused coding I created the larger conceptual code “Male privilege in anti-violence work” that included the two earlier open codes. In this later stage of coding, I elaborated and refined initial coded categories as additional data was collected and analyzed. Once I coded my data, I developed theoretical or “analytic memos,” which is the pivotal analytical step between collecting data and writing up findings (Charmaz 2006; Lofland and Lofland 1995). By writing analytic memos, I drew out their theoretical implications. Data analysis was a continuous process that evolved over time.

ALLY MOVEMENTS

Scholars have found that ally movements that recruit dominant group members to work on behalf of subordinated others face several challenges, including collective identity construction (Morris and Braine 2001), maintaining commitment (McCarthy and Zald 1987), and conflicts between the dominant group and the subordinated others they support (Bell and Delaney 2001; Dolgon 2001; Lichterman 1985; Marx and Useem 1971; McAdam 1988). Despite the ideological commitments dominant group members share with subordinated others, Munkres (2008) suggests that “privileged people are thought to be more reformist in

orientation, to value accommodation, and to see compromise as expedient” (191). While recruiting dominant group members may help a movement achieve its goals, it is also disruptive internally.

Research on whites in the civil rights movement has documented how white allies took leadership positions, acted on their racial prejudices, and were paternalistic towards black activists (Marx and Useem 1971; McAdam 1988). In the feminist movement, white, middle-class, heterosexual women excluded women of color, poor women, and lesbian women from much of their organizing (Collins 2000; Roth 2000, 2004). Scholars have also theorized about the subversive nature of pro-feminist men organizing to eliminate gender inequality (Connell 1998; Golderick-Jones 2003). Michael Flood (2003) cautions that “profeminist mobilization on gender issues [is] a delicate form of political activity, as they involve the mobilization of members of a privileged group in order to undermine that same privilege” (458). Anti-violence activist-scholar Bob Pease (1997) outlined four contradictions of men’s profeminist activism: (1) men may collude against women with other men; (2) men may misdirect their anger towards the women who identify their sexist tendencies; (3) male bonding may preclude men’s feminist identity development; and (4) men often keep their profeminist consciousness raising within the group. R.W. Connell (1998) is also critical of men organizing on behalf of women and in response to gender inequality because by mobilizing collectively, men draw on their shared interests and inadvertently reproduce gender privilege. Although I situate my analysis within this scholarship on alliance building, my dissertation research also contributes to, more specifically, our understanding of men’s involvement in a feminist, women-led movement.

THE MOVEMENT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The movement to end violence against women (MEVAW) is an outgrowth of two distinct yet related social movements: the battered women's movement and the rape crisis movement. Activists in the battered women's movement focus on domestic violence, and activists in the rape crisis movement focus on rape and sexual assault. Now called "anti-violence work," there is much overlap between both movements, as they share the same goals: provide direct services to survivors, hold violent men accountable, and more recently, prevent men's violence against women. Although these two movements remain distinct in some ways, they comprise the broader movement of women and men working to end men's violence against women. When I refer to the MEVAW, I refer to the activists and organizations dedicated to ending men's physical and/or sexual violence against women.

The accomplishments of the MEVAW have been remarkable. In fact, to highlight the successes of both movements, I will recall what life was like for battered women and rape survivors before these movements formed. Before the battered women's movement, there were no shelters for battered women. There were also no such things as domestic violence protective orders, nor lawyers who specialized in domestic violence cases. Police officers were instructed to let husbands and wives solve their own disputes, despite women's obvious injuries. There were no state coalitions advocating against domestic violence, nor any national organizations working to legislate in favor of harsher penalties for violent offenders. As activists in the movement often say, "Before the battered women's movement, the term domestic violence did not even exist—it was called *life*."

Before the rape crisis movement, there were no 24-hour hotlines for rape victims to call at 3:00 in the morning. There were no rape crisis centers, which also meant that there were no counselors available to help women cope with the trauma of rape. Before the rape crisis movement, when a rape victim went to the hospital, there was nobody with specialized training to take care of rape victims, let alone handle rape evidence. There was no rape prevention education on college campuses, nor trained staff for student survivors to talk to. When a man raped his wife, he was within his legal rights because marital rape laws did not exist. Rape was what happened to women when men couldn't, or didn't want to, control their sexual urges. Men raped women, but women weren't supposed to talk about it.

Then something happened. Women started talking about it. "It" being violence—the physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological violence they were enduring, often at the hands of men they loved. When women shared their experiences they realized that what was happening to them (or had happened to them) was happening to many other women. Or better put, many other men were doing the same kinds of things to many other women. Riding the social justice wave of the civil rights movement and the women's movement from the 1960s, women worked to change sexist attitudes, beliefs, and institutions that sustained a way of life where men used violence to control women. As Greensite (2009) noted about the formation of the rape crisis movement, "As more and more women began sharing their experiences of rape in consciousness-raising groups, breaking the silence that had kept women from avenues of support as well as from seeing the broader political nature of rape, a grassroots movement began to take shape." Concurrently, Schechter (1983) noted that "Between 1974 and 1980, projects to help battered women suddenly appeared in hundreds of

towns and rural areas. With the forceful declaration, ‘We will not be beaten’ women organized across the country” (1).

There was a symbiotic relationship between theory and practice that nourished both movements. In the early 1970s, the first speak-out against rape took place in New York City, just as rape crisis centers opened up in large, politically active cities, like Berkeley, Boston, and Washington, D.C. (Greensite 2009). By 1975, Susan Brownmiller’s (1975) *Against Our Will: Women, Men, and Rape* challenged the idea that rape was inevitable and defined rape as a “conscious process of intimidation by which *all* men keep *all* women in a state of fear” (15). By the late 1970s, women in San Francisco organized the first “Take Back the Night” rally to speak out about their experiences as survivors of rape and sexual assault (Greensite 2009). In the early 1980s, more than 20 states joined to form the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

Meanwhile, in 1973, in St. Paul, Minnesota, women were getting ready to open the doors of the first shelter for battered women in the U.S. By the mid-1970s, the first state coalition against domestic violence was founded in Pennsylvania, just as activists were pushing the term “battered woman” into the public lexicon (Schechter 1983). In 1976, the International Women’s Year Conference in Houston brought women together to create a national battered women’s movement (Schechter 1983; Howard and Lewis 1999; Stevenson and Love 1999). In 1978, Del Martin published her landmark *Battered Wives*, which is credited for catalyzing the battered women’s movement. In 1983, the The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence hosted the first “Women of Color Conference,” which made race, class, and homophobia central themes of women’s organizing (Howard and Lewis

1999). In the ten years between 1973 and 1983, over 700 battered women shelters opened in the United States.

By the mid-1980s, these movements had redefined the public's understanding of men's violence against women from a private experience to a widespread political problem; created local, state, and national organizations to help battered women and rape survivors; and began passing legislation essential for holding violent men accountable.

Turning Points in the Movement

In the mid-to late-1980s, a major turning point occurred in both movements, one that changed the course of anti-violence work. In 1985, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a report identifying domestic violence a major health problem for women. Redefining violence against women as a public health problem meant that social institutions were implicated in addressing the problem. Also, by the late 1980s, rape crisis centers began to transform from volunteer-driven feminist organizations to professionalized, service-driven organizations (Curtis and Love 2010). According to Curtis and Love (2010), "A major force behind this shift was funders who preferred to support service provision over social change initiatives" (7).

By 1990, legislators created the first federal legislation that addressed violence against women. In 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was passed. This landmark legislation changed the course of domestic and sexual violence work in the United States. VAWA provided (and continues to provide) federal money to address the issues of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. Also in 1994, the Center for Disease Control

funded the first Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) program, which was designed to lower rates of sexual violence through rape prevention education (Curtis and Love 2010; Garske & Hoffman 2007).

These developments affected internal movement dynamics, including how activists defined the problem. Most notably, by defining violence against women as a public health problem—rather than a socio-political problem rooted in men’s domination over women—the problems of male power and gender inequality were deemphasized. What had started as grassroots activism and social change work was slowly becoming a part of the non-profit industrial complex (Kivel 2007; Rodriquez 2007).

MEN’S INVOLVEMENT

When the rape crisis and battered women’s movements formed, they were women-led, with few men involved. When there was a man around he was, as movement veteran Diane said, “The only man around all us women.” Lifelong activist Lane also noted, “When I started working at the rape crisis center, I was *always* the only man there.” Men who were involved often became involved because their female partners were already in the movement. These were men who supported the ideas and efforts of the women’s movement, as well as other social justice causes (Katz 2006; Kivel 1992). Some men got involved by working with abusive men and doing batterer intervention work. Movement veteran Tim said, “We learned from the feminist women in the movement that if we wanted to help, we needed to be talking to other men. So, that’s what many of us did.” Some of the early batterer intervention programs set the groundwork for the batter intervention movement that took shape in the

1980s (Katz 2006).¹

Just as women formed consciousness-raising groups, there were some men who also wanted to talk with other men about men, women, power, and violence. These men believed that because men were the perpetrators and/or the enabling bystanders, men had to be involved in ending men's violence. As anti-violence activist and author Paul Kivel (1992) noted, "Some men began to see that we could no longer discount sexual harassment, battery and rape as women's problems, these were clearly part of a nationwide social problem" (159). By the late 1970s, profeminist men had formed anti-sexist and anti-violence groups and organizations across the country. Some of these initial organizations included the National Organization for Changing Men (later renamed the National Organization for Men Against Sexism), the Oakland Men's Project, Men Against Violence, DC Men Against Rape (later renamed Men Can Stop Rape), and Real Men (Katz 2006). These anti-sexist and anti-violence men critiqued traditional notions of masculinity based on emotional stoicism, aggression, and domination over women. These men wanted to rewrite the gender script they were expected to follow and were inspired by the idea that they could, as author John Stoltenberg (1989) urged, "refuse to be men."

Despite these small pockets of men working to end violence against women, the overwhelming majority of activists were women. Because men's involvement was so uncommon, their role within the movement was undefined. In fact, some women activists had a hard time taking men's contributions all that seriously. From their perspective, men

¹ Georgia based Men Stopping Violence (MSV) is now a leading anti-violence organization with a focus on violence prevention, but was founded in 1981 as a batterers intervention program. Other batter intervention programs during this time included the St. Louis based Raven, and Emerge, in Massachusetts.

were not the *real* activists in the movement, women were. In my interview with Sheila, a lifelong anti-rape advocate, she recalled her reaction to a men's anti-rape group meeting she attended in the mid-1980s:

I was invited to attend a men's anti-rape group meeting. There were four, maybe five guys. The meeting was at one guy's apartment. I remember when I went in there were candles and incense burning in the room, and it was sort of dark. And they all had their shoes off and were giving each other back rubs. And I had always worked for non-profits and I was like, what is this? I'm at an organizational meeting and they're burning incense and giving back rubs? Anyway, it was a perfect example of how the group functioned at the time. It was a very kind of touchy feely, very low key, very informal, not highly structured at all.

By describing the men as "touchy feely" and distinguishing herself as the professional ("I had always worked for non-profits"), Sheila trivializes the men's involvement. As Sheila saw it, she was doing *real* work, while the men were engaged in New Age male bonding. For many women in the movement, it was actually a good thing that few men were involved because, as they saw it, women needed a break from their everyday encounters with men and patriarchy. Didn't women survivors who endured men's beatings and rapes deserve time and space away from men? After all, weren't men the *problem*?

It was common for women in the rape crisis and battered women's movements to define men as "the enemy" (Schechter 1983). In fact, part of what drew women activists to the movement was the male-free space it provided. As lifelong advocate Audrey explained:

I am a survivor. I grew up in a very violent home. I'm also an incest survivor and my brother was my perpetrator. I was a college student when I got involved, and part of what I found in this work were these incredibly strong, smart women who were doing this, and I was just drawn to them like moths to a flame. And I found a place where I felt like my feet were under me for the first time in my life. And I didn't have to think a lot about men. And, I didn't have to deal with them except for as the enemy. And, that was a really nice thing and a nice place.

For women like Audrey, who had been violated and abused by the men in their personal lives, constructing men as “the enemy” was appealing because it was consistent with their own feelings about men. Welcoming men into the movement was especially challenging for women who valued the safe and women-only community the movement provided. Audrey later added, “I'm glad the movement has moved forward, and I know men's involvement is important, but a part of me will always miss the golden days when it was a movement for women, by women.” As some women saw it, male participants were trespassing on women's sacred ground.

Despite some women's resistance to men's early involvement, other women supported men's contributions because they believed that as members of the dominant group, men could be influential agents of change. For instance, Donna, a veteran domestic violence advocate, said:

A lot of women have had to come around to the idea of men in the movement. Not me. I always knew the important role men needed to play in this movement. For me, it was always a matter of creating institutional change. And, with men as the ones in those top leadership spots, no change will happen without them. It is *impossible* to move forward in this movement without men. When I went through my own experience with domestic violence, at every major turning point, there was a man I had to deal with—be it the police, the courts, the judge, the lawyer. It was men all around me. That is why we need them in this movement.

Donna's account reveals the paradoxical nature of men's involvement, and of ally movements more generally: because men *are* members of the dominant group, they have access to social and institutional power that women lack. Therefore, men are more capable of enacting change in the lives of other men and in the social systems they lead. In the same way that African Americans in the civil rights movements partnered with white allies, some women in the movement, like Donna, saw men's involvement as a strategic and necessary part of the movement's efforts.

By the time VAWA passed in 1994, men's involvement in anti-sexism and anti-violence activism had increased (Flood 2003; Katz 2006; Pease 1997). The men's organizations I mentioned above had entered their second decade, and individual men had emerged as leaders in anti-violence work. Profeminist men wrote books about and gave public talks about the links between masculinity and violence, educating other men about

men's role in ending violence against women.² An especially notable development was the male-led White Ribbon Campaign (WRC) in 1991, which was launched by a group of Canadian men in response to the "Montreal massacre,"³ the 1989 killing of 14 women students at the École Polytechnique. The killer, 25-year old Marc Lépine, left a note describing why he killed the women students. Among other things, he said that "feminists ruined my life," and "feminists have always had a talent for enraging me." The White Ribbon Campaign has since become a global movement to end men's violence against women, and has been adopted by hundreds of communities in the U.S.

As men began taking more leadership positions in the movement, many women feared men's takeover and cooptation. As Lane explained,

When I first started it was new enough for men to be in the movement that for the most part what we got was, "Well, welcome, have a seat, join in." We didn't so much get the "What the hell are you doing trying to take over?" That took 3 or 4 years, and then it was "What the hell are you doing here?" And, "Why are you taking over my space?" And, "Men are still the enemy" was the language that some women used.

Men who were active in the movement since the earlier days offered similar reflections about the increasing resistance they got from women activists. In *Men's Work*, Paul Kivel (1992:165) wrote:

² Some prominent writings by men included Paul Kivel's (1992) *Mens Work: How to Stop the Violence that Tears Our lives Apart*, Rus Funk's (1993) *Stopping Rape: A Challenge For Men*, and Michael Kimmel and Thomas Mosmiller's (1992) *Against the Tide: Profeminist Men in the United States 1776-1990*.

³ (http://www.gendercide.org/case_montreal.html).

We found that when we made mistakes, said the wrong things, or acted out our own sexism inadvertently, women got angry at us. Having invited their trust, we ended up hurting them. Sometimes this made us very cautious. We were reluctant to antagonize women or to be incorrect.

As Kivel explained, forming good relationships between women and men within the movement was challenging. Tim also admitted, “Women had a lot to be angry about. And they took that anger out on us.” Women’s resistance and hostility towards men drove some men away from the movement. As Lane recalled, “For a lot of men it was like, ‘I’m trying to do a good thing and you’re coming in here and yelling at me.’ There’s a lot of resentment in that. There’s a lot of men who never come back. You’ve convinced me that I don’t belong here. I could have been an ally but I’m out.” Recall, too, that Sheila initially sneered at the unstructured and “touchy-feely” nature of the men’s anti-rape meeting. Her perspective about men’s involvement changed over time, however, as she not only grew distrustful of men in the movement but outright hostile towards them:

Kris: As men were becoming more involved, how did you feel about that?

Sheila: Distrust[ful]. And an uneasiness with letting them in.

Kris: What were you distrustful of?

Sheila: I distrusted their motives. And, even if it wasn’t [their] motives, it was distrust about where things would ultimately end up... I literally used to stomp up and down the hallways of the

rape crisis center office just yelling, “I hate men. I just hate men!” after I’d come back from a meeting or presentation when I had to deal with a particularly obnoxious male.

This shift in Sheila’s reaction—from minimizing men’s participation to outright hostility—was emblematic of a transition in the movement. As more men got involved, their interactions with women and behaviors in the movement raised red flags for women. Women were concerned about how men might shape the direction of the movement (“Where would things ultimately end up?”).

Women grew skeptical not only about *why* men wanted to be involved but also about what their involvement would look like. Did men want to be of service to women, or did they want to be in charge and take over? As Sheila continued, “I mean, there was some sense that we had to have men as allies. And there was some initial response that we can use them as allies, as long as we maintain leadership and control, and they do what we tell them to do, basically.” In other words, men were welcome, as long as they knew that their place was in support of, and behind, women’s leadership. Therefore, the *nature* of men’s involvement in relation to women’s leadership became a central concern in the movement.

The Movement Today: The Increasing Emphasis on Mobilizing Men

Today, Sheila is the executive director of a rape crisis center and admits that although she still gets angry at men in the movement, she has learned to temper her hostility. She said, “It’s not that I still don’t get angry at men, but I’m able to focus my anger much more on the larger system of sexism.” Audrey, who liked not having to “think about men except for as the

enemy,” is now a co-executive director of a dual coalition⁴ and works with men on a regular basis. In regard to men’s involvement today, Audrey said, “Working with men in this movement is one of those things that we’re still figuring out. I mean, yes, we need men and women working together. But I still don’t see men making the kind of personal sacrifices that women make.” As I will illustrate throughout my dissertation, men’s position as allies remains a tenuous one.

Although women are still the majority of activists in the MEVAW, the “men as allies” framework constitutes a major development in the movement, one that I examine in this research. Although men’s involvement was once uncommon, activists now take as a given that they must engage men, and efforts to involve men and boys in the prevention of violence against women have increased considerably (Atherton-Zeman 2009; Flood 2003; 2011 2011; Katz 2006). Today, men and boys are recruited as participants in violence prevention education programs, as targets of social marketing campaigns, as policy makers, and as activists and advocates (Flood 2011). At the state and local levels, there are dozens of men’s organizations devoted to ending violence against women, as well as hundreds of local community groups. On the national level, the Office of Violence Against Women created the “Engaging Men and Youth in Prevention Program” in 2005 to fund projects that develop or enhance efforts to engage men and youth in preventing violence against women and girls. In 2009, there was the first ever National Conference for Campus Based Men’s Gender Equity and Anti-Violence Groups.

Another indicator of the growing effort to involve men in the movement is the recent

⁴ A dual coalition is a covalition that addresses both sexual violence and domestic violence.

addition of “men in the movement” jobs and/or resources at women-led domestic and sexual violence organizations. For example, the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA) created the “Engaging Men and Boys Coordinator” position. The North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV) has a staff member responsible for coordinating with men in the movement and organizing the annual *Men for Change Award*, which honors the North Carolina men who have made significant contributions to ending violence against women and children. Many other anti-violence organizations throughout the country have initiated similar “male ally” award events that support and promote men’s involvement and leadership. These growing efforts to mobilize men as allies have led to the development that I examine in this dissertation.

DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

Following this introductory chapter, the dissertation is organized into three analytic chapters, with a final concluding chapter. In chapter two, I begin by examining how men are mobilized within “engaging men” (EM) work. Given that anti-violence work is typically considered “women’s work,” and the VAWM is a women-led movement, how do activists and organizations make joining the movement appealing to men? I identify two strategies activists used to engage men. First, I will show how activists separated “men” from “masculinity” to facilitate a critique of sexism that allowed men to feel good about themselves as men. Second, I will also show how activists constructed male activists as moral actors. By portraying male activists as possessing special virtues, activists offered men identity incentives that satisfied the men’s desires to see themselves as strong and

courageous. This strategy drew on many of the notions about masculinity that anti-violence activists critiqued. I end the chapter by discussing the benefits and potential problems of these recruitment strategies. I argue that, in addition to making anti-violence work appealing to men, these strategies also allowed male activists to appear progressive, without giving anything up. My analysis contributes to theorizing about mobilizing men as allies in women-led movements, and to movements more generally. Although dominant group members are recruited to help reduce inequalities, my research suggests that *how they are mobilized* can actually reinforce, rather than oppose inequality.

In chapter three, I examine the micro-politics of mobilizing men to end violence against women. In a historically women-led movement that links men's use of violence against women to male power, what are the tensions inherent in men organizing for women and in response to violence against women? I argue that the alliance between women and men is shaped largely by the struggle to confront male privilege in the movement. The chapter is organized into two parts. In part one, I examine the tensions that arose as men brought the "the problem" of sexism and male privilege into movement spaces. I extend the use of the glass escalator concept (Williams 1992) to examine the reproduction of male privilege within the movement. In part two, I examine how activists responded to these problems by using the rhetoric of "men's accountability," which sought to hold men accountable for their behaviors. I found that although activists integrated accountability rhetoric into the movement, there was a gap between the rhetoric and practice. I identify two obstacles that impeded effective accountability practices: (1) the lack of a unified definition of accountability; and (2) men's reluctance to hold each other accountable. My analysis in

this chapter identifies the tensions that impede dominant/subordinate group alliances, particularly as they relate to men in gender-based movements.

In chapter four, I examine how women advocates made sense of men's increasing involvement and leadership within the movement. I begin by describing the dilemma women faced, as they simultaneously sought and critiqued men's involvement. On the one hand, they identified the benefits of men's involvement, namely that men can more effectively deliver anti-violence messages to other men. On the other hand, women opposed the glorification of male activists and reproduction of inequality in movement spaces. I show that in trying to resolve this dilemma, women differentiated between men in the movement. By discrediting some men, and authenticating others, women constructed the "male ally" identity. Although scholars argue that collective identity construction is vital to social movement mobilization, I argue that women advocates did not invest in collective identity construction with male activists. Rather, women distanced themselves from male activists and, instead, constructed themselves as the movement's *primary* activists, while constructing men as secondary activists. Drawing from my interviews with male activists, I also show how fragile the male ally identity was, as it was constantly subject to discrediting. I situate my analysis of women's construction of the male ally identity in the literatures on identity politics in social movements (Bernstein 2002; 2005; Cerulo 1997; and McCorkel and Rodriguez 2009) and ally identity construction (Myers 2008).

My research in these analytic chapters contributes to our understanding of three key processes in ally movements: (1) how dominant group members are targeted and mobilized to join ally movements; (2) how activists confront inequality and privilege within ally

movements; and (3) how ally identities are constructed. In chapter five, the conclusion, I discuss the implications of the findings of my research in greater detail, situating my findings in broader theorizing on social movements. I discuss the broader implications of my analysis and the limitations of my study. I end my dissertation by offering suggestions and directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

“ENGAGING MEN”: MOBILIZING MEN TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

We don't have a problem getting men to show up. That we can do. We have a problem keeping them at the table. (Male activist, via Listserv)

In this chapter, I examine how activists and organizations engaged men in anti-violence work. First, I show how activists separated “men” from “masculinity” to facilitate a critique of sexism that still allowed men to feel good about themselves, as men. Second, I show how activists constructed male activists as moral actors. By portraying male activists as possessing special virtues, activists offered men identity incentives that satisfied the men's desires to see themselves as strong and courageous. This strategy drew on many of the same notions about masculinity that anti-violence activists critiqued. I argue that, in addition to making anti-violence work appealing to men, these strategies also allowed male activists to appear progressive, without giving anything up. My analysis contributes to theorizing about mobilizing dominant group members in ally movements (Bishop 2002; Casey 2010; Kivel 2002). Although dominant group members are recruited to help eliminate inequalities, my research suggests that *how they are mobilized* can reinforce, rather than oppose, inequality.

THE WORK OF ENGAGING MEN

In chapter one, I explained that efforts to mobilize men to end violence against women have increased. While this is true, it would be misleading to omit an important distinction about *where* most men are being mobilized, which is within a subsection of the

movement known as “Engaging Men” (EM) work. Outside of EM work, women still do most of everything else. They are the majority of 24-hour crisis hotline workers, shelter staff in battered women’s shelters, crisis counselors in rape crisis centers, court advocates in domestic violence agencies, hospital advocates for rape survivors, community educators in local agencies, training and technical assistance specialists, rape prevention educators on college campuses, prevention coordinators for state coalitions, and executive directors of national, state, and local domestic and sexual violence organizations.

EM work, on the other hand, focuses specifically on violence prevention education with all-male (or mostly male) audiences. In my fieldwork, I observed that movement events that made men’s involvement the central theme of the event—which almost always meant having the phrase “engaging men” in the event title—generated men’s participation. These EM events were also organized and hosted by men’s anti-violence organizations. Although women activists were often invited to attend panel sessions and speak during EM events, men were most of the keynote speakers, workshop facilitators, and attendees. In other words, EM events were male-centered spaces, where discussions of “men” were central. In contrast, very few men attended conferences, trainings, and workshops where “engaging men” was not the focus.

Although EM work is an outgrowth of the broader movement to end men’s violence against women, there are reasons to see it as a movement in its own right. Male activists are vocal about mobilizing men to, as one organization said in its mission statement, “galvanize a national movement of men working to end men’s violence against women.” Another indicator that EM work has formed its own movement is the emergence of recognized

leaders, many whom have written books and articles regularly cited by male activists. And, with increased state and federal funding for EM initiatives (see chapter one), efforts to involve men in anti-violence work continue to expand. Although my research examines how the “men as allies” development has impacted the broader MEVAW, in this chapter I focus specifically on how men were mobilized within EM work. This is important because, as I will show, men’s mobilization within EM work has profound consequences for the alliance between women and men.

The growth of EM work has made room for men’s involvement in unforeseen ways, as male activists are now considered necessary and vital to ending men’s violence against women. But considering that men were initially defined as “the enemy” (see chapter one), and are still “the cause” of the problem today, it is surprising that men’s involvement has grown to the extent that it has. The question remains: Given the threat posed by the movement’s anti-sexist messages, how did activists and SMOs make joining EM work appealing to men? This is the question I address throughout this chapter.

Doing “Men’s Work”

The primary goal of men’s anti-violence activism was to change men’s behaviors, which activists frequently called “men’s work,” or “engaging men work.” The core activity within EM work was “redefining masculinity,” which activists did by generating dialogue among men about how conventional expressions of manhood supported men’s use of violence against women, among other damaging behaviors. As activists saw it, by “redefining masculinity” they were changing men’s behaviors and helping end men’s

violence against women.

I will show how through anti-violence education work with male audiences, and through anti-violence campaigns targeting men and boys, activists invested greatly in the idea that there was such thing as an authentic man, and used their involvement in EM to signify their authenticity as men. As many of the activists saw it, men outside of EM work were limited by societal gender norms, and were encouraged to act in artificial, socially prescribed ways. Male activists, on the other hand, by virtue of their involvement in EM work were actualizing their “true self” as men.⁵ Collectively, male activists taught each other about the damaging effects of traditional masculinity, and together they redefined what it meant to be men. From their point of view, they were living more authentic lives, not only as men, but as better men. As Paul explained in his interview, “Those of us who are involved in this work, it’s like we are in this constant process of moving forward to what is at our core. It’s a constant process of moving from A to Z and trying to become better men essentially. We’re trying to be true to ourselves, not to some fabricated ideal society wants us to be.” Similarly, another activist said his involvement in EM work made him a better man. “In doing this work,” he said, “it’s like the veil has been lifted and we can begin anew. But not just as new men, as better men.”

As many male activists saw it, their involvement in EM work signified and affirmed their authenticity as men, which was often expressed by the notion that “real men” were strong enough, courageous enough, and bold enough to stand up against sexism and violence

⁵ I am employing a phenomenological approach to theorizing about authenticity. The desire for authenticity—or being able to act in a way that is experienced as consistent with one's idea of who one really is—is socially constructed. Achieving an “authentic self,” as male activists define it, is a socially constructed subjective experience (Mead 1934; Weigert 2009).

against women. This notion was also articulated through the “real men don’t hit women” motto, which elevated the status of men who felt secure enough, as men, to refrain from using force (physical and/or sexual) to dominate women. Overall, there was a general sentiment in EM work that anti-violence men were “real men.” This sentiment reinforced the belief that there was some inherent and authentic “manness” that male activists had either achieved by virtue of their involvement, or were aspiring to.

Male activists often acknowledged the widespread assumption that male anti-violence activists were gay, or “wimpy,” because they advocated for a women’s issue. Katz (2006) calls this assumption the “macho paradox” because, as he sees it, anti-violence men stand up against the dominant male peer culture, and are therefore even stronger and more courageous than men who are complicit in sexism; yet it is these very men whose manhood is called into question. Hence, the paradox.

By constructing their involvement as something that *men* do, activists could participate in work that was typically considered “women’s work” while fending off threats to their identity by still feeling like men while doing it. During a conference, a male activist was asked, “What was the greatest surprise and joy, after stepping out of The Man Box?” He said, “That I’m still a man, enjoying many of the things that men like doing: basketball, football, fishing (friendly poker games, with my buddies). That I can do all of this and still support a world that’s safe for women and girls.” By working to “redefine masculinity,” male activists could critique some parts of it, while holding onto other valued aspects of the dominant identity “man.”

A second motivation for redefining masculinity was that some men in the movement

were dissatisfied with traditional masculinity because of their own experiences. As Greg said, “Growing up, I never really fit in with what all the boys around me were doing and saying to each other. I always felt more comfortable around girls and women.” Tim echoed this sentiment: “For my entire life, I have been much more comfortable around women than men. That has always been the case.” Lane, too, said, “I’ve never been ‘one of the guys.’ That just wasn’t me. Kids would tease me because they said I was gay. I always felt like I didn’t really like the way boys and guys were expected to act. I didn’t want to act like that. It didn’t seem like anything that made anyone feel particularly good.” Therefore, by redefining masculinity, activists like Greg, Tim, and Lane were able to reconcile their dissatisfaction with the dominant male culture while holding onto what they liked about it.

EM activists had another choice. They could have tried to get rid of masculinity altogether. Instead of mobilizing men around the goal of “redefining masculinity,” they could have mobilized men around the goal of “eradicating masculinity,” or “ending masculinity.” They could have, but they didn’t. Why not? One reason is that there is social privilege and power that comes with expressions of masculinity. Instead of abandoning masculinity altogether, activists defined old aspects of masculinity in new ways, allowing them to be both strong *and* compassionate, courageous *and* emphatic, assertive *and* thoughtful. Redefining masculinity in this way allowed activists to feel good about their involvement, but to also feel like *men* doing so.

In his study of the mythopoetic men’s movement, Schwalbe (1996) argued that “...since there were clear advantages to holding onto [the “man” identity]...the men found a way out of the bind by redefining manhood and masculinity, among themselves, to fit what

they already were” (119). In much the same way, I found that male activists in EM work faced a similar predicament: they knew that men perpetrated violence against women, and that masculinity was associated with violence, yet they also wanted to belong to the dominant gender group and lay claim to other manly qualities, such as strength, courage, and assertiveness. An activist said to the men in the audience during an EM training, “Don’t worry; we’re not tossing manhood out. We just want to be conscious of what men do.” Similarly, Paul admitted in his interview, “You kill yourself for 18 years to get to this perfect place at the center of that man box, the man-box nirvana if you will, and then somebody asks you to throw that all away? It’s essentially something that you’ve been working for all of the life that you’ve known. That’s a big leap for guys to make.” As I will show, however, activists and SMOs did not ask men to throw it all away. In fact, by participating in EM work, male activists were offered identity incentives and rewards, as men.

Redefining Masculinity: The Man Box

A popular exercise within EM work was called “The Man Box.” The concept of the “man box” was developed by Paul Kivel and others at the Oakland Men’s Project, and was used to teach about how boys and men are socialized to behave in our culture. The exercise involves identifying the ways men are confined by narrow definitions of manhood. The walls of the box represent the social sanctions boys and men face if they violate gender norms. Activists believed that without the “man box,” boys and men could reach their full potential as humans. In EM work, the man box was said to be “the theory behind the practice.”

The man-box exercise was effective because it prompted men to discuss what was

lacking in their lives. For example, at a workshop session about “engaging men as allies,” the workshop facilitator said, “There are many, many consequences of the man-box. One is that we are not able to develop relationships with men.” Another man responded, “Sometimes I want to say, ‘I’m scared.’ It’s exhausting having to always act like you are not afraid of anything. I have faced some things in my life that were scary, but because of the man box, I wasn’t allowed to admit that to anyone.” Another man said, “I want to be able to dance when I feel like it. I want to be able to go somewhere and dance and not feel like I’m breaking some code. But the man box prohibits me from doing that. How do we make it so that our sons can dance?” The facilitator then said, “You know, boys are actually more expressive when they are babies than girls. Up to two years old, boys are more emotionally expressive. But then it’s forced out of them. And then we end up not being able to communicate with anyone—with other men, with women, with our own children. That is just not acceptable.” Similar conversations, in which male activists described how they felt inadequate and/or cheated out of living emotionally and psychologically full lives, were regular occurrences. EM work, then, wasn’t just about improving the quality of life for women; it was also about improving men’s lives. Defining the work in this way meant that men could work to end violence against women, but as they did so, they were also helping themselves and other men live more authentic male lives.

Activists’ frequently recognized changes in their consciousness, or what activists referred to as “the light bulb going off” and their “a-ha moments.” For instance, at the end of an EM training, the facilitator asked audience members for comments and questions. In

response, one man described how the training, and specifically the man box concept, helped him redefine his experiences as a man. He said:

Today has been really transformative for me. As a man, I always knew there were expectations and pressures imposed on us, as men, to behave a certain way, and about what it meant to be a man. But I had no idea about the man box. I'm 52 and all this time I had no idea the man box existed. This is some powerful stuff.

This man's admission echoed other men's testimonies. As another man said, "You know, you grow up and you know that you are supposed to act a certain way. And you know that there are a lot of things you are not supposed to do, and say, and think, and feel because you're a man. But, you don't question it. It just is. But, now, it's like, knowing what I know about *why*, there's no going back." By defining conventional masculinity as the problem, and citing all the ways men lost out because of it, activists laid the foundation for redefining it.

SEPARATING "MEN" FROM "MASCULINITY"

Much of the activity at EM events involved discussing the connections between men's behaviors and men's use of violence against women. Given that men were the ones committing violence against women, it made sense to think that there might be some kind of problem deeply rooted in men that led them to be violent. The challenge, however, was that activists needed to develop a critique of men that invited—rather than repelled—men's participation in EM work. As one activist noted, "We're pretty much telling men that everything they have been taught their whole life, about what it means to be a man, is bad,

and that they should throw it all out and start over. That's a lot to take in. And, men get defensive about that." How, then, did activists get newcomers to feel comfortable about critiquing men's behaviors?

Activists never explicitly said that men were the source of the problem. Instead, activists separated "men" from "masculinity." This was a strategic distinction, not simply a matter of semantics. By separating "men" from "masculinity," male activists could critique the social construction of gender, but still feel good about who they were, at their core. As one activist said, "We love men. We love men. This work is not about getting rid of men, or getting rid of manhood. It's about figuring out what parts of it need to go, and what parts of it are no longer acceptable." Another said, "There are some gorgeous things about being men. We love men. We have a lot of love for men." Further, one of the guiding principles in an EM training manual was to be "male-positive," which activists defined as recognizing that "the standard expectations and constructions of manhood never entirely define our experiences as men." Again, there was the belief that there was masculinity, which was socially prescribed, and then the more authentic man that lay underneath. As one activist said, "We are loving men through this process. We are inviting men, not indicting men."

Activists blamed men's violence against women on character traits associated with traditional masculinity that either created or exacerbated the problem. An example of this appeared on one organization's homepage:

We at Men Can Stop Rape believe that stereotypical masculinity (or any other term you might choose: traditional masculinity, hypermasculinity, hegemonic masculinity, dominant masculinity) is still too much the air

that we breathe...As one of the significant sources of violence against women across the globe, as well as other forms of violence, and as an unconscious source of conflict for many men, stereotypical masculinity causes great harm when it goes unrecognized. (from www.mencanstop.org)

Here, MCSR's messaging is clear: traditional masculinity is harmful, and is a root cause of men's violence against women. Notably, this message also appealed to men. That is, by noting how men were also harmed by traditional masculinity ("an unconscious source of conflict for many men"), activists critiqued masculinity without defining men as inherently bad or inadequate. Talking about masculinity thus was a way to protect *men* from guilt-inducing critique.

In one organization's "Training Institute" handbook, the first of their "Seven Guiding Principles" argued that, in essence, "manhood" is the root of violence and discrimination against women and girls:

Roots of Violence and Discrimination Against Women and Girls:

Men's violence against women and girls is rooted in a history of male domination that has deeply influenced the definition of manhood in our culture. This definition of manhood has three primary aspects that promotes and supports a culture of violence and discrimination against women and girls. It teaches that women are: of less value than men, the property of men, and sexual objects. **[Our organization]** views these

three components as an equation that equals violence against women and girls.

Activists also strived to redefine masculinity by noting how “all men” are affected by it. They often stressed how “all men are in this together,” and therefore they needed one another’s support to behave differently. Doing so helped male activists feel like they were united by their struggles. As one speaker explained during an EM event:

Think about how pervasive the man box is. It doesn’t matter where you go—all over the country, in every town, in every city, in every suburb, in every remote part of town—you say, “Suck it up, and be a man,” and every single man knows what that means. Every single man knows exactly what that means. We all got the same training. We all go through it.

Although activists acknowledged that their experiences as men were also shaped by race, sexuality, class, ethnicity, etc., they stressed how *all* men experienced the man box. As one man said, “We’ve inherited a mess here guys. The man box is a mess. And, we didn’t ask for this. But, even though we didn’t ask for it, it’s ours now. It’s all of ours.” By defining men’s collective struggles and experiences, activists built a sense of community around themselves. This was affirming for men who otherwise might have been reluctant to engage in self-critique. “It’s all of ours,” conveyed solidarity.

Activists often traced the damaging effects of masculinity to boyhood socialization. Men told stories about how their socialization as boys made them emotionally inept, unable to communicate well with others, and unable to form deep relationships with other men.

During an EM workshop, the facilitator described how he liked to stay connected to the past, because it reminded him of the harmful “system” of masculinity:

When I do this work I always have a picture of myself when I was a boy, so that I can always remember that system that shuts down our emotions. And, that big wall—the man box—keeps the rest of us from doing anything about it. That is the heart of the matter. I’ve been taught from a young age to give up my humanity. Part of what we need to do is make space for men to do this work—to give men the ability to feel their humanity and to hold it, to touch it. We’ve got to give guys the experiences of that connection.

For this activist, and for many others, their involvement in EM work provided a space for them to reinvent themselves, to repair parts of themselves they were dissatisfied with. By drawing on the collective experiences men shared, activists sought to create unity among recruits. Although significant differences existed between men, activists emphasized how *all* men were affected by pervasive gender norms and that *all* men would benefit by new definitions of manhood. Paralyzing guilt was avoided by making bad masculinity, not men, the target of their critique.

CONSTRUCTING MALE ACTIVISTS AS MORAL ACTORS

In this section, I illustrate how activists motivated newcomers’ involvement by constructing male activists as virtuous. Constructing male activists in this way allowed the men to feel good about themselves, and more importantly, to feel good about being *men*.

Male activists were—because of their participation in EM work—defined not only as *different* kinds of men, but *better* men. Anti-violence education programs and campaigns designed for male audiences constructed male activists as stronger, more courageous, bolder, and more compassionate men than non-activist men. Male activists were constructed as men who rose above the standards set for ordinary men—men who had been boxed into traditional gender socialization. As one of the EM leaders said to a group of men during an anti-violence training, “You’re good men already. What’s the next step you can take?”

By constructing male activists as possessing moral virtue, activists made joining the movement appealing to men who otherwise might have been turned off by being asked to think critically about men and masculinity. As I will illustrate, anti-violence campaigns that targeted men defined male activists as good, moral men, not just as good moral people. EM activism, then, offered identity incentives that reflected how the men wanted to see themselves, which was as strong and courageous men who took the high road by standing up for what was right. If strength and courage were traits of anti-violence men, then men who got involved in EM work were strong and courageous men.

During EM events, activists often described men involved in EM as possessing special virtues. One example is a term coined by A Call to Men: “well-meaning men.” Activists regularly defined what a well-meaning man was and explained how male activists could become well-meaning men. During one conference, a male activist said, “What is a well-meaning man? Well, remember that most men are not violent. The problem is that, for the percentage of men that *do use* violence, they commit those acts of violence over and over again. So, all of you here today who do not perpetrate violence are well-meaning men.” By

using this phrase, this activist united the men under one identity, an identity that put the participating men in a category that implied virtue.

Similar to “well-meaning men,” activists also used the term “men of conscience” to describe male activists. More than uniting male activists with a shared identity, these insider phrases also helped set them apart from other presumably non well-meaning men. As Taylor and Whittier (1992) contend, collective identity construction often involves differentiating between “us” and “them,” with the “them” being the cause of the problem. Male activists were confronted with a unique predicament because they *were* the designated “them.” However, activists used these terms to differentiate themselves from other non-activist men. In this way, men created an “us” and “them” within EM work. The “us” being male activists, and the “them” being non-activist men.

At the start of an EM conference, the conference facilitator described the prevalence of men’s violence against women by differentiating between the men at the conference (whom he called “well-meaning men”) and other non-activist men. He said:

I am going to assume that all of you here today are well-meaning men. I am going to assume that you don’t abuse women, that you don’t hit women. We’re gonna take that as a given. Ok? All of you here today are well-meaning men. Now, compared to *all the men out there*, us well-meaning men make up just a small amount. So, we’re here (He lifted his arms up and opened them to illustrate how many well-meaning men there are, and then he placed them over to his left side). Then, you have the men who abuse. And currently, statistics tells us that it’s actually not

that many men. (He lifted his arms up again, and opened them to illustrate the smaller number of men that are the abusers and then he placed them over to his right side). Then you have all of these other men who are not abusers, but who allow those who are, to do what they do (He lifted his arms up again, and opens them wide, to illustrate how many men allow men to abuse and then he placed them over to his right side).

By differentiating between groups of men, the facilitator created an “us” in opposition to a “them.” In trying to motivate men’s involvement, activists and organizations nourished men’s desires to feel good about being men, despite widespread critiques of the characteristics associated with being men in our culture. As activists sought to “redefine masculinity” they constructed the “us” to be a moral actor. As the conference facilitator quoted above later asked the audience, “You’re a good man already. But what’s the next step you can take?” Activists engaged men by offering them an identity that not only made them feel good about themselves, but more specifically, good about being men.

Motivational Framing

Research on framing processes in social movements (Gamson, Fireman and Rytina 1982; Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988; 1992; Johnston 1991; Hunt, Benford and Snow 1994) examines the interpretive schemas movement members construct to motivate action. Snow and Benford (1988) and later others, have identified how collective action frames diagnose the problem (diagnostic frames), propose solutions to the problem

(prognostic frames), and provoke action by offering vocabularies of motive (motivational frames), or what is known as the “call to arms.”

Scholars have noted that social movement members craft collective action frames by drawing on the symbols and themes found in the cultural repertoire of the target audience (Johnston and Nokes 2005; Naples 2002; Snow and Benford 1988). As I illustrated, however, the core of EM involved critiquing masculinity and then redefining it. This posed an interesting challenge for activists, especially because EM work also problematized the very symbols and themes found in the cultural repertoire of men. I found that despite activists’ commitment to “redefine masculinity,” motivational frames drew from many of the same notions of the dominant male culture that they critiqued. Throughout EM work, activists made many references to the strength, courage, assertiveness, and leadership qualities that were required of male activists. In fact, what I discovered was that some of the characteristics activists listed as part of the man box were also the characteristics they drew from to motivate men’s involvement. To reconcile this tension, activists offered men new ways to think about how to display these valued masculine qualities.

A poignant illustration of this motivational framing was seen in the widely popular “Strength Campaign,” which was an anti-violence campaign that targeted male audiences. Developed by Men Can Stop Rape, the campaign promoted the idea that men are physically strong and should use their strength to stand up for what is right—respecting women and ending rape. The images in the “Strength Campaign” posters depicted muscular men (either in all male groupings, or with women) with written slogans such as “My Strength is Not For Hurting. So When Men Disrespect Women We Say That’s Not Right. Men Can Stop Rape.”

Another example is, “My Strength is Not For Hurting. So, When She Wanted Me to Stop, I Stopped. Men Can Stop Rape.” The motivational messaging was clear: the kind of men who help stop rape are strong men who do the right thing. This campaign expanded the meaning of “men’s strength” beyond physical strength to include *moral strength*. Consequently, it also reinforced the idea that man equals strong. [See Figure 1]



Figure 1. Picture of "My Strength is Not For Hurting" campaign poster

The “Strength Campaign” became one of the largest and most successful men’s anti-violence campaigns to date (www.mscr.org). More than a poster campaign, the “Strength Campaign” grew into youth development programming, public education messaging, and leadership training for male youth (www.mscr.org). There are MOST (Men of Strength) Clubs in middle and high schools, and Campus MOST clubs on college and university campuses across the country. The campaign’s widespread adoption reflects how well the frames resonate with male youth. The campaign’s emphasis on *men* doing the right thing

offered boys and men an identity they could claim and a motivation for getting involved. That is, if they were boys and/or men in a Most Club, or if they wore a “Men of Strength” T-shirt, then *they were men of strength*.

In early 2012, Men Can Stop Rape retired their version of the “Strength Campaign” and replaced it with the “Where Do You Stand Campaign?” Much like the “Strength Campaign,” the “Where Do You Stand Campaign?” included images of groups of men, each accompanied by the slogan, “I’m the Kind of Guy Who Takes a Stand. Where Do You Stand?” One example is “When Jason Wouldn’t Leave Mary Alone, I Said She’s Not Into You Anymore. Let It Go. I’m the Kind of Guy Who Takes a Stand. Where Do you Stand?” This campaign illustrates how activists reclaimed men’s assertiveness and assigned that characteristic high moral value. This motivational frame offered boys and men an identity to claim—that of a bold and assertive man. “I’m the Kind of Guy Who Takes A Stand” is an identity claim that male activists affirmed for one another, through their involvement in EM work. [See Figure 2]

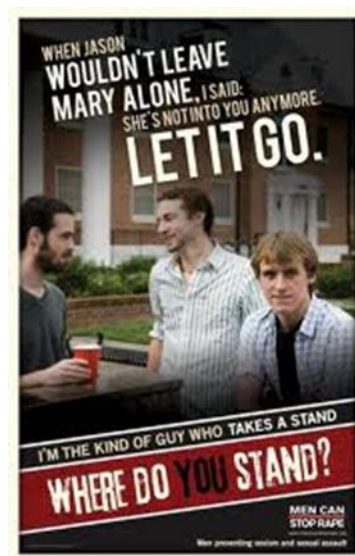


Figure 2. Picture of "Where do you Stand?" campaign poster

The emphasis on men “taking a stand” was not just something that showed up in that one campaign. Male activists frequently referred to their involvement in EM work and in the MEVAW as “taking a stand.” In fact, there was even a men’s anti-violence initiative called “Stand-Up Guys.” By interpreting men’s participation this way, activists were able to define men’s involvement as an act of courage. Consequently, newcomers were being taught how to see their involvement as evidence of manly character.

I noted how EM events attracted more men than anti-violence events that did not focus on men. This pattern of attendance suggests that the opportunity to improve women’s lives may not have been the *only* motivating force behind men’s participation. Rather, it was the opportunity to be involved in *men’s* work—to be doing something that *men* did, because they were men—that motivated men’s participation. Male activists were, above all else, *men* against violence. Hence, their deliberate use of “men” in the names of their organizations, such as Men Can Stop Rape, A Call to Men, and Men Stopping Violence.⁶ Similarly, the terms “engaging men work” and “men’s work” defined what activists did in gender-specific ways. Male activists were not *people* with a cause; they were *men* taking a stand. The gender identity “man” was used as a resource, and was therefore reinforced because of it. Ironically, when activists were critiquing men’s behaviors, they referred to “masculinity.” But when they talked about positive attributes, they used the term “men.”

In a promotional booklet created by “Stand-Up Guys,” the cover photo shows men’s legs striding in unison [See Figure 3]. The back cover reads, “Rise. And Shine. Want to be a

⁶ Women led-organizations, in contrast, almost never had “women” in the organizational title.

Stand-Up Guy? Listen to the stories of women and girls around you. Learn about the impact of male violence and discrimination. Then do something to make a difference.” This frame motivated men to get involved by offering the virtuous “stand-up guy” identity as a reward. Activists constructed a “stand-up guy” as a moral actor because he rose above convention to do the right thing.

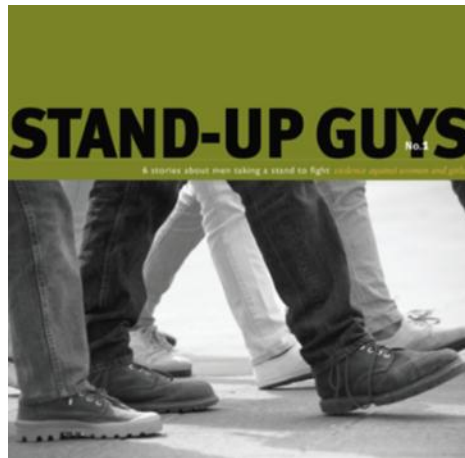


Figure 3. Picture of "Stand up Guys" booklet cover

At an EM conference I attended, I went to a workshop titled “Engaging Men As Allies.” The workshop facilitator began the session by doing the man-box exercise. After that was completed, he posed these questions to the men: “Given that the man box exists, what is men’s role in this movement? What can men do? What do we need from men?” Several men responded to his question by collectively constructing male activists as possessing special virtue.

The first man responded: “To take stand. To take a stand, as men.

Especially as men. To make that stand that this behavior is not ok.”

The second man responded: As men, we need to be more open about the struggles we go through. It takes real courage to do that. It takes real courage to look inside yourself and admit to yourself, and to others, that you are the “V” word. That you are vulnerable.

The third man responded: “As men, we need to be able to empower each other and resist dominant behavior when we see it. We need to stand up and subvert unhealthy interactions when we see it. It’s not easy, but we can help each other do it.”

The fourth man responded: “As men, we need to change the way we communicate. We don’t have to be macho and just suck it up. We can rise above that stuff.”

By defining men who did EM work as courageous men taking a stand, and as men who rose above conventional gender norms, they constructed male activists as moral actors.

These responses also reflected male activists’ investments in being men, as almost all of them used the phrase “as men.” Activists’ often stressed how being a good ally was not only difficult work, but “men’s work.” In fact, the phrase “as men” and “as a man” was so commonplace in EM work that I hardly noticed it. However, by paying attention to how and when men used that phrase, I realized that male activists used it purposefully. By distinguishing what they did as uniquely *men’s* work, male activists were able to participate in a feminist movement while maintaining membership in the dominant gender group.

Another way male activists endowed “man” (and male activists in particular) with moral value was to align themselves with moral exemplars, such as Jesus Christ, Cesar Chavez, Gandhi, and Dr. Martin Luther King. By aligning themselves with these moral exemplars, activists constructed themselves as moral crusaders and warriors. In fact, some male activists referred to their involvement with words like “battles” and “war,” and to themselves as “soldiers.” One male activist at an EM training said, “As men in this work, we are the foot soldiers in this fight. We are the ones who can turn this all around. And it’s not going to be easy. But, today, we gotta rally up the troops.” By using military imagery, activists offered newcomers a sense that they were enlisting in a manly endeavor.

In another instance, an activist likened male activists to Jesus Christ. He claimed that a group of men who organized a men’s anti-violence Listserv had “paid due homage to the most powerful ‘man against violence’ the world has seen to date, Jesus Christ.” He continued, “[Jesus was the first and more poignant example of efforts to stop violence, especially violence against women...The legacy created by Jesus and his 12 male disciples, the most noted ‘group of men against violence’ shows emphatically how much can be achieved by men when they are given the most positive guiding principles of social architecture....” These associations bolstered participants’ feelings of virtue and specialness.

I showed here how activists used motivational frames to define men who did EM work as good men, not just good people. Embedded in the frames were identity incentives that reflected how the men wanted to see themselves, which was as strong and courageous and able to rise above the standards set for ordinary men. If strength and courage were traits of anti-violence men, then men who got involved in EM work were strong and courageous

men. By constructing male activists as possessing not just virtue, but manly virtue, activists and organizations made joining the movement appealing to men who otherwise might have been uncomfortable with the anti-sexist messages in EM work.

Constructing A Better Masculinity

Activists worked to create what they saw as healthier and better ways of being men, what they termed “healthy manhood” and “healthy masculinity.” As one conference facilitator said, “We are here today to unlearn dominant masculinity. We need a new presentation of healthier male images, and part of that is focusing on the rebuilding process.” Activists often stressed how creating “healthier masculinity” would not only reduce men’s violence against women, but also improve men’s lives and society at large. For example, organizers of the 2012 “Healthy Masculinity Summit” described its purpose as spreading “the message of healthy, non-violent masculinity across the country...Men who are strong and assertive, as well as caring and connected, benefit our loved ones, schools, workplaces, nation, and the world.” By framing the solution to the problem in this way—by implicating world peace—activists invited men to participate in something that transcended their own existence. The “something” they wanted men to participate in was the opportunity to be bold men. As one activist noted as an EM workshop, “Men’s work tries to challenge each other to go to places we don’t want to go. And that place is a new, healthier vision for manhood.”

One men’s anti-violence organization used the term “the counter story of masculinity” to encourage male activists to repair masculinity. The “counter story” opposed the “dominant story of masculinity,” which was a masculinity rooted in aggression and

violence. During trainings, educators used the concept of the “counter story of masculinity” to generate discussion about how activists could create an alternative to traditional masculinity. In its training materials, the organization contrasted the dominant story with the counter story:

“A dominant story as it relates to manhood is a master narrative representing the values and messages associated with a shared social understanding of what it means to be a man. ...for example, displays of physical and emotional toughness, the drive to win at all costs, and expressions of aggressive behaviors and attitudes. The stories are dominant because they are pervasive and powerful, obscuring and diminishing the possibility of alternative stories and identities. A counter story is a narrative that resists the values and expectations of masculinity’s dominant stories and therefore represents a moral shift... Counter stories serve as [our] foundation for developing a healthier masculinity open to more diverse expressions and actions. [We] encourage[s] men to share their conflicts with the expectations of traditional manhood, to speak out about times they have chosen to challenge those expectations, and to help make the counter story the common story.

In this organization’s message, we see how activists’ framing of the solution builds collective identity. By distinguishing “dominant story” from “counter story” and by privileging one over the other, this message constructed targets of action and strategies, as well as a

collective identity for activists to aspire to. Also, by referring to men's "moral shift," this message makes attributions and claims about activists' moral character. By defining male activists (the "counter story") as moral actors, and constructing non-activists (the "dominant story") as irrational and immoral, this frame constructs the two groups in opposition to each other, creating an "us" and "them" between activists in EM work and men outside it.

Just as the man box provided activists with a concrete cause for the problem ("traditional masculinity") it also presented a solution ("redefine masculinity"). At an EM event, one man said, "We need to stand up together and make the man box uninhabitable." Another replied, "Men's liberation is part of this process. We have to liberate men from the construction of the box. We have to consciously work to get out of the box." As another man said, "We need to find ways in practice that are in contradiction to the box, and we need to help other men do this too." Similarly, at an EM training, the facilitator said, "As we redefine ourselves, and as we redefine manhood, you will feel more comfortable doing it. At first, it will be difficult and it will be uncomfortable. But, over time, you will feel more comfortable stepping outside the man box. Getting men to step outside the box, to cross the line, that's what we're here to do today—to begin that process." At the end of the training, the same facilitator added these remarks, "What you all did today as part of your education work was model a different masculinity for the other men here today. By doing this work, you're redefining manhood." By offering words of support and encouragement, conference and workshop facilitators played an important role in EM work—they served as role models to other men, discussing their struggles with masculinity and sharing stories about how they felt empowered after stepping out of the man box.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I examined the strategies activists used to engage men in anti-violence activism. I argued that because masculinity, and the characteristics that signify it, are highly valued in our culture, male activists did not work to abandon this cultural construction altogether. In fact, EM was largely a success because instead of abandoning the traits associated with men and masculinity (i.e., strength, power, assertiveness, and courage), activists gave participants new ways to think about how their involvement signified these same qualities. By separating “men” from “masculinity,” male activists could critique men’s violence against women, but still feel good about being men. In fact, activists’ used their involvement in “men’s work” to signify their identities as men.

Ally movements are based on the belief that oppression will persist until dominant group members work against their own interest to help end it (Bishop 2002; Casey 2010; Kivel 2002). Since men control access to social, economic, and political power, they also control access to women’s equality. Since men use violence against women to maintain power and control over women, men in the anti-violence movement are presumably working against their own interest. My analysis indicated, however, that men were not mobilized around the goal of eliminating male power and privilege. Activists did not engage men by telling them that they were joining efforts to get rid of men’s power. What I found, instead, was that activists motivated each other by redefining masculinity in a way that still benefitted men.

Although constructing male activists as moral actors was an effective mobilization strategy, it also elevated men’s position in the movement. That is, if men in EM work were

“better” men who “rose above” the standard set for ordinary men, then men’s involvement, and individual men, were unique and special, and therefore worthy of special attention and accolades. As scholars have noted, investments in moral identities can keep people from seeing how they reproduce inequality for others (Deeb-Sossa 2007; Kleinman 1996; Schwalbe 1996). By constructing male activists as moral actors, male activists were able to enjoy a privileged and elevated status in the movement, despite the fact that men’s behavior was the source of the problem. They were, after all, the “good guys.” Ultimately, constructing male activists as possessing moral virtue had negative consequences, particularly regarding men’s integration into the broader movement to end violence against women, which was still a women-led movement. In the next chapter, I examine some of the micro-political tensions that accompanied men’s integration into the broader movement to end men’s violence against women.

CHAPTER THREE

“I’M SURE AS HELL NOT PUTTING ANY MAN ON A PEDESTAL”: CONFRONTING MALE PRIVILEGE

What does it say about a movement if the marginalized members need to take time and energy to process our marginalization within our own movement? (woman activist, on anti-violence Listserv)

In chapter one, I explained that a significant development in the MEVAW is the effort to increase men’s involvement. In chapter two, I examined how activists and SMOs recruited men into doing “engaging men” work. These two chapters laid the foundation for my next question: Given that the movement to end violence against women is still predominately a women-led movement, how is the alliance between women and men taking shape internally? As men’s employment in domestic and sexual violence agencies grows, as collaborations between women-led and male-led organizations become more common, and as men take visible leadership roles in primary prevention work, more opportunities for conflict have arisen. In this chapter, I examine the challenges of mobilizing men as allies to women. I argue that the alliance between women and men is shaped largely by the struggle to confront sexism and male privilege within the movement.

The chapter is organized into two parts. In part one, I examine the tensions that arose as men brought “the problem” of sexism and male privilege into movement spaces. In part two, I examine how activists have responded to these problems by using the rhetoric of “men’s accountability,” which seeks to hold men accountable for their behaviors. I found that although activists have integrated accountability rhetoric into the movement, there is a gap between the rhetoric and practice. I identify two obstacles that impede effective

accountability practices: (1) the movement lacks a unified definition of accountability; and (2) despite activists' emphases on men holding each other accountable, women activists carry the burden of policing men's behaviors and drawing attention to issues of male power and privilege. My analysis in this chapter contributes to social movement theorizing about ally movements by identifying the tensions that impede dominant/subordinate group alliances, particularly as they relate to women-led movements that incorporate men as allies.

Challenges for Ally Movements

Social movement scholars have found that when dominant group members organize as allies to subordinate group members, they often reproduce social inequalities and hierarchies within the movement. According to Myers (2008), when social movements welcome allies, they will inevitably confront issues of power and privilege. Research has identified how whites reinforced racial hierarchies within the civil rights movement (Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken 1971; McAdam 1988; Rothschild 1979). McAdam (1988) found that white activists during Freedom Summer harbored deep-seated racist attitudes, which they carried with them as they organized for black voter registration. Similarly, white women's exclusion of women of color in the women's movement has also been well documented (Breines 2006; Greene 2005), and remains divisive to contemporary feminist organizing.

Scholarship on sexism in the civil rights movement shows how men dominated positions of leadership and authority while women were often relegated to secretarial-type duties (Clark 1990; Evans 1979; McAdam 1988; Klatch 1999). Myers's (2008) analysis of

heterosexuals advocating for gay and lesbian rights found that heterosexuals exploited their heterosexual privilege by picking and choosing when and if they wanted to identify themselves as part of the dominant group or not. Overall, this literature exposes how efforts to form dominant/subordinate group alliances—though beneficial for advancing the movement’s messaging—presents additional problems.

Scholarship that focuses specifically on men in women’s movements is limited. What we know about men in the broader feminist movement (Golderick-Jones 2000; Kimmel and Mosmiller 1991) is based on little empirical data. Additionally, we know little about how women activists deal with issues of male privilege and inequality within their own movement. My research contributes to our understanding of the unintended consequences of recruiting men as allies in women-led movements.

Men as Allies: Accountability

Broadly defined, accountability means being held responsible for your actions, or being made to account for your behavior. The concept of accountability is important for my analysis because, as I will show, activists have responded to the problem of male privilege in the movement by using the rhetoric of accountability. Sociologists have examined accountability in the context of idiocultures (Fine 1987), defining it as the expectation that individuals will tell each other when they are violating desired models of behavior. Theorizing about accountability practices in idiocultures has focused on accountability practices in Christian groups. In her study of emotion work in a university Evangelical Christian organization, Amy Wilkins (2008) found that accountability was a valued aspect of

the groups' relationships. Wilkins found that members monitored each other and identified inappropriate emotional displays as part of fostering authentic Christian feelings, such as happiness.

In his study of the Promise Keepers (a Christian men's movement), John Bartkowski (2000) analyzed "accountability groups," which function as small, intimate spaces where men could "cultivat[e] the godly manhood" movement leaders promoted in larger venues; or where the "real work of promise keeping is actively facilitated" (39). Central to these accountability groups was monitoring men's behaviors and sharing personal experiences. Wilkins and Bartowski's research illustrates how members of idiocultures transmit and enforce group norms through monitoring and policing individuals' behavior. Drawing from this theorizing, I will illustrate how activists in the MEVAW emphasized "men's accountability" as a way to transmit and enforce anti-sexist group norms while integrating men into the movement.

In Christian groups, accountability efforts are not intended to reduce power differentials within the group. However, for activists in ally movements, reducing power differentials within the movement is integral to accountability politics. For example, anti-racism activists believe that whites must take accountability seriously to be good white allies (Cushing 2010; Hobgood 2000; Kivel 2002). The idea is that when whites are held accountable for their behavior, they are more likely to support the efforts of minority activists, rather than dominate them. I found that activists' emphasized "men's accountability" in hopes of quashing male privilege within the movement. As I will show,

however, there was a gap between accountability rhetoric and practice.

WHEN THE SOLUTION BECOMES PART OF THE PROBLEM: ACTIVISTS CONFRONT MALE PRIVILEGE

Women activists agreed that it was important and necessary to welcome male allies. But they were also concerned that men's involvement opened the door to sexism and male privilege within the movement. As many women saw it, men's involvement undermined the very goal they were trying to reach. For example, a woman activist wrote on an anti-violence Listserv: "While I respect the need [for male] newcomers...there is a point where what is 'part of the problem rather than part of the solution' is brought into the group and is not conducive to the goals." There was a general sense that men's involvement, although beneficial in some ways, was simultaneously undermining the movements' efforts because men were, after all, *men* in a women's movement. Mel noted:

Sure, it's great that more men are involved now. But with that comes all this sexist bullshit that takes away from what we're trying to do. We're trying to change men's behaviors, right? And we're trying change a culture that devalues women. But yet we're dealing with this garbage in the movement too? If we can't do it with men *inside the movement*, what does that say about the work we're trying to do?

Whereas in EM work (see chapter two), male activists were overtly "pro-male," declaring such things as, "We are inviting men, not indicting men," women activists did both—they invited men and indicted men. As they saw it, male activists were still products of a sexist

culture. As Audrey noted, “I don’t care how good your mama was at raising you, there are things that are intrinsically in you that are what we are working against.” As Audrey and other women saw it, male anti-violence activists were also socialized to dominate space, feel entitled to take charge, objectify women, and be unreflective about how male privilege benefitted them. Consequently, even the most well-intentioned male activist was part of the problem.

Although women’s concerns about men’s involvement date back to the 1970s, current emphases on mobilizing *all men* (see chapter one) has likely bolstered these concerns. Now, college athletes, fraternity brothers, military soldiers, athletic coaches, and “Average Joes” are recruited into the movement, and that shift has created some backlash. Elsa, who works regularly with male activists through her position at a family violence organization, described how trying to recruit “all men” had both positive and negative impacts. She explained:

I think [men’s involvement] is positive, but with it comes some challenges in terms of replicating sexism that we need to address. It seems that in the movement people have just been like, “We need to get men in.” And, they’re very excited about getting men, *all men*, to participate and to be part of it, which is great. I mean, we need *all men*, definitely, to say that [violence is] not okay. But at the same time, there’s risk in just doing that. So, it’s kind of a really, really, hard line to walk.

Elsa’s account is representative of how many other activists identified both pros and cons of men’s involvement. It is important to note, however, that women activists were not the only

ones who identified the unintended consequences of men's increasing involvement.

In an article published in *The Voice: The Journal of the Battered Women's Movement*, veteran activist Ben Atherton-Zeman (2009) also cautioned against the open invitation for "all men" to join the movement. He claimed that doing so undermined the movement's anti-sexist goals. He wrote, "Many men are entering this movement and becoming part of the problem, while trying to become part of the solution." He later added:

More and more men are finally joining the movement to end men's violence against women...However, the rush to involve men needs to be tempered with wisdom and caution. Certainly male involvement can be a positive thing...But many communities are reporting that we men who label ourselves "allies" are still a large part of the problem—acting our sexism and denying it, refusing to be accountable to women, or even perpetrating violence ourselves (8).

As Elsa and Atherton-Zeman noted, despite good intentions, male activists do and say things that violate the movement's anti-sexist ethics. Hence, the widespread notion within the movement that, while trying to be part of the solution, men also add to the problem.

At a conference session organized to "generate dialogue about men in the movement," a woman activist said, "What I have often seen from my own work [at the sexual assault coalition] and from what I know other women have experienced from their own work, men's involvement may very well be the most pressing issue in the movement today. And, with that in mind, it is crucial that we address some of the potential risks of engaging men." Another female activist replied, "I really do value men in the movement.

Truly, I do. I think they have a very important role to play. But, sometimes, I feel like men are coming into the movement with good intentions, but because they haven't done their homework, and don't know the history of the movement, they don't know about the underlying problems of sexism, so they end up reinforcing those very things." A male activist responded with, "That is absolutely the case. Absolutely. We have made significant progress in engaging men and bringing more men into this work. But with that has come some challenges in how men are moving through this movement. I guess what concerns me is that we're gonna throw the baby out with the bathwater."

This kind of dialogue, in which activists identified the drawbacks of men's involvement, was common in the movement, especially when activists created space to discuss these issues. With this space intentionally created, activists traded stories about how individual men did or said things they described as "unacceptable," "problematic," or "completely out of line." I attended a number of conference events intended to address precisely this issue.⁷ During these events, activists (mostly women, but sometimes men) expressed their concerns about men's involvement and often exchanged stories about how men's participation created problems. Women regularly discussed "men taking over" and "men taking up too much space." Other critiques centered around what women perceived as the undue praise and attention male activists received in the movement, simply because they were men. The way men behaved, and the reactions they received, were persistent points of tension.

⁷ Throughout my research, I attended several different activists events, all centered around the same theme: the unwanted aspects of men's involvement, or as the events were titled: "Engaging Men: Successes and Challenges," "Men as Allies: Risks and Rewards," "Engaging Men: Learning from the Past to Improve the Future," and "Women and Men as Allies: What Men Need to Know."

These dynamics of male privilege and sexism called into question men's abilities to be authentic allies. For example, in the excerpt below, a woman referred to how male activists were discredited by particular behaviors they displayed.

Please know that many of the self-proclaimed allies in this movement are not trusted by women fighting alongside you. Please know that we warn each other about attending your sessions and workshops. That we recognize and name the ways in which your male privilege shows up in the work you do, regardless of whether or not you choose to recognize it yourselves. Please keep in mind the history of gender privilege that allows you to show up the way you do in the anti-violence movement...I don't believe we can have a movement to end violence if we don't pay attention to the identity-based dynamics that occur within our own [movement].

Comments like this were common on anti-violence Listservs and in other movement spaces, and were often followed by discussion about the nature of men's involvement. These kind of dialogues often stimulated discussion and debate about the nature of men's involvement and how male activists benefitted from and perpetuated male privilege. In the next section, I examine one of the most persistent tensions surrounding men's involvement: the overvaluation of men's contributions.

The Glorification of Male Activists

Sociologists who study gender and work have found that when men enter female-dominated workplaces, their gender serves as a resource that helps them attain managerial and leadership positions. Williams (1992) refers to this as the “glass escalator.” In contrast, when women enter male-dominated workplaces they encounter a series of institutional obstacles limiting their opportunities for advancement—what is known as the “glass ceiling” (Padavic and Reskin 2002). The glass escalator effect can also be seen in the MEVAW. Despite their numerical minority status and the devaluation of “women’s work,” men’s gender increases the legitimacy of their anti-violence work, and their status in the movement. In other words, that *men do* anti-violence work enhances the value of the work. As my research also suggests, male privilege also enhances the status and prestige of male activists in the movement.

Men’s gender serves as a resource because of male privilege, which is the system of advantage based on membership in the category “men” (Johnson 2001; McIntosh 1988). As members of the dominant group, men are seen as possessing the qualities of leaders and are therefore more likely to be promoted to leadership and supervisory positions, even if they lack experience relative to their female counterparts. As one activist noted, “Men are used to being in charge and they’re used to telling people what to do. Women are used to seeing men in charge, and are used to men telling them what to do. I’m seeing that dynamic get translated into the movement, and it worries me.” It is this concern—that men will dominate the movement—that has generated debate over men’s expanding role in domestic and sexual violence prevention work.

Activists' fears about male privilege were reflected in the belief that prominent male activists earned more money than prominent women activists. As women activists frequently noted, men got paid well to deliver the same message that women had been delivering for thirty years. Although I could not verify the alleged differences in speaking fees, the perceptions that men were paid more than women was widespread. Some activists argued the perhaps male activists out earned women simply because there were fewer of them, or what activists commonly referred to as "the supply and demand effect." No such effect is evident, however, when women enter male-dominated professions (Padavic and Reskin 2002).

In a study of a predominantly female Black political organization, Kolb (2007) found that despite the fact that the men devoted and invested significantly less effort and energy in the group than the women, women often placed the men in positions of visibility because the women believed that if men delivered the organization's messages, the message (and the organization) would be viewed more favorably by others. A similar phenomenon occurred in the MEVAW, as women activists and women-led organizations promoted men's visibility in the movement. One example of this is the "male ally" awards events that women-led organizations sponsored and promoted. As the organizer of a male ally award event said to her fellow staff members, "You have to get the word out about this event, ladies! This is our biggest event of the year. This is our biggest fundraiser!" I also found, however, that many women activists refused to privilege men. The same woman who urged her co-workers to promote the male ally event, also rolled her eyes and complained that "Well, you know, everyone gets so freaking excited about men doing this work. It's really kind of annoying."

Women activists were bothered by this glorification of male activists. As they saw it, men received more attention (and more favorable attention) for doing the same work women had done for years. As some women activists said, “men are put on pedestals.” Ruby, for instance, explained how men in the movement generated more favorable attention than women activists:

Getting men involved as allies, even though it's been going on for a while, it's one of those new, cool things. What I've seen is that, because it's a hot new thing to do, a lot of attention is being paid to men who are involved...People are like, “Oh, come and speak here and come and speak there!” It puts them on a pedestal even though those exact same things have been happening for years and years and years—but mainly by women, so it's not as important because it's women's work. Not as important.

Sheila also noted how men's participation generated an enthusiasm and excitement that women's participation did not. She compared reactions to men's involvement with reactions to women's:

When it's women involved in anti-violence against women work, it's like, “Please, I'm falling asleep, this is so boring.” Men involved in anti-violence against women work? Oh my god! Awards, recognition, media attention, money. It's the perfect example of how sexism works in our society: the men get all of this attention for facing something they've been fucking up since humanity started.

By connecting men's elevated status in the movement to the dynamics of male power and privilege *outside* the movement, Sheila identified the contradictory nature of men's involvement: it brought more attention to the movement—which was good—but it also reminded women of men's higher social status. Being involved also raised the status of individual men who were considered heroic for helping end men's violence against women.

According to some women activists I interviewed, male activists did not have to contribute much to receive positive feedback. Minimal participation was enough. According to one facilitator at a men's anti-rape training, sometimes all men had to do was show up to a meeting. As the facilitator said, "Just being a visible male ally in this room is powerful." Because men were relatively rare in the movement, the presence of a single man was noticed. Andrea, a rape prevention educator on a college campus, described what she perceived as dramatically different reactions to two speakers at a Take Back the Night rally:

What I have seen is that as men they feel like they don't have to do as much because it's nice that they're even involved. They don't have to learn as much because good for them for even doing this. Just at this past Take Back the Night (*She shook her head and took a deep breath*). Ughhh! I was so frustrated. So, my peer educators, Students Speaking Out (SSO), are a co-ed group of students, but mostly women. Take Back the Night had 2 MC's this year. One was a woman from SSO and one was the president of the men's group (CMAR). The president of SSO and the president of CMAR said something at the beginning of the night. The president of SSO gave this amazing, touching, powerful

speech. I mean, just so energizing, and activating, you know, all these kinds of things. Then the CMAR president came up and all he said was, “We’re a group of guys who care about this issue. Thanks for coming out.” I mean that was really the extent of it. And for days all I heard about was about how amazing (*she rolls her eyes*) it was that CMAR men were there. And how powerful it was having the president of CMAR get up there and say that. Nobody said a word about the president of Students Speak Out. Not a word, and it just made me sick. It really just made me want to cry. That is what I see everywhere ...It just drives me crazy. Unfortunately I see a whole lot of this praising of these wonderful men who, in my opinion, don’t really do all that much.

As the advisor to both the men’s anti-rape group and the co-ed Students Speak Out group, Andrea saw how people overvalued men’s minimal contributions, while undervaluing and taking for granted women’s contributions.

Although some women critiqued the glorification of male activists, it was often other women activists who exaggerated and elevated men’s contributions. It was common for male activists’ comments to be immediately met with compliments from women. For instance, during a Webinar about engaging men, the male presenter simply said, “Men are part of the problem, therefore we must be are part of the solution.” A woman replied with “I love Roger. He’s awesome.” Another woman wrote in, “We need more men like Roger.” A third woman wrote, “It’s men like Roger that we need as role models for our sons.” Roger’s remark about men was mundane in the context of the movement, yet it elicited praise rarely

enjoyed by women activists. Another example of how women elevated the status of male activists occurred when the President of SSO, Brittany, wrote an e-mail to the CMAR and SSO Listservs. In her e-mail, Brittany publicly thanked and honored the men who participated in a voluntary training. She wrote:

I woke up this morning and the first thing on my mind was that I'd really like to thank [the men in CMAR] for participating in the training yesterday. I know that it's a serious time commitment; a great deal of information to absorb in a single day; and that it can be an emotionally challenging day. I also wanted to sincerely thank you for participating in the part of that training [that I facilitated]. Your questions and comments were excellent and thought provoking, and I can't thank you enough for feeling comfortable enough to really say how you felt and to challenge some of the things we were saying.

By portraying their involvement as special and extraordinary, she elevated the status of the men, whom she also constructed as special and extraordinary. Interestingly, Andrea's reaction to the men's participation in this same training was quite different:

A few of the CMAR men decided to do the sexual assault training this year, which was shocking in the first place, because they have never showed up in the past. But the men would not stop badgering [the young women students, including Brittany] with questions the whole time, which I was just outraged about. It was like this male entitled bull-shit.

It seems, then, that Brittany, a young college student, was trying to accommodate and excuse the men's behaviors. Andrea, on the other hand, was an older and more experienced anti-violence educator who recognized the sexist nature of this interaction.

Overall, male activists were well aware of their elevated status in the movement, and many of them addressed it. As Atherton-Zeman (2009) noted in an essay, "As a gender, we men are 'Johnnys-come-lately' to the issue of domestic violence and sexual assault prevention. Yet when we do show up, we are often listened to more than women, praised more than women, and get paid more than women. Whenever we do the slightest thing, we get a whole lot of credit ..." (8-9). In his interview, veteran activist Lane said, "A lot of women fawn over the men in the movement, and, honestly, sometimes it makes me really, really uncomfortable." George also admitted that women in the movement had tried to "fix me up with their daughters," because they considered him a "good guy." George added, "I mean, I get it. But I have learned now how to redirect those moments when women are like, 'Oh, my God, what you're doing is amazing,' by saying things like, 'Actually, I learned a lot from the women who work in your local rape crisis center. They are the ones who are amazing and who taught me a lot about this issue.'" Tim, too, noted that he "used to really, really like the attention I got from women. I still do like the attention, a little too much actually. I wish I didn't, but I do. But now I am more aware about it happening and often say, 'If I say something smart today, a feminist woman taught me it.'" Although not all male activists were as self-reflective as Lane, George, and Tim, they were well aware that they received favorable attention from women.

In addition to the glorification of male activists, another unintended consequence of

men's expanding involvement was more frequent "movement violations." I use this term to refer to the things that male activists did and said that violated the movement's anti-sexist ethics. Despite these violations, which are examined in the following section, men in the movement continued to reap the status rewards of being men in the movement.

Movement Violations

Activists frequently referred to the "mistakes" men made. When veteran male activists talked about men's "mistakes," they often referred to how they messed up a lot when they were new to the movement, but that they had "learned over the years." In fact, men's violations seemed to be an inevitable byproduct of their involvement. During a men's anti-violence conference, a prominent male activist explained how men would inevitably make mistakes:

As men, you *will* make mistakes. You will, because for your whole life, you have been socialized to act a certain way, and to be a certain way.

You don't just wake up one day, and poof, it's gone because you do this work. You have to work at it. I still work at it. I've been doing this work for over twenty years now, and I still make mistakes. It's a constant process.

The mistakes male activists referred to were the sexist things men would do and/or say, both inside and outside the movement. It was also common for male activists to refer to men's involvement as "a process," which sent the message that men would inevitably mess up, and there should be no expectation otherwise. Brandon, one of the most prominent anti-sexist

and anti-violence educators and authors, said, “If we’re going to try and engage men in anti-sexist work you have to acknowledge that men are men in a sexist culture. We’re gonna have—whether it’s up front, or residual, or covert—sexism. That’s just part of the package.” In this section, I examine some of the violations that activists identified.

One violation was referred to as “taking up too much space.” In interviews, women activists described occasions when men talked too much, interrupted women, and/or took control during presentations co-facilitated with women. Andrea described one such occasion:

Dennis was the only man that came to our regional conference last fall and he dominated the entire thing. He talked over every woman. He kept, he just goes on and on, and on and on, without making connections. And we [the women] were all very much aware of it. But, I mean, he had no sort of awareness at all. And you just think about survivors. Every time we do a talk someone in the room is a survivor. Period. And, you have this overbearing, dominating, not respecting women, talking over women, lack of awareness [behavior]. I mean it’s endless. I see this *everywhere I go*. And I’m like, this is ridiculous.

(emphasis in original)

Other activists shared similar stories about men dominating conversations and interactions. Below are excerpts from my interviews with Elsa and Ruby. As Elsa said:

I was at a conference and we were at this workshop and this group was doing violence intervention and prevention work with men in prisons. And this man and this woman were doing this training about this work

and the man just *took over*. He just started *talking and talking and talking*. To the point where the female presenter just kind of moved off the side. And when I see that I think that's exactly the kind of behaviors we can't have. I mean he completely took the whole thing over, like she wasn't even there.

Ruby described a similar experience:

I've been interrupted by men doing this work during meetings, when I'm in the middle of a sentence, and I'm pretty feisty, so I'll say, "Well, I'm in the middle of a sentence now." But you know, there are men who feel that it's ok to talk over women and interrupt women. And there are endless examples of that. I mean, of course a man is going to interrupt me, based on how our gender norms are set up. I mean, of course what a man has to say is more important than what I have to say, so it has to be said immediately, and so of course he's going to have to interrupt.

When men interrupted women and monopolized conversations, they violated a critical principle in the movement: women's voices deserve to be heard. This behavior also reflected male entitlement and how men felt entitled to speak over women. As the data show, women activists were very aware of these micro-political interactions and were often frustrated by them.

Male activists shared stories about how they received criticism from women for interrupting women. Many also acknowledged that male activists tended to "take up too

much space.” Lane, for instance, described men’s tendencies to control interactions within the movement by admitting he was guilty of behaving this way:

Even unintentionally, men will speak over women. Or, they get really excited and they fail to pay attention to the gender dynamics. You know, it happens...I try but I don’t always succeed at being attentive to how much space I’m taking up. So, I get criticized by women for that. And I deserve it.

Similarly, Tim described his personal struggle to not interrupt women:

Ok, so something I still struggle with is interrupting women. I own it. I acknowledge it. That’s mine. Now, I don’t always succeed, but I have spent many years being conscious of that. So, no matter how important I think something I have to say is, or how excited I am to say it, I have to make that conscious effort not to talk over women. It’s a struggle. I have come a *really* long way. Feminist women were very clear and upfront with me, back in the day, that that was something I needed to work on. And I have. But I still mess up. That I know.

As Lane and Tim admitted, they “mess up” and talk over women during interactions. They also both recognized that this behavior was problematic and agreed that male activists should work on not doing it. However, when Lane suggested that men get carried away with “excitement” and are “unintentional” about interrupting women, he minimized this patterned behavior. Whether or not men *intended* to dominate interactions was irrelevant, because the outcome was the same: women’s voices and expertise were overshadowed by men who felt

entitled to talk over them.

Women activists also critiqued men's tendencies to dominate and control work meetings. This kind of behavior did not sit well with Sheila, the director of a rape crisis center, who explained what happened when a man who was recently hired by a men's anti-violence organization dominated their inter-organizational meeting:

He doesn't know his ass from a hole in the ground. It breaks my heart. I mean this was his second week there, and I was sitting in meetings with him, doing program planning with one of our major funders, and he's dominating the meeting. I mean, it's me and three other executive directors from domestic violence organizations who have been in this field for years. And he's dominating the entire meeting. I'm like, will you just sit down and shut up and listen and learn something? I don't do well with large displays of testosterone.

Prior to this man's hire, the rape crisis center collaborated regularly with the men's organization. Shortly after that meeting, however, Sheila terminated involvement with the organization. She later added: "I have no confidence left in [them] whatsoever. Zero. We don't donate to them anymore as an agency. I mean, we're not even participating in the two-day national conference they're doing." In this instance, a man's domineering behavior had consequences not only for him as an individual, but also for his organization.

Also, when Sheila stated that she "doesn't do well with large displays of testosterone," she was conveying an important point about men's violations. That is, the problem is not so much that male activists tend to be less experienced and/or knowledgeable

than women; rather, the problem is that men bring unwanted aspects of masculinity with them.

Audrey shared a story about an unpleasant interaction she had with a man who worked for a neighboring sexual assault coalition. She and the man, Tripp, attended a meeting to negotiate the merger of their respective coalitions into one. According to Audrey, Tripp physically intimidated her during the meeting, and was verbally aggressive. She said:

So this neutral facilitator in our meeting, which got particularly contentious, was stuck. And, one of the things that I do pretty well is facilitate conflict. So, he asked if I would jump in and co-facilitate with him for a few minutes, to try to move us on. I said “Sure,” not thinking about how one of the conditions for this meeting was that it had to be facilitated by a neutral facilitator [and not one of us from either of the coalitions]. But, I am in the moment, and if there’s a conflict and I can help, and the facilitator is asking me to do that, I will do that. Then, Tripp is in there like (*raises her voices and imitates Tripp*). “You made a commitment not to do this and here you are doing it!” But the dynamic that happened was he got up out of his chair, leaned in over the table, and yelled at me. I mean it was, I can still see his face, he was that angry. And it was visceral. And it was very gut level. And it scared the shit out of me! And you know, what I saw was, here’s this man coming at me from across the table, and he’s out of control. Um, so, the meeting totally fell apart at that point...The thing I will say about

that is that, in all the years I've been doing this work, I've had many really challenging disagreements with women, but I've *never* had a woman come up across the table in the course of one of those.

Men's sexual objectification of women was another violation that activists had to confront. Activists saw this kind of objectification as an element of rape culture, hence something to be strongly opposed. One troubling incident occurred during a national men's anti-violence conference. In fact, this incident was so troubling that it was mentioned by three different activists. Angela, a session moderator at the conference told me what happened:

We were [at a men's anti-violence conference] and there were a group of women who had witnessed men who were attending the conference, and who had given their word about working on their sexism, who were spending their evening in [the local] brothels. And women came forward and said, "This is offensive beyond belief."

By participating in the sexual objectification and exploitation of women's bodies, men violated a fundamental anti-sexist principle of the movement—which is that anti-violence activists do not objectify women's bodies. Violations like this one were especially damaging because they undermined women's trust in men's involvement.

Another violation that women activists cited was the "expert syndrome." Activists used this term to describe the tendency for male activists to present themselves as subject matter experts, despite the fact that many of them were new to domestic and sexual violence prevention work and lacked the experience many women activists had. Critiques about the

“expert syndrome” were often directed at male activists who traveled around the country to give speeches and talks about domestic and/or sexual violence. It was also frequently suggested that these men charged high prices for their speaking fees.

In response to what she perceived as inappropriate behavior on the part of a male anti-violence educator, a female activist posted this message on a men’s anti-violence Listserv:

Please think twice about the implications of showing up as the “expert.”

Please think twice about the gender dynamics that allow you to fire off a curt response to a woman...Please keep in mind that many of us who you attempt to “school” on the “facts” of sexual assault came to this work as a result of our own victimization...we don’t need you to tell us the “facts.” We need you to be allies, NOT experts.

Like the activist quoted above, veteran activist Donna also cautioned against the expert syndrome, suggesting that “although well-intentioned, many men have not done their homework. They think they know how to solve the problem, so they go out and they work in complete isolation, away from women and away from the years of experience and expertise women have accumulated.” Tensions over claims to expertise served as reminders that gendered power differentials existed within the movement.

Given the ubiquity of sexism, and the interactional nature of gender inequality (Ridgeway 1993; 2011; Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin 1999), it may be inevitable that men’s involvement will continue to bring with it sexism and male privilege. As my research suggests, dominant group members and subordinate group members who wish to build

alliances must work through these micro-political obstacles. The question that remains is, How are activists dealing with these internal tensions?

THE EMPHASIS ON “MEN’S ACCOUNTABILITY”

Activists responded to these internal tensions by using the rhetoric of “men’s accountability.” This referred to men’s responsibility to hold each other accountable for their sexist behavior. It would be fair to say that the movement successfully integrated the rhetoric of accountability into its discourse. There were, however, problems that created gaps between rhetoric and practice: (1) activists lacked a unified definition of accountability; and (2) men were reluctant to police each other’s sexist behavior, preferring to leave this task to women in the movement. Women activists still carry the burden of drawing attention to issues of male power and privilege.

Accountability in the Movement

The term “accountability” has long been used in the MEVAW. In the 1970s, advocates pushed for “offender accountability” to hold violent men responsible for their use of violence against women. In the 1980s, advocates worked to build institutional accountability, which made social institutions responsible for ensuring that survivors received the services they needed (such as legal representation, health care, counseling, etc.). By the 1990s, as men’s anti-violence groups and organizations expanded throughout the country, activists extended their use of the term to include holding male activists responsible

for their behaviors within the movement. As veteran domestic violence activist Donna explained:

Accountability was about men realizing that being involved was not enough. It's *how* they got involved that really mattered. Are you following women's leadership and expertise? Are you responsive to women's criticisms to your work? Are you soliciting women's feedback and then using that to inform your own work?

As Donna defined it, "accountability" was meant to preempt men's tendencies to control movement space. Women thought that if they held men accountable by monitoring and sanctioning men's behaviors, then they could maintain their leadership over the movement. Defining accountability in these terms resonated with many women activists, especially those who were reluctant to work with men. Angela, for instance, explained how she was initially reluctant to work with men but was eventually persuaded by an advocate who convinced her that men in the movement should be guided by her leadership:

It was with great trepidation that I decided to work with men. It was just not something I wanted to do. But one day Sherryl called me and wanted me to work with some men who were doing work with batterers. I said, "I don't know why you're calling me. I don't work with men and I don't want to work with men. Someone has to do that work, but it's not my work." And she said, "Well, actually, Angela, it kind of is your work. Because what it means for men to do work that's accountable and ethical is to do work with the leadership of women, and particularly

women who have been in this movement and who have experienced abuse in their lives. They need to see those women as leaders, and in order for them to call themselves accountable, they need to be able to hear your voice and accept critique from that place.” And I thought about it. And she was right.

Donna and Angela’s accounts pinpoint two core ethics of accountability: (1) men should follow women’s leadership; and (2) men should be receptive to women’s feedback. Also implicit was the assumption that *women* would serve as the movement’s watchdogs to monitor and police men in the movement. It seemed, then, that by endorsing “accountability” women activists could resolve their conflicted stance of accepting men as allies, while acknowledging that men’s involvement came with a price.

Women were not the only ones, however, who emphasized men’s accountability. In fact, male activists identified accountability as a guiding principle for their own organizing. Male activists wrote book chapters, essays, and gave talks titled, “Staying Accountable to Feminists” and “Men’s Accountability to Women’s Leadership.” Male activists also discussed the importance of being self-reflective and receptive to women. In *Stopping Rape: A Challenge for Men*, Rus Ervin Funk (1993) wrote:

The subject of accountability has been covered, but it can’t be discussed too much... I define [accountability] as listening to [women’s] concerns, being responsible for our actions, communicating on an ongoing basis, and being willing to acknowledge when we make mistakes. Being accountable means being willing to take an accounting

of our behaviors and take responsibility for our choices. It means being responsive to the women in our life and the women we are working with, as well as to the women and women's groups that are working most directly with survivors of men's violence (132).

Similarly, in *Men and Sexual Politics*, Bob Pease (1999) wrote:

It is understandable that women are going to be cautious of men working in the area of male violence. Finding ways to ensure that we are open to women's feedback is, I believe, important. As men working with men, we have a responsibility to find ways of remaining accountable to feminist women's groups to ensure that women's interests are kept in the foreground.

Notice that in these two excerpts the emphasis on accountability defined men's involvement in relational terms. That is, men's involvement was to be structured in relation to women's involvement, with men *supporting* women's work, not directing it. Embracing accountability was also a way male activists could do ally identity work. That is, by showing women that they recognized the importance of accountability, men were being good allies. Men could also keep women's criticisms about men "taking over" at bay, since they were being mindful of women's leadership. When men talked about "men's accountability to women," they signified their understanding of women's leadership in the movement. The rhetoric of accountability, then, assisted men's socialization and integration into the movement.

RHETORIC VS. PRACTICE

Activists worked hard to integrate the rhetoric of “men’s accountability” into the movement’s discourse. Today it is nearly impossible to be involved in the movement without hearing “accountability” defined as a cornerstone of men’s activism (Cohen 2000). There are entire conferences, sessions within conferences, webinars, men’s “institutes,” and activist working groups organized to address men’s expanding role in the movement, with discussions of “men’s accountability to women” at the center of conversation. More than once during the course of my research I was contacted with questions about “men’s accountability.”

In 2009, *The Voice: Journal for Battered Women* published a special issue on accountability. That issue included an article by Ben Atherman-Zeman titled “Minimizing the Damage: Male Accountability in Stopping Men’s Violence Against Women,” in which Atherton-Zeman argued that “keeping [men] accountable” can minimize some of the “damage” that comes with men’s involvement. In 2011, an anonymous male author published an essay titled “Men’s Involvement in Violence Prevention: The Need for Accountability,” in a violence prevention journal. This essay contended that men can work against male privilege by “honestly and continually questioning [their] actions.” Also in 2011, a male activist noted over a Listserv, “There is a wide range of ways in which the work men do in this movement can be harmful to the movement as a whole if we aren't doing it with accountability to women in this work.” To judge from the movement’s discourse, accountability is taken very seriously.

As more men have become involved, however, the emphasis has shifted from men

being accountable to women, to men holding each other accountable. At a men's anti-violence conference I attended, the conference facilitator stressed how important it is for men to hold each other accountable:

We, as men, need to step up. We need to be willing to say to another man, to one of our brothers, to our friend, to the guy next to us, "What you just said is not ok. It's not ok, and here's why." And by holding each other accountable in that way, we are doing the real work. That *is* the work.

The emphasis on men holding each other accountable signifies an important shift in the movement's micro-politics. According to Allan Johnson (2000), men are socialized to ally with men, not be "gender traitors." By asking men to hold each other accountable, or as activists commonly referred to it, "call each other out," men are expected to abandon their allegiance to other men. Therefore, by holding each other accountable, men are breaking their loyalty to men, to form allegiance with women.

A woman attending a workshop about "women and men as allies" articulated the expectation that men will hold each other accountable. She said:

I want to know that, when it comes down to it, you're going to have our back. And I don't just mean stand by and watch us hold men accountable. I mean, get up on your own two feet, stand up, and look another man in the eyes and say, "Nope. Stop right there. What you just said undermines the work women have done for over 30 years, and

here's why." Or whatever it is you decide to say. *That's* how men are accountable to women—by holding other men accountable.

The emphasis on men holding each other accountable corresponded to men's changing role in the movement. As Linda, the executive director of a rape crisis center, noted, "If we are going to accept men as leaders in our work to end violence against women, then that means they'll have to do the dirty work of telling other men when it's time to step back. If you can't confront other men on their sexism and on their homophobia, and if you can't get other men to reflect on their own privilege, then you shouldn't be a leader." Similarly, Chantel said, "To be a leader in this movement means that you lead by example. To be a male ally, and to be a male leader in this movement, means you're not afraid to call another man out. Publicly, in front of other men."

Talk about accountability was intended to address the problem of male privilege and sexism. And it was not without effect. What I found, however, is that activists' efforts to turn this rhetoric into effective practice was impeded by the lack of a unified definition of "accountability" and men's reluctance to hold each other accountable. As a result, there was a considerable gap between the rhetoric of accountability and its practice. Each of these problems is examined in more detail below.

Obstacle #1: Definitional Inconsistency

The movement lacked a unified and consistent definition of accountability. In fact, with so much emphasis on "men's accountability" within the movement, and with so many discussions at movement events about how men needed to "stay accountable" to women, I

was surprised to discover that the activists I interviewed struggled to define it themselves. I also found that when activists did define it, their definitions varied considerably.

I asked all of my interviewees the same question: “Something I’ve been hearing a lot about lately is men’s accountability. What does that mean to you?” Several activists admitted that they did not know how to define it exactly, adding that it was a “good” and “important” question and, as Tamara said, “a really fundamental concept for us but one that’s hard to define.” Audrey said, “You know, that’s a good question. I think about that a lot and it’s hard to put into words.” Ava said, “I don’t really know exactly how to define it, but I know what it is when I see it.” Chantel also didn’t know how to describe it, but said that she “know[s] when men are *not* doing it.” When I asked Phil, he said, after an extended pause, “Well, that was something we worked really hard on some years ago. Now, I’m not so sure.”

When activists were able to articulate definitions of accountability, these definitions fell into one of two categories. They either described accountability in *proactive* terms, which meant that men’s involvement should be guided by women’s leadership. Or they defined it in *reactive* terms, which stressed the importance of policing individual men’s behaviors during social interactions. Designing men’s organizations and groups so that men support rather than dominate women’s leadership is different from policing individual men’s behaviors during social interactions. Examples of the proactive definition include:

Accountability means that men doing this work need to be advised by women in leadership who are on the front lines doing the work. And men need to be guided by what’s needed, not by what they think they

should be doing. It's about being informed by women's experiences before you go out there and try and do your own work. (Ray)

For men to be accountable, I want to know are they seeking out guidance from women in other organizations who have been doing this work for many years? Have they learned from women before trying to go out and do their own education work with men? How have they been guided by women's voices? (Mel)

Here, activists emphasized how male activists should be informed by women's experiences. Those who defined accountability in reactive terms stressed the importance of men's *receptivity* to women's criticisms and feedback.

Being a man who's accountable in this work means that it's part of our job, as men, to take feedback from women, to hear their criticisms, and to be receptive to that criticism, and to not get defensive. That's just as important as doing the work itself. In fact, that is a big part of the work. (Robby)

Accountability, to me, means men don't get defensive when someone calls them out for something they did. It means being open, and receptive to what we, as women, or even other men, point out to them. They might think they always know what they're doing. But they don't! And for a man to be accountable means he's acknowledging that he will, at some point, mess up. It's going to happen, ok, so deal with it.

Admitting that up front and then knowing how to deal with it without getting defensive—that's accountability. (male activist at conference)

Most activists' defined accountability in either proactive or reactive terms. Other advocates, however, like Linda and Sheila, defined accountability in terms of whether men were self-reflective about male privilege. As Linda said, "Men are accountable when they recognize that they bring their privilege into the work." Similarly, Sheila said, "Accountability is, first and foremost, recognizing that you in fact have male privilege, and then it's about acknowledging it. Don't pretend it's not there, because it is."

Thus while the rhetoric of "men's accountability" was pervasive in the movement, activists lacked a clear definition of what accountability meant in practice. A newcomer's candid admission via a Listserv reflected the movement's disconnect between accountability rhetoric and practice:

As someone who is fairly new to this movement, and at the same time hoping to contribute to the men's (pro)feminist struggle against gender violence, I have heard the term "accountability" thrown around quite a bit, without really being defined. And quite frankly, people have asked me directly how I am accountable to women and women's advocates, and I'm not quite sure what to say. I know that I want to be more accountable, yet am not exactly sure how to do so. I am involved in a men's group at a gender violence prevention organization here...Sorry if this is a 101 question, but I think it's an important one, because men's accountability [is] a concept I hear about frequently, yet not one that

seems to have a clear definition, or - just as importantly - a means to action.

This newcomer's message illustrated the extent to which accountability rhetoric was part of the movement, but without a consistent definition or mode of practice. Without greater definitional clarity, it was hard for activists to close the gap between rhetoric and reality. To better institutionalize accountability practices, the movement will need a clearer definition of what those practices look like.

For a movement that has undergone some significant shifts and turning points (see chapter one), it was perhaps inevitable that accountability would come to mean different things to different people. In fact, the diversity of the MEVAW is reflected in the lack of definitional consistency around accountability. The broader organization of the MEVAW is highly diversified and fragmented. There are different factions and generations of activists within the movement—from 1970s-era feminists, to 1990s men's movement men, to newcomers who embrace the public health model. As Brandon pointed out, "When people say men must be accountable to women, *what women* are we supposed to be accountable to? There are lots of different kinds of women. What women are we supposed to be accountable to?" Despite the diversity within the movement, activists' emphasis on accountability has remained. This diversity, however, has likely impeded a unified and cohesive definition of accountability over time and place.

Obstacle #2: Men's Reluctance

Despite the movement's rhetoric about men holding each other accountable, I found that women carried the burden of policing men's behaviors, or "calling men out," as activists called it. Overall, women drew attention to issues of male privilege and sexism in the movement, not men. I also found that women activists were frustrated about what they saw as men's unwillingness to police other men's behaviors. In fact, in the instances when women policed men's behaviors, they also called attention to how male activists failed to do so. Women activists described these instances as "men dropping the ball," "men not walking the walk," and "men not doing their work." Women activists saw these occasions as missed opportunities for men to show that they were trustworthy allies.

Men's reluctance to police other men and to draw attention to issues of male privilege intensified women's distrust of male activists. Audrey admitted that she left her position as a board member of a men's organization because of how the men failed to hold a particular man accountable when he said "really troubling things." Audrey said, "The men kind of sat back and bonded. They weren't willing to take on their male colleague. They weren't willing to, in a meeting, call him out on things that were happening, and it was just very disappointing. It was the women who took action and demanded some accountability."

Earlier I presented an excerpt from my interview with Angela in which she talked about men "going to brothels" while attending a conference. Later in the interview, Angela described how conference participants responded to this violation. Angela shared how it was the women, rather than the men, who responded by drawing attention to the men's wrongdoing.

The women came forward and said, “This is offensive beyond belief.” And, the women were at a place where they wanted to, they needed some action. And I said to them, “The action is that the men who have been sitting in this room need to hold them accountable for that. And I am calling you out on that. I know you’ve been getting all the kudos but this is where it gets hard and I need you to stand beside me while that happens.” And that’s what we did. The women wrote a statement. And their statement really chastised the men for what they described as being very offensive behavior. I then allowed the women to read their statement. Then, my challenge was to say to the men, for those of you who have participated in this activity, you owe it to the women in the room to personally apologize to them. Personally say to them that you lacked consciousness and awareness when you partook in those kinds of actions. They had to know [what they were doing was problematic] and I’m not allowing any excuses. Don’t tell me it was slip of the mind or that you thought it was ok because you were drinking. And we basically made it so that men had to speak up and had to publicly condemn that behavior.

As Angela described it, the women were the ones who defined the men’s behavior as problematic and who insisted that it be addressed publicly. I observed a similar pattern when a woman activist policed a man’s violation via a Listserv. In his e-mail post, the man implied that men have been involved in anti-violence work much longer than women, since

Jesus was the first anti-violence male activist. He also claimed that “women learned from men.” A woman challenged the man’s statements, and went on to reprimand the other male activists for failing to speak up. She wrote:

...I cannot help but gasp at your second paragraph, proclaiming the life of Jesus his disciples and other male leaders, your statement that “it is women who learned from men in this regard” and your minimization and misrepresentation of women’s “60 years” of fighting discrimination against them, vs. men’s supposed efforts over the last 2008 years. And, I am equally shocked that other members of this list gave those comments a pass. I trust that you are well intentioned and that you’ve just got a lot of learning to do. I implore the other men on this list to do their work in educating you, and to not let this egregious misrepresentation of women’s lives and struggles—and the role of Christianity and other religions in that struggle—stand.

By pointing out their failure to hold him accountable she, in effect, held the other men accountable. Interactions in which women policed men’s behaviors, and highlighted other men’s failures to do so, were common.

Since men tended to react defensively towards women who policed them, activists often stressed the importance of men’s “receptivity.” In their interviews, veteran male activists reflected on how they learned to be less defensive and more receptive to women’s critiques over the years. Tim explained, “I used to get so defensive when a woman called me out for something I said. I remember I used be like, ‘But, no you didn’t hear me right. You

thought I said XYZ, and but I really said was ABC.’ But I learned over the years, that being accountable to women means that my job is to hear that critique and take it. It took me a long time to get that.” Similarly, Lane said, “As a man who has been in this movement for a long time, I see it as my role to mentor other men just getting involved about how to take criticisms and feedback well from women. I tell them, you will hear things that you won’t like, and you will feel things that you don’t like. Part of your job is to sit with that discomfort. Not to get defensive about it, but sit with it. Men have a hard time with that because we’ve been taught we’re always right.”

According to Allan Johnson (2001), when men stray from the unspoken male bond, they are labeled as “gender traitors.” Men are encouraged to align themselves with other men, not with women. For a man to call out another man for saying or doing something sexist means that, in that moment, he has traded his allegiance and bond with other men for an allegiance with women. The problem is that dominant group allies are conditioned to align themselves with, and to collude with, their dominant group member peers—not with minority activists. This tendency, combined with a desire not to scare newcomers away, made it hard for men to confront each other as often and assertively as necessary.

Despite the movement’s emphasis on “men holding each other accountable,” women still carried the burden of policing men’s behaviors and drawing attention to issues of power and privilege. Part of the problem was that activists lacked a clear understanding of accountability. Another part was that men were reluctant to challenge their peers. Attempts to minimize the gendered power differentials between women and men by emphasizing “men’s

accountability” thus fell short. In chapter five, I offer some recommendations for overcoming this problem.

CONCLUSION

Indeed, there have been some benefits of expanding men’s participation in the MEVAW. For one, the movement’s messaging has reached wider audiences. Secondly, activists have redefined violence against women as men’s problem too, not just women’s problem. On the other hand, incorporating men had not occurred without problems. As scholars have noted, implicit in much ally activism is the reproduction of the very privilege the movement is working to overcome (Myers 2008). A cost incurred because of the “men as allies” development is that activists must not confront male privilege within the movement.

Tensions created by these confrontations served as constant reminders that gendered power differentials are pervasive and deeply entrenched. For a movement that connects male power and privilege to men’s violence against women, it is inherently contradictory that the movement itself has become a site where these patterns of inequality are reproduced. As activists work to promote cultures free from male domination, power and privilege, they are impeded by patriarchy in their own movement.

I used of the glass escalator concept (Williams 1992) to describe the reproduction of male privilege in the MEVAW. Although the glass escalator concept is most often used to describe men’s experiences in “female professions,” it is also useful for analyzing men’s experiences in women-led social movements. In these movements, as in the workplace, men

are rewarded more favorably for comparable contributions, and prematurely granted status as leaders and experts.

My analysis examined how activists responded to these tensions by using the rhetoric of “men’s accountability.” In their attempt to confront male privilege in the MEVAW, activists incorporated this rhetoric into the movement’s discourse. Yet, there remained a gap between accountability rhetoric and practice, attributable to definitional inconsistency and men’s unwillingness to police other men. In the next chapter, I examine how women activists are making sense of men’s increasing involvement and leadership in the MEVAW.

CHAPTER FOUR

“THERE’S A PRECIOUS FEW MEN WHO TRULY GET IT”: WOMEN CONSTRUCT THE AUTHENTIC MALE ALLY

I have dedicated my heart and soul to this movement, and to the intersection of race, class, and gender. Not because I wanted to, but because *I had to*. I guess I’m telling you this because the work is so important to me that I really struggle with inviting men in. I realize that while men’s involvement in this movement is so important and critical—and I am so whole heartedly with men in this work—there are still questions of what their roles are. (Woman activist, during a conference panel)

Given the complex nature of men’s involvement (discussed in chapter three), how are women advocates making sense of men’s increasing involvement in the movement? In a movement where women once defined men as “the enemy” (Schechter 1982) but are now expected to ally with them, how are women defining men’s involvement? These questions guide the analysis in this chapter. First, I identify the dilemma women advocates articulate: on the one hand, they see men’s expanding involvement as a necessary and strategic development for the movement. On the other hand, they criticize and contest the privilege men bring into the movement. I will show how in trying to reconcile this dilemma, women differentiate between male activists, distinguishing “real” male allies from superficial male allies. By using what I have come to call “authenticity tests,” women advocates construct the male ally identity. I argue that as women define men’s involvement, they construct men as the *secondary* actors in the movement, while constructing themselves as the movement’s *primary* actors. In the end of the chapter, I examine a current challenge facing male activists today, which is their struggle to maintain an authentic ally identity. My analysis contributes

to our understanding of identity construction in social movements.

My analysis is informed by theorizing about subcultural identity work (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock 1996) and identity politics in status-based social movements (Bernstein 2002; 2005; Cerulo 1997; Polletta and Jasper 2001; and McCorkel and Rodriguez 2009). Most directly, I build upon McCorkel and Rodriguez's (2009) ethnographic analysis of the challenges anti-racist whites created for two racially progressive social movements ("pro-black" abolitionism and "conscious" hip hop). Similar to how some women advocates fear men's takeover, and similar to how women believe men's involvement can undermine the movement's feminist principles, McCorkel and Rodriguez (2009) found that black activists were cautious about whites' involvement because they thought whites would diminish the radical politics of the organization and/or try to take over. As a response, black activists "vetted" incoming members and differentiated between "members" and "supporters." By identifying which whites were "real fans" and which ones were not, black participants "resolve[d] the dilemma of white participation by making a set of claims about the selves of their fans" (372). In my analysis, I argue that by differentiating between male activists and validating only specific activist/ally behaviors, women advocates buffer the enthusiasm surrounding men's involvement, constructing men as secondary actors in the movement, while constructing themselves as the primary actors.

The Dilemma for Women

Ruby is a white woman in her early thirties. Although Ruby is young, she has the old-soul qualities of the movement veterans, though without their cynicism. She is energetic,

quick-witted, pissed off about sexism, and, above all else, passionate about her anti-rape work. Pointing proudly to the NOW poster on her office wall, she said, “I’m kind of a rabble rouser.” In her role as the prevention educator for a state sexual assault coalition, Ruby frequently worked with men in the movement. Therefore, I was eager to learn about her experiences with men and what she thought about the increasing emphasis on engaging men in violence prevention work. When I asked Ruby what she thought about men’s increasing involvement in the movement, she said:

Why in the hell wouldn't men be involved? The overwhelming majority of perpetrators are men. They should be involved! But, at the same time, I'm sure not going to put anybody on a pedestal. “Oh, wow, look at this man. He's involved in the anti-sexual violence movement. Isn't that great?”

“Wow, he's dreamy.” Even though what [men are] saying is the same exact thing Ida B. Wells said back in like 1824.

Ruby, like many other women advocates, simultaneously supported and critiqued men’s involvement. Other women were similarly ambivalent. It was common for the women I interviewed to say things like, “We need men involved because this is not just a women’s issue,” at one point in the interview, but then immediately after say, “It’s just not fair that when a man says the same thing women have said for years, he gets a standing ovation and I get challenged by people in the room.”

Despite enthusiasm for the “men as allies” development, women advocates remained cautious and critical of men’s involvement. On the one hand, they acknowledged the benefits of men’s participation and saw the recent push to involve men as a necessary and strategic

development in the movement. In fact, most women admitted that men are more effective than women in delivering anti-violence messages to other men. On the other hand, women criticized this very notion because it perpetuates the belief that what men have to say is more important than what women have to say—and worse, that women’s voices are silenced while men’s are trumpeted.

Mel, a sexual assault educator for a state sexual assault coalition, explained her conflicted feelings about men’s involvement. On the one hand, she saw men’s participation as a good thing because men are directly implicated by the problem. On the other hand, she was bothered by the male privilege she saw being further entrenched in the work.

Kris: How do you feel about men’s increasing involvement in anti-violence work?

Mel: I will talk myself into a circle on this one. I readily admit that now. I think that we need men in this work. First of all, we're talking about men's violence against women, so we need men. We need the good, non-offending men to step up, speak out, show their support, and work with the females that have been doing this work for quite some time now. So, I definitely think that there is a need and a role for men. Ok, and then here’s where I start to go around in a circle. But, then I say to myself, isn't it frustrating that if I'm a man and you're a woman and we go into a class, and you and I say the same exact thing to the men in the class, the reality is, since I'm a man, they take my word without questioning it. But, if you say the same stuff, you are viewed as the man-hating,

angry, lesbian, feminist, all the other things that all of us have been called forever. And then I wonder, Well, isn't that still part of the problem?

Mel's account, like Ruby's, is consistent with other women advocates who articulated the same dilemma: women want to embrace and support men's involvement, yet they remain critical about the drawbacks and pitfalls of engaging "the oppressors" as allies.

Mel's account also highlights one of the patterns I discussed in the previous chapter, which is that although women are likely to be cast as man-haters with axes to grind, men are considered the authorities and experts on violence against women. Mel clearly identified the contradictory nature of men's involvement: that male power and privilege in the movement are connected to men's violence against women outside the movement. She asked, "Isn't that still part of the problem?" Later in the interview, Mel expressed her frustration about the inseparable pros and cons of men's involvement.

Aren't we still sending the message to men, "Believe what other men are saying. Believe what the female is saying, *maybe*, but first you have to question her. She has to *prove herself*?" But then I say to myself, if we can still reach those men and get the message out there of what it means to be a man and about how rape impacts women and other men—and then round and round I go: Yes, we need them as allies. We need them out there doing the work with us, but then I get, I get very frustrated, quite honestly, that, excuse me, but this big fuckin' deal is made because of what they're saying. Well, we as women have been saying that for 30, 40, 60 years now, so just because you have a penis and you say it, now all of a sudden like, oh, you know, this big to-do is made? That very clearly makes

me angry, because I just said the “f” word. So, it's a very complex dynamic in the field, but I think it's one that we have to recognize and own and talk about.

By simultaneously criticizing men’s instant legitimacy *and* acknowledging the benefits of men’s participation, Mel highlights the power differentials between women and men, which is not only frustrating to her personally, but counters the movement’s underlying feminist principles. Elsa, who regularly works with male activists at a family violence agency, shared her reactions to the current emphasis on engaging men in the movement:

I think [men’s involvement] is positive, but with it comes some challenges in terms of replicating sexism that we need to address. It seems that in the movement people have just been like, “We need to get men in.” And they’re very excited about getting men, *all men*, to participate and to be part of it, which is great. I mean we need all men, definitely, to say that it’s not okay. But at the same time, there’s risk in just doing that. So, it’s kind of a really, really, hard line to walk.

These excerpts reveal the difficult position women activists are in as they struggle to support men’s involvement. In some cases, women who stuck their necks out for individual men were disappointed later. This happened to veteran anti-porn and anti-violence activist Barbara, who described how she came to regret inviting men into her women-only activist space after a prominent male activist created problems for the group.

Kris: How do you feel about men’s involvement today?

Barbara: Mixed, very mixed. I’ve worked with Peter for over twenty years.

I trust him completely. I also trust Stanley completely. Other than that?

(Shrugs her shoulders) I had a very bad experience with one man who’s

very well known in the anti-violence movement. I was on a committee with him to organize an anti-porn conference. He manipulated and dominated the conversation and all the e-mails. Nobody felt heard. Then when I brought it up to him he wouldn't listen to me. He just kept going on and on, and on and on, dominating everything. And I eventually had to kick him off. But I couldn't kick him off. He wouldn't leave! I had to call—me, the feminist—had to call Peter and tell him to do it. I said, “Peter, you've got to speak to him. You've got to tell him to get off here because he won't listen to me.” And you know what? I was the one who pushed for him. The women in the group did not want him. They wanted a women-only group. And I was the one who said, “No, we've got to get beyond these politics. We've got to be more male inclusive.” I was the one who pushed, and this is what happened.

Barbara's account highlights the potential conflict between the *ideological support* for men's involvement and the *practical integration* of men into feminist work spaces. In other words, men's involvement is good, in theory. In practice, it brings new challenges and obstacles that must be dealt with (see previous chapter). Barbara's account also highlights an important part of women's dilemma: in addition to actually doing anti-violence work, women must often manage the spillover effects of men's involvement (see previous chapter about “men's accountability”). Although the women advocates I interviewed shared their positive experiences with men, the experiences that were most salient to the women were ones like

Barbara's, where a man's domineering interactional style created more problems than his involvement was worth.

Men whose entry into the movement was through primary prevention tended to receive more skepticism from women. These men tended to work for sexual and domestic violence agencies but as "Prevention Specialists" and "Prevention Coordinators." Women who worked on the direct services side of the work, or as they referred to it, "the front lines," were especially critical of the attention and praise given to men "on the prevention side." Audrey, for instance, was a strong supporter of men's involvement, yet she disliked how men associated with primary prevention were lauded as superheroes. She explained:

There's all this stuff going on around this move toward primary prevention. You know, we have communities here that still don't have crisis intervention services. And it gets even more disgusting when men doing prevention work use that river analogy. The way they describe it is that crisis intervention work is about jumping into the river and saving the bodies that are floating down it, and being on the banks, and getting them warmed up on their way out. But, *prevention* people are the ones who put their backpacks on and hike upstream, and go take care of everything. And talk about all the gender garbage that goes with that. It's the women in the river on the bank and the guys who are gonna go upstream. And, we're supposed to trust them (she laughs) on this big adventure? Yeah, sure. Women are on hospital calls at 3:00 in the

morning and the guy who got hired doing prevention work in the school works 8 hours a day playing with kids. That doesn't feel too good.

Although there were also many women who got involved in the movement via the shift towards primary prevention, men in this work tended to gain more notoriety. Resistance to this trend was reflected in women's sarcastic references to men doing prevention work as, "riding in like knights in shining armor" and as "superheroes here to rescue women with their logic models."⁸

Although women and men agreed that they needed to work together to end men's violence, women were uncomfortable watching their control over the movement slip away as men's participation in women-led organizations grew. Women advocates struggled to come to terms with their loss of control over what was once considered a women's movement. Movement veteran Angela believes that the movement's push to involve men helped to educate men about violence against women, but also undermined women's leadership.

We have compromised ourselves in terms of having a women-led movement to now having men in those leadership positions. There's a price to pay for that. On the other hand, I think that it [men's involvement] does provide the opportunity for men who would not otherwise get this type of education to get it and to hopefully spread the word. The question is, what are we getting and what are we having to give up?

⁸ The reference to "logic models" was directed at the public health model of violence prevention. Violence prevention practitioners develop logic models to illustrate a sequence of cause and effect relationships in violence prevention programming.

As Angela noted, the problem for women was figuring out how to balance the costs and benefits of men's involvement. Ruby, Mel, Elsa, Barbara, Angela, and others struggled to decide if what they gained from men's involvement (i.e., more effective violence prevention education with men) was worth what they had to give up (a movement for and by women). And while women activists by and large supported the growing popularity of "engaging men" work, and commended men who worked to "redefine manhood," they remained critical of men's behaviors, particularly within movement spaces they shared with men (i.e., when men worked for women-led organizations, and when women and men attended collaborative events, such as conferences and workshops).

Despite the many critiques of male privilege in the movement, not one woman I interviewed, formally or informally, wanted men to leave. There was, in fact, a general recognition that men's involvement would continue and perhaps increase. In the next section, I examine how women reconciled this dilemma by differentiating between male activists, distinguishing "real" male allies from superficial male allies.

DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN MEN

In 2009, I attended a men's national anti-violence conference in New York City. One of the highlights of the conference was the women-only panel session. The panel consisted of prominent women in the movement, and was intended to give the women a platform to "Speak *our* truth, as *women*," as the moderator said (emphasis is original). The panel was also designed to generate discussion about "the challenges and concerns that come to bear as men come into this work as allies." The moderator began by asking the panel, "What lessons

have you learned about working with men?” After a moment’s pause, one woman leaned into her microphone and said, “I have struggled with this question all morning. In fact, I have struggled with this question for the past two years. What I’ve learned is that there is a difference between well-meaning men, and men who get it.” At the time, this woman’s comment did not strike me as indicative of a larger pattern or process. Yet, as I paid more attention to how women were defining men’s role in the movement, and as I compared cases of women’s reactions, it became clearer how this panel member’s response represented, quite poignantly, women’s tendencies to differentiate between men in the movement.

Sarah, who works on a college campus as a sexual assault and relationship violence coordinator, reported “more positive experiences with men than negative ones.” However, she also cited “definite differences in the kind of men involved,” adding, “I don’t just want any guy up there doing education work and giving a presentation in front of people. That takes a certain kind of guy. ” Although Sarah was enthusiastic about men’s involvement and had many positive experiences with men, she also shared stories about how men had dominated work meetings she was in, undermined her authority by making belittling comments to her, and were sometimes unqualified, yet still accepted into visible leadership positions. Apart from these negative observations and experiences, Sarah said, “I actually think, though, that *some* men really get it, which is why we have more men doing this work today.” Women activists were clear that not all male allies were created equal. It was this tendency to differentiate between men that I examine here, as I highlight the centrality of differentiation for the broader process of ally identity construction.

“Why Are You Even Here? ”: Discrediting Male Activists

What I originally interpreted simply as women’s complaints about men turned out to be a much more complex process of ally identity construction. By looking closely at women’s accounts, I began to realize that when women critiqued particular men they were also constructing these men as superficial or inauthentic allies. The women were generally supportive of men’s involvement, as long as the men in question were “real” or “true” allies—men who were “in it for the right reasons,” “sincere about the work,” and “someone you can trust,” as different activists put it.

Throughout my research, it was common for women advocates to question men’s intentions and qualifications. Sometimes women doubted whether certain men knew basic information and statistics about men’s violence against women. Other times, women doubted that men were doing anti-violence work for the right reasons. Andrea, for example, thought that the young men in the campus anti-rape group were more preoccupied with being known as the “men against rape” than they were in learning about the issue. Andrea noted, “These guys [in the campus anti-rape group] don’t even know basic statistics about rape and sexual assault, and yet they want to go out and teach others about it? I don’t think so.” Other women made similar observations about men with whom they had worked.

When men behaved in sexist ways or showed no awareness of male privilege, women activists doubted their authenticity. For instance, Ruby explained the disappointment she felt after seeing, in-person, a male activist whose written work she admired. She said:

I was excited because I had seen some [written] work that he did and thought it was pretty good. But then I went and saw him present at a

national conference and I was like, “Oh, whatever!” He is just sexist, and patronizing, and ridiculous. And, yet people are still like, “Oh, this person's great! This person's great!” And I’m like, really? Have you paid attention to the interactions you have with him? [Kris: What did he do exactly?] It’s how he talked. He knew everything about everything! “Oh, I have a doctorate and I have been doing this work for a while.” And then his attitude when he answered questions from women—it was as if the hundreds of years of work women have done never happened. He was so “I am the savior” kind of attitude. That’s not the kind of men we need doing this work.

Ruby’s account reveals her disappointment upon seeing the man behind the text. A man who she admired for his writing was, in person, sexist and pompous. This undermined his credibility as an ally. Real allies, in her view, did not claim to be the experts but instead accepted roles as secondary activists. They also publicly recognized women’s expertise and contributions to the movement.

Men’s display of sexist behavior was a consistent marker of men’s superficiality as allies, according to women. Charlene, a woman I met at a men’s anti-violence training also discredited a man based on what she interpreted as a mismatch between his public reputation and his sexist presentation of self. Charlene explained:

Everybody loves Martin and thinks he is so great because of VAWA.

First of all, he didn’t write VAWA. He gets credit for it but he didn’t

actually author it. Second of all, he is so entitled. I mean, I met him at a

conference and he took up so much space the whole time. He's completely unaware of how much space he takes up. And everyone puts him on a pedestal like he's so awesome (*rolls her eyes*). He's really not.

Ruby and Charlene made it clear that some men did not meet their standards of how an ally behaves. By discrediting the men based on their sexist behaviors, the women constructed the boundaries of the male ally identity.

According to Ruby, good male allies *do not* claim to be the smartest people in the room.” For Charlene, a male ally is aware of the physical space he takes up and does not dominate social interactions. Both women expected men to *model* anti-sexism in their interactions with others, not simply *be known* for being anti-violence activists. Consistency between values and actions was essential. As a woman advocate was quoted in a 2010 conference report, “There should be no difference between the man on the anti-violence stage, and the man off it.” When women perceived an inconsistency, they discredited a man as an ally. As Ruby added later in her interview, “There's men who talk the talk, and men who walk the walk.”

Women advocates also discredited men by doubting their qualifications, preparedness, and commitment as activists, which was sometimes measured by how much men were willing to devote to the cause. That is, women often talked about the countless hours they spent volunteering at rape crisis centers, working at domestic violence shelters, and answering hotline calls—the kind of work that earned people respect and street cred as advocates and activists. As some advocates saw it, men were often rewarded for doing very little (see previous chapter). As Andrea remarked in reference to the college men on her

campus, “It’s great that you get all these kudos, but you don’t really do anything. I mean really, what do you actually do?” Similarly, Sarah claimed that one male activist in particular had not yet done enough to prove to others that he was a knowledgeable activist and ally.

She said:

I saw Sam presenting at a conference on an area that he wasn’t even attached to in the community. Nobody in the community would have heard his name and said, “Oh, yeah, Sam, he does that kind of work.” But, suddenly he’s all about that? He was never setting up tables, or flyer-ing, or showing up at awareness events. And, not to mention, working with survivors, answering crisis line phones, or going to any trainings.

Not only does Sarah doubt Sam’s knowledge level and qualifications, but she also mentions that no other activists “vetted” or vouched for Sam. In other words, because no other reputable activist confirmed Sam’s competence, Sarah implied a superficiality or fraudulence on his part. Although she did not use the term, Sarah might have said that Sam had ridden the glass escalator to a position for which he was not yet qualified.

Sarah also questioned Sam’s motivations, doubting that “his heart was ever really into it.” When I asked her to explain what she meant by this, she explained how there are different levels, or degrees, of men involved—men who “get it” and those who, like Sam, apparently do not. She said:

You know, men who you can tell just don’t get it. Like he cares and there’s the interest in it but he has no real knowledge. There’s this desire

but there's never really the commitment to really learn about privilege and oppression, and why it's important to recognize the work women have done, because this has been a movement about and by women for so long.

Other women advocates questioned men's intentions, too, and doubted whether the more well-known men in the movement had sincere motivations for getting involved. Since some men in the anti-violence movement seemed to bask in celebrity-like status, women wondered whether these men were involved for the right reasons. A woman I met at a national men's anti-violence conference expressed skepticism over men "at the national level" and doubted whether these men were genuinely committed to ending sexual violence. She claimed that men's personal behaviors in the work contradict the anti-sexist politics of the movement.

There are some men at the national level that I really question their intentions, because it seems like they're doing this work because they want the attention and glory. They like being put on the pedestal. I question their intentions because it's like, well, huh, if you're working against sexual violence and you're working against sexism, why are you perpetuating male gender norms, like having to receive all of the glory and attention for it? And I've witnessed some pissing contests between men at different conferences and I'm like, "What are you doing? Why are you even here?"

Since men in the MEVAW often received praise for even minimal participation, women were skeptical of the men who had achieved star status. As the advocate quoted above asked, If

men's involvement was authentic, then why were they reinforcing male privilege? To her, an authentic ally did not exploit male privilege—but countered it. Similarly, Chantel, the executive director of a sexual assault coalition identified a man who, in her opinion, had illegitimate intentions.

It didn't take long to figure out that his intentions were just not there. I mean, his intentions were clearly not to end violence against women. That's not at all what he was interested in. All of our advocates were like, "Why is he even here?" Finally, I had to say, "You know what? You're disrupting the way we do our work." I had to disengage him. To this day, I don't know what his intentions were.

Chantel later added, "He never seemed to grasp the big picture. And for me, at some point you have to get the big picture to be doing this work. You have to understand that patriarchy and privilege and power have a lot to do with the perpetuation of violence in our culture. If you don't, I have no use for you."

To summarize, by doubting men's intentions and motivations, women advocates also doubted men's authenticity as allies. By identifying contradictions between men's personal behaviors and the broader feminist goals of the movement, women felt men revealed themselves as superficial and inauthentic. As the women saw it, a real ally would know better than to entrench the inequalities that generate violence in the first place. Who, then, is a real ally, and what does a real ally do? In the next section, I show how the women identified some men as true and trustworthy allies.

“He Gets It”: Authenticating Male Activists

I heard the term “get it” used to describe people who thought critically and who could identify sexism, both overt and subtle. When an activist said to me, “Now, someone like Robby, he really gets it,” I nodded my head in agreement because I had internalized the local meaning. However, I came to realize after hearing women repeatedly use this term, that its purpose was to identify genuine male allies. By unpacking the meaning of “getting it,” I was able to discern how women advocates marked the boundary between genuine, trustworthy allies and fakers. Once I realized how important “getting it” was to constructing the male ally identity, I paid closer attention to how (and when) women used the term.

When women described particular men who “got it,” they emphasized different parts of the identity code.⁹ Several advocates, for instance, claimed that the mark of a true ally was men’s awareness of their privilege. Other advocates claimed that “men who really got it” policed other men’s behaviors, or, in their words, “held each other accountable.” The older, more experienced women cared more about whether male activists took the time to learn about the history of the movement and women’s contributions to it. By learning the history of the movement and referring to it, men displayed their real commitment to the work and were considered true allies. As veteran activist Donna noted, “What I say to men who want to join in this work is, ‘Do you know the history of this work? Do you know all that women have done, many, many years before you and other men really started showing up? If not, that’s what you need to be doing. If a man does that, that’s a man who knows what it means to be an ally. That’s a man I can trust.’”

⁹ According to Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock (1996), identity codes are rules of performance and interpretation whereby members of groups signify themselves by talk, dress, and other acts of signification.

Mel described her positive experiences working with men, and noted how “some men really get it.” When I asked Mel what she meant, she thought about it for a minute and said, “So someone like Randy, he *gets it*. He gets that college men can’t just be this stand-alone men’s group. He’s like, ‘What’s Take Back the Night doing? Why aren’t we showing up? We should be tabling.’ For Mel, then, a true male ally attends activist events to support women’s leadership. It was also important to her that men “share the philosophy of the movement and integrate it into their work.”

When Ruby described the men who she saw as “intentional and authentic,” she emphasized how important it was for men’s behavior to be consistently non-sexist. She said, “The men that I see actually building accountability into the work are the men who are intentional and authentic about the work. They don’t just say, ‘Oh yeah, we’re accountable.’ Their way of existing backs that up.” Again, we see how women emphasized the difference between men who were involved superficially and men whose involvement was, as Ruby described it, “intentional and authentic.” As women saw it, an authentic male ally consistently displayed non-sexist behavior. Andrea also assessed men’s authenticity as allies by whether or not they were aware of their privilege. She explained, “I know *way, way, way* more men who are well-intentioned and who care, continue to create a culture where rape is going to occur because of their entitlement and privilege that they’re not in check with. You can’t underestimate the strength of a man that really understands, and a man who is really empathic and aware of their privilege.” For Andrea, only a handful of men possessed the depth of self-awareness to be considered true allies.

Andrea’s account echoes the panelist I quoted earlier who said, “There is a difference

between well-meaning men and men who get it.” As women advocates saw it, merely being interested and involved did not confer true ally status on a man. Andrea added, “But I’ve been fortunate enough to work with a few men who I feel really, really get it.” When I asked Andrea to explain what she meant by men who “really, really get it,” she said:

For one, I think [men who “get it”] are visibly aware of their privilege. Whether it’s their white male privilege, or their male privilege. And they acknowledge it verbally all the time. You know even before they start talking, literally acknowledge it. You know, like, “As I talk about this I am a man and therefore I am privileged and therefore this is my experience.” You know? So just that acknowledgement and consciousness. And in their interactions with other men they have integrity and hold other men accountable regularly. And they hold themselves accountable if they, by accident, say a word that they shouldn’t. And that they’re not defensive. Take feedback well. And [men] who don’t have issues with women in leadership positions. Those to me are the qualifications. To have that extra level of consciousness. Men who hold themselves accountable, who aren’t defensive, who are willing and wanting to learn. And have integrity. Be consistent with the messages they give, and the messages they give are consistent with the life they are trying to live.

In her account, Andrea described the ideal ally as a man who: (1) recognizes male privilege; (2) polices other men’s behaviors; (3) reflects on gender inequality; (4) listens to women’s

feedback; and (5) takes direction and leadership from women. To be seen as an authentic male ally a man had to display these qualities and behaviors.

Other women advocates authenticated male activists by using phrases such as: “the real deal,” “a legit ally,” “a man I can trust,” “in it for the right reasons,” “making the right connections,” “men who rise to that level,” and, the most commonly used phrase, “men who get it.” Lifelong advocate Angela said, “I have a healthy distrust of men, and professionally Marcus and Clint are the only men who rise to that level for me. They really get it.” When I asked Angela what differentiated Marcus and Clint from other men in the movement, she said, “For me, it’s really been about them checking in with me every step of the way. They did nothing—they didn’t put a printed word on paper, they didn’t launch a website, they didn’t do anything without coming to me and saying, ‘Angela, What do you think? Before we do X, Y and Z, what do you think?’ And my feeling was that they learned well. They learned really well.” By deferring to her experience and leadership, Marcus and Clint distinguished themselves as true allies.

Sheila also constructed the true male ally as rare and exclusive by singling out Lane as one of the “few men.” She explained, “I think there are a precious few men who truly *get it*, who have any real understanding of sexism and the privileges they walk through life with. Lane is one of the few men in this work who got that, and who made it a part of the work.” When I asked Sheila what Lane, and these “precious few” men did that other men did not, she said, “I think they really believe it. When I say ‘believe it,’ [I mean] they really believe that they have privilege and benefit from it all the time.” For Sheila, awareness of privilege is a distinguishing mark of the true male ally.

In sum, the women relied on several markers to identify true and trustworthy male allies. While the movement provided opportunities to monitor and assess most of them, women had few opportunities to assess men's authenticity *outside* the movement because they only saw *public* performances. In trying to get past the public/private divide, Angela wanted to see what Marcus's backstage was like by meeting his intimate partner. For Angela, the men had to pass what she called her "litmus test."

I said to Marcus and Clint, "You have to prove yourself to me. I'm not going to just love you at face value; that's just not going to happen."

Over the years, I have come to love and respect them. I know them and their families. I wanted to get to know their families. I told Marcus, "I need to meet your wife." For me, I needed to know the women who were partnered with these men to sort of finalize my perception of who they were. That was my litmus test.

For Angela, it mattered whether male activists just "talked the talk" in front of movement members, or if they also "walked the walk" in their personal lives. Meeting Marcus's wife was one more way she could vet him and determine if he was an authentic ally.

Another activist, Audrey, also emphasized the importance of men's behaviors *outside* the movement. She doubted that most male activists actually modeled anti-sexist behavior in their personal lives. As she explained,

It requires looking at what their relationships are like with other men and how genuine and real and loving and kind they are. I think there are a lot of men who do this work who don't struggle with that. What I hear

from women who do this work and have heard and have experienced myself over the years is that it changes your relationships with family. You hear and see things differently. It changes who you choose to have deep friendships with. It may change the faith community that you participate in. I don't hear that as much with men. I don't hear the whole thing about "I go home for the holidays and suddenly the whole dinner experience looks completely different to me." Or, "the football game looks like a completely different event." I don't hear "here's what I gave up in terms of friendships, but here's what I get." When I do hear that, then I feel like I'm working with a man or guy who really does get it.

For Audrey, then, it was not enough for men to simply show up for a conference or an anti-violence training. It was not enough for men to wear a white ribbon and make a public pledge not to use or condone men's violence against women. Audrey wanted men to *change*. She wanted men to make sacrifices, to give things up that reflect and reinforce patriarchal culture, like their superficial friendships with other men, and watching football. Andrea, too, said she wanted men's public commitments to anti-violence and anti-sexism to mirror their personal lives. She said later in our interview, "The messages [men] give should be consistent with the life they are trying to live." By defining these standards of authenticity, women advocates constructed the boundaries of the male ally identity. Men who fall outside the boundaries are not true allies, just well-intentioned men. Men who "rise to that level," as Angela described it, are real allies.

As I have shown, women advocates did boundary work to protect movement space from those whom they perceive as inauthentic and undeserving. This required differentiating between types of men in the movement, especially between real, trustworthy allies and men who may be well-intentioned but don't really get it. By discrediting some men and authenticating others, women advocates constructed the male ally identity.

CONSTRUCTING WOMEN AS THE PRIMARY ACTIVISTS

Women advocates also made important distinctions between women and men activists. A key point of difference was that men had been involved in the movement for less time than women. On this basis, they defined men's role as supportive and women's role as directive. In this way, the women constructed themselves as the movement's primary activists, while constructing men as secondary actors. By constructing an "us" and "them" distinction, women resisted forging a collective activist identity with men in the movement.

Comparing Length of Involvement in the Movement

Women advocates frequently noted how much longer women had been involved in the movement than men. Although there had always been at least a few men working alongside women, women acknowledged men's relative newness to the movement and contrasted it to women's longstanding involvement. These reminders functioned as a kind of social comparison between women and men. The point of the comparison was to imply that women were, by virtue of their longer involvement, the movement's more important, primary actors. This social comparison divided women and men, making it harder to construct a

collective movement identity.

Chantel, who is in her late thirties, was genuinely enthusiastic about men's involvement in anti-rape work. There were several men from men's anti-violence organizations with whom she partnered regularly in doing trainings. Chantel also claimed, however, that because many men were new to the movement, they should "honor" women's historical contributions. As she explained:

Women didn't just wake up and start doing this work ten years ago like they did. Women have been doing this work since the beginning of time—literally since the beginning of time. If men don't honor that, then they will feel like they're the superheroes because they saved the day. That's not why they're here. They're here to be our allies, and by that I mean following our lead.

In Chantel's view, women's longer involvement gave women the right to lead the movement. Men's proper role as newcomers was to be supportive allies.

Other advocates referred to men as "our true partners," "our allies," and "our counterparts," but then defined men as "supportive" and women as "leaders." Donna, for instance, claimed that men were "our true partners in this work," yet made it clear that this meant men supported women's leadership. Donna described her reaction to male activists who wanted to partner with her domestic violence coalition. Donna said:

What I say upfront to men who want to be involved is you need to tread lightly. What I mean is, you need to be a support system to the women in the movement. Seek their counsel, seek their advice...because they

know best. You must trust the years of collective wisdom that women have accumulated that you have not. If men come into this movement outside of that paradigm of thinking, it's not gonna work. When men come into the movement with their own ideas about what needs to be done without consulting with women, you're gonna have resistance, you're gonna have problems. And you're gonna be ousted. That's what [men] are there to do—to serve. For any man who wants to get involved in the coalition I say “tread lightly.”

In citing the “collective wisdom” women possess that men do not, she constructs women as the primary activists and men as secondary. By cautioning men to “tread lightly,” Donna puts men on notice that they are in territory where women’s knowledge and experience is privileged. Beth, who worked at a sexual assault coalition, spoke about her involvement in anti-rape work with deep pride in the movement’s history. She told me, “I’m so interested in the history of the movement. I just think it’s so important.” And, although she saw men’s involvement as necessary, she distinguished between women and men on the basis of length of time in the movement, positioning women as the experts and men as the helpers. Beth said:

I think it’s absolutely necessary that men are involved because we need men. We need men in this movement. Period. But this is a feminist movement and that’s what it is. We don’t want men coming in and telling us how to do our job. We don’t want men telling us how to help women [do their jobs]. Women have put in the work, we’re the ones that

created all that we know of the anti-violence movement at this point in time. It's great that [more] men are here now but we are accountable to the people who came before us. In this movement, the people who came before us were women and we have a duty—if it wasn't for these women, I wouldn't be sitting here. I mean, there would have been millions of rape victims across the state that would never have gotten any kind of service. We have to make sure we're making them proud, that we're adding to their legacy and not changing it. Sure, it's all well and good that men are here now. But this started as a women's movement. Regardless of how much that changes over time, we have to make those women proud.

For Beth, it was critical for movement members to recognize that even though men's involvement in anti-violence work has increased, they do not have as much right to do and say what they want as women do. By comparing women's historical contributions (“we have put in the work”) with men's recent involvement, Beth justified women's claims to greater authority. Women have earned their position as movement leaders, while men still need to prove themselves.

To summarize, one way women sought to resist the changing landscape of the movement was by securing their identities as the movement's primary leaders, which they did by referencing women's historic contributions. Women advocates also aligned themselves with the women who came before them, not their present-day male counterparts. It may never matter how many more men get involved in the movement, because women will

always be able to invoke the movement's early history—when few men were involved—to resist men's pursuit of status of power within anti-violence work.

WHEN THE PEDESTAL CRASHES: THE FRAGILITY OF THE ALLY IDENTITY

Social movement scholars have noted how ally activists are in a unique position; they do not fully belong to the primary activist group, nor do they fully identify with their own group (McAdam 1988; Myers 2008). Theorizing on ally identity construction suggests that because allies are not the direct beneficiaries of the movement's action, they face routine challenges in terms of creating and maintaining ally identities. Myers's (2008) analysis of ally identity construction in the gay rights movement shows how heterosexual activists struggled to sustain their "politically gay identity." Myers argues that because allies cannot claim connection to the movement in the same way beneficiary activists do, they must do it in other ways. The ally identity is "constantly renegotiated, renewed and revised...Identity work is thus required to maintain the ally identity" (Myers 2008: 176).

Many of the men I interviewed talked about the pressures they felt not to "screw up" because, at any moment, they could be called out by someone. As they saw it, one slip, and their ally identity would be discredited. Men relatively new to the movement were especially vulnerable to being discredited because they had not yet proved themselves. As Dave explained, "When I first started doing this work, I had so many questions about what I could and could not do. Like, if I see a pretty girl walking down the street, could I look at her? You know, if I'm with someone from work, are they gonna call me out for being attracted to a woman on the street? So, whenever I was with someone from work, I would try not to make

eye contact with pretty women on the street.”

It wasn't just newcomers who felt pressured not to screw up for fear of being exposed as an inauthentic ally. Lane, for instance, felt like he had to consistently earn women's validation, even though he was someone who many women (and men) in the movement identified as a man who “got it” and as “a real feminist,” and as “a better feminist than a lot of women.” Lane feared that if he was discredited by someone, the ramifications would impact *all* men in the movement. He said, “If I mess up, then the whole pedestal collapses. And then women say, ‘See, this is what we were afraid of in the first place.’” Lane later added, “There's this unbelievable level of punishment of even minor errors, because I have to be perfect. OK, punishment might be a strong word, but disappointment.” Ally activists, like men in the MEVAW, likely feel more pressure to consistently present authentic activist selves than do beneficiary activists. Since ally involvement is seen as the exception, rather than the rule, their presence stands out and their behaviors are monitored more closely.

Goffman's (1963) claim that most people are potentially discreditable on some grounds, helps explain why some of the male activists I interviewed felt like they were always walking on a tightrope. In fact, I found that even the most vetted veteran male activists struggled to maintain their identity as authentic male allies. Brandon, for example, who was a leading figure in violence prevention work said, “There's some women who are just waiting for this moment where they can say, ‘Ha, See! Brandon just said something sexist! See, that's who he *really* is!’ Like they just found me out or something.” Therefore, despite women's claims that there are men who “get it,” and men who do not, as male activists experience it, their identity as authentic activists and allies is always at risk.

An example of how male activists feared being discredited took place during an interview with a prominent and well-respected male activist in the movement. This particular male activist had been identified by several women activists as one of the men who “really gets it.” As Sarah described him, “He’s been doing this work for so long. He has shown that he’s committed, and willing to do the internal work that men need to do. He really gets this work on a level that I feel good about. ” During our interview, however, he admitted that, despite his anti-sexist public presentation in the movement, and despite his reputation as a man who rejects sexism and the objectification of women, he himself sexualizes women. When I asked him if there was an aspect of “traditional masculinity” he struggled with, he said, “Yes. The objectification of women.” When I asked him to elaborate, he got choked up, took a few deep breaths, then said to me, “I surf Internet porn. I, I, I look at pornography on the Internet.” He knew his peers in the movement would condemn this behavior. He continued, “It’s against pretty much everything I stand for. I do this for a living. I’m a national speaker.” He knew, too, that if other activists knew about his private behavior, it would ruin his reputation as an anti-violence activist.

The pressure men felt to prove their authenticity as allies created conflicts and divisions between different activists. George referred to these conflicts as “one-upmanships” and “pissing contents.” George, who did violence prevention work for a state coalition, explained how men—in trying to prove what good male allies they were—sometimes embarrassed newcomers by “showing how much they know at the expense of another guy.” When I asked him to describe a particular occasion when this happened, he described a recent incident that took place over a Listserv:

Somebody was asking a perfectly good-faith question and asked, ‘What bullet points would you add?’ And then one guy steps in and says, ‘Well, first, I wouldn’t use the word bullet point.’ It’s like, Dude, shut up. Get over yourself. So he doesn’t like the phrase because he doesn’t like using violent metaphors. Woop de do, good for you. It would be one thing if that was a widely held thing that everybody really agreed with, but it’s not. What that person effectively did was shut down this new person and probably make them less likely to use the Listserv as a resource. Men in the movement are the worst at that stuff because they want to show that they’re the ok guy. And it ends up becoming this thing, like, my anti-sexism penis is bigger than your anti-sexism penis. It’s really annoying...

George’s references to men’s behaviors as “one-upmanship” and comparing penis sizes, was echoed by other activists who equated competition between male activists to a kind of masculinity test. Another example included the ongoing published debate between two male researchers over whose anti-rape program was more effective. During an interview, a male activist admitted to me that part of him feels “a little bit jealous” that his men’s anti-violence organization is “no longer on top.” Such sentiments reflect aspects of traditional masculinity, such as competition and domination. Later in his interview, George added, “It’s fascinating to watch the other guys on the Listserv chime, in because it was clear to me who was trying to have a good-faith argument and who was just trying to posture. It’s in the name of being a good male [ally] but that’s just a smokescreen. Being a good male [ally] would be contacting the person off list to let them know. You don’t publicly shame someone.

Give me a break.” Ally identity work, however, necessitates a public performance in front of an audience. Given the feminist values of the movement, it makes sense that some male activists might publicly shame a newcomer as a matter of demonstrating accountability and feminist credentials.

These accounts from male activists suggest that ally involvement requires more than simply showing up and endorsing the cause. Maintaining the ally identity is difficult (Reason and Broido 2005). For movements like the MEVAW, and other social justice movements, the mere presence of dominant group member allies is not enough to convince insider activists that all is well. Not only must allies prove their authenticity time and time again, but there is even resistance to the term “ally.” As one woman of color activist said during a conference panel, “There are no allies in this work. There are aspiring allies. Just like whites have to hand in their aspiring ally cards at the end of the day, so do the men in this work. Every night, you turn your card in. Then, when you wake up the next day, you have to start all over again. You don’t just get to be an ally. You are always an *aspiring ally*.” By constructing male activists not only as different kinds of activists, but as less significant “ally” activists, women sought to secure their position as the movement’s primary activists.

CONCLUSION

The alliance between women and men is shaped largely by the struggle to confront male privilege within the movement. Women’s experiences with men—both the good and the bad—nurtured a complex set of feelings about men’s role as allies. On the one hand, women identified the benefits of recruiting men, pointing to how “men listen to other men”

and how “men know how other men think.” On the other hand, women were bothered by other aspects of men’s involvement because, as they saw it, men received more credit, attention, and accolades than women, simply because they were men.

The increasing emphasis on mobilizing men as allies led some women activists to fear losing control over the movement. One way women tried to reconcile their conflicted stance was by discrediting some male activists and validating others. Women thus could feel good about supporting men’s involvement, as long as those were men who “got it.” Men who had good intentions, but didn’t “get it” were superficial allies. By authenticating particular men and discrediting others, women defined the boundaries of the male ally identity. More than constructing the ally identity, women were also seeking to resist male privilege in movement spaces. Women activists tried to leverage control by defining men as secondary activists, and themselves as the movement’s primary activists. One resource they used to do this was something that men lacked, which was their activist legacy. By aligning themselves with the women who came before them, rather than their present-day male counterparts, women activists distinguished themselves as the movement’s rightful leaders. This social comparison divided women and men, making it harder to construct a collective movement identity.

For the men, pressures to be a “real ally” could be daunting. Even established and reputable male activists worried about slipping up and being discredited. A pedestal is an easy place from which to fall. The standards of authenticity men had to display to be genuine allies turned some men off from the movement. As Lane claimed, “A lot of men don’t come back. If they mess up once, and are ridiculed for it, they don’t come back.” Overall, my

findings and analysis indicate that women activists were torn between the *practical advantages* of involving men, and the *micro-political repercussions* it created.

While other studies have explained how beneficiary activists perceive ally activists, my research contributes to our understanding of *how* insider activists construct ally identities. By engaging in ally identity construction, women activists were able to resist the overvaluation of male activists. It thus appears that minority group member insiders may construct ally identities, in part, to resist the privilege and inequality created by dominant group member involvement.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: PROMISES AND PITFALLS OF ALLY INVOLVEMENT

When I began this project, I wanted to learn about men's involvement in anti-violence activism. I was interested in how men got involved in anti-violence activism, and how they negotiated being men with doing what had long been considered "women's work." After interviewing some men, and attending "engaging men" events, I realized that I didn't just want to study EM work, as if that activism existed in a vacuum. I came to identify the more pressing story, which was the relationship between women and men working together as allies in a historically women-led movement—a movement that, at its core, still critiqued men's behaviors. This paradigm shift presented a setting to examine how generic social movement processes (i.e. mobilization, integration, and identity construction) played out in a movement where dominant group allies worked in a minority group movement. The typical "us" and "them" distinction driving most movements was anything but distinct, and men had become mainstays in a movement that once defined them as "the enemy."

As my research illustrates, the contentious nature of the insider/outsider distinction created frictions and tensions within the movement. Despite the fact that minority-group movements may benefit from engaging dominant-group allies, the analyses in the three preceding chapters illustrate how generic social movement processes (mobilization, integration, and identity construction), were shaped by inequalities between women and men. In this concluding chapter, I provide an overview of my three analytic chapters. Then I

discuss how my research adds to our understanding of the processes whereby dominant group allies work in minority group movements. I discuss the strengths and limitations of my research. I end by offering directions for future research.

MOBILIZING MEN AS ALLIES

Mobilizing men in women-led movements presents an important obstacle to overcome: moving towards gender inequality is against men's short-term interests (Connell 2003). As my analysis in chapter two showed, efforts to engage men in anti-violence activism overcame this obstacle by allowing men to appear to be working against their own interest without actually giving up anything. In fact, men in the movement benefitted from being men in much the same way that men in broader society benefitted from being men—by securing higher social status and prestige than their female counterparts. By redefining anti-violence work as “men's work,” and by redefining masculinity to accommodate favorable images of themselves, male activists avoided having to give up the power and prestige rooted in gender inequality.

As I demonstrated, activists made a strategic distinction, separating “men” from “masculinity.” By separating the two, male activists could critique the social construction of gender, but still feel good about who they were, at their core. Thus, activists made it so that their involvement signified manly virtue. Although constructing male activists as possessing special virtues helped make anti-violence work appealing to men, it also portrayed men's involvement as something special, rather than expected, or taken-for-granted, like women's participation. Activists and organizations offered men identity incentives based on how men

wanted to see themselves, which was as strong, courageous, bold actors who were rising above the standards set for ordinary men. As a conference facilitator so poignantly put it, “You’re a good man already, but what’s the next step you can take?” In other words, involvement in EM work made them not just better people, but better men.

Since one of the goals of EM work was to engage the “Average Joe,” these mobilization strategies helped make anti-violence work appealing to men who might otherwise be threatened by more radical anti-sexist messaging. That is, instead of mobilizing men around the notion of “redefining masculinity,” a more radical mobilizing message would have been “eradicate masculinity.” It is unlikely, however, that many men would stick around upon being told that masculinity was not only *damaged*, but wasn’t worth repairing. What *did* get men to stick around, and what motivated them to participate, was being able to name their involvement as “men’s work” and to see their participation as a signifier of their manly virtue (cf. Schwalbe 1996).

I argued that *how* men were mobilized within EM work had consequences beyond what men did in all-male, or mostly male, settings. In chapter three, I argued that men’s mobilization was consequential for how they were later integrated into the broader MEVAW, which was still overwhelmingly a women-led movement. Although ally movements are based on the assumption that engaging dominant group members is vital to *ending* inequality (Bishop 2002; Myers 2008), my analysis showed how the alliance between women and men was shaped largely by the struggle to confront sexism and male privilege. I explained how male activists rode a kind of glass escalator (Williams 1992) within the movement. Their gender served as a resource that increased the legitimacy of anti-violence work and men’s

status within it. That men did anti-violence work enhanced the value of the work, which was helpful in some ways, but also divisive. Women activists saw the practical benefits of having male activists promote anti-violence messages to other men. But the glorification of male activists served as constant reminders that gender inequality existed not only outside the movement, but inside it as well.

As activists tried to balance the benefits and costs of men's involvement, they struggled to implement effective accountability practices within the movement. My analysis in chapter three identified two obstacles that impeded accountability practices: (1) activists lacked a consistent definition of accountability; and (2) men are reluctant to confront other men. Despite the fact that activists successfully integrated accountability rhetoric into the movement's discourse, there was a gap between rhetoric and reality. My analysis in this chapter contributed to our understanding of how social movements confront inequality within the movement, and the challenges they face in doing so.

Sociological theorizing about identity construction in social movements suggests that activists seek to build a collective "we" to create unity among movement members. This theorizing, however, has focused mostly on movements with clearly defined insiders and outsiders, and in which insiders work to resist the injustices created by dominant group outsiders. Less research has focused on collective identity construction in movements that recruit dominant group members as allies. My analysis in chapter four extends this theorizing by identifying the obstacles that threaten collective identity construction, particularly within movements where both dominant and subordinate group members are expected to form an alliance (and where the "outsider" is also the "insider"). I identified the

dilemma women activists experienced as they came to terms with men's increasing visibility and leadership within the movement.

My analysis exposed how women were torn between the practical advantages of involving men, and the micro-political repercussions that followed. To reconcile this dilemma, women distinguished "real" male allies from superficial male allies. While other studies have shown how identities are constructed to reproduce and maintain inequality (Schwalbe 1996), my analysis also shows how identities can be constructed to resist oppression and power differentials (Mason-Schrock 1996). Women made comparisons between women and men by making frequent references to how much longer women had been involved in the movement than men. This comparison implied that women were, by virtue of their longer involvement, the movement's more important, primary actors. This social comparison divided women and men, making it harder to construct a collective movement identity.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ALLY MOVEMENTS

The implications of my research extend beyond this present study of men in the movement to end violence against women. In this section, I will discuss how my findings and analyses contribute to our understanding of three key processes in ally movements. These processes include: (1) how dominant groups members are mobilized to work on behalf of others; (2) how activists confront inequality and privilege within social movements; and (3) how ally identities are constructed.

Mobilizing Dominant Group Members in Minority Movements: Creating Allies

Michael Flood (2001) suggests that one of the risks of involving men in anti-violence work is the “dilution of a feminist agenda” (360). Other scholars have noted, too, that when movements strive to recruit dominant group members as allies to minority activists, they face the risk of de-radicalizing their politics and messaging (Myers 2008; Munkres 2008). Yet, despite this recognition, we know very little about *how* (and why) deradicalization occurs within ally movements. My research sheds light on this important process.

From my analysis in chapter two, we can see that de-radicalization occurred when male activists’ focused more on “redefining masculinity” than on eradicating the system of gender that privileges men over women. To get men to “stay at the table” and not be threatened by anti-sexist messaging, activists constructed pro-male and “male-friendly” frames that allowed men to feel good about themselves, as men. In fact, male-friendly messaging drew from some of the same notions of traditional masculinity that activists critiqued. The effort to distance “men” from “masculinity” ended up reinforcing existing gender ideologies. Gender itself as a system of inequality was never called into question. Nor was the dichotomous thinking that women and men are essentially different kinds of people.

True, EM activists faced a difficult challenge. They sought to mobilize men in a movement that critiqued things men and boys had been taught to cherish. By examining how they did this, my analysis exposed the tendency for ally movements to spend more time appealing to the dominant group, than working in the best interest of minority group members. Mobilization strategies designed for male allies were designed to appeal to men, *as*

dominant group members. To keep men involved in anti-sexist and anti-violence activism, male activists were made to feel good about themselves, not only as people, but *as men*. Since men, and manly qualities, are overvalued in our patriarchal culture (while women and qualities associated with women are devalued), it made sense that male activists constructed their involvement as an expression of manly virtue.

Making masculinity the focal point, rather than the system of sexism, allowed activists to ignore more critical (and uncomfortable) discussions of the privilege that comes with being part of the dominant gender group. Separating “men” from “masculinity” also allowed men to distance themselves from the problem. That is, if *masculinity* was the problem, and if *masculinity* was an inauthentic construct, then manhood itself could go unexamined. In short, talking about masculinity was a way to protect men and the gender system in which men are the dominant group from critique.

My analysis also shed light on what I have come to call the *anti-ally environment* in which we live. In a culture that exalts individualism, entering into ally activism can be outright hostile terrain, especially for men who advocate for women’s equality. Jackson Katz (2006) calls this the “macho paradox” (see chapter one). Male dominance persists because men are invested in maintaining it. Men who critique dominant male culture pose a threat to men’s position. They are considered gender traitors. Male activists had to work against this trope.

Male activists also had to work against the popular belief that men who care about ending violence against women are not “real men,” a belief which is part of the anti-ally environment. To counter this belief, activists defined anti-violence activism as “men’s work.”

Male activists could thus participate in what was typically considered “women’s work” without feeling that their manhood was threatened. The problem was that this redefinition shifted the focus from women to men. It also gave men incentive to collude with each other in affirming that they were strong, bold, and brave men for showing up to a workshop and questioning some of the costs of hegemonic masculinity.

My research suggests, then, that perhaps the very goal of recruiting dominant group allies is incompatible with radical activism. Men, whites, heterosexuals, and other dominant group members trying to act as allies may be turned off by discussions of how the privileges and benefits they receive are directly tied to the oppression their activist counterparts experience. This may end up compromising the movement’s core goals. In the MEVAW, efforts to recruit and integrate men impeded critical analysis of men’s power and privilege. As a result, women activists often had to expend energy policing the behaviors of men who were far from “getting it.”

Research on social movements lacks attention on the process by which dominant group members are mobilized as allies. My analysis contributes to our understanding of this process by showing how men were constructed as allies to women. My research indicates that in creating such allies, social movements must frame the value of the work, and allies’ involvement in it, in terms that appeal to dominant group members. A major barrier social movements face when motivating dominant group members as allies is getting dominant group members to work against their own interest. This is no small feat. In the case of mobilizing men in women-led movements, this meant not only framing activism in terms that appealed to men, but it also meant organizing activism in a way that benefitted men. Efforts

to make ally activism appeal to dominant group members is likely to end up reproducing the very system of power that privileges one group over another.

Authenticity and Social Movements

Authenticity refers to people's yearnings for meaning, coherence, and significance (Gecas 2000). Scholars have theorized about how people participate in social movements because they want to actualize an authentic self. Authenticity "has great potential in helping us to understand the social psychology of social movements and the basis of members' commitment" (Gecas 2000: 104). In chapter two, I argued that male activists invested greatly in the idea that there was such a thing as an authentic man, and that they used their involvement in EM work to signify their authenticity as men. Activists embraced the belief that there was masculinity, which was socially prescribed—and thus inauthentic—and then there was the more authentic man that lay underneath. Men in EM work, then, were actualizing their "true self."

Defining the work in this way meant that men who wanted to end violence against women were living more authentic male lives. Male activists were enticed by the notion that they were "real men" because they rose above the standards set for ordinary men. In this way, male activists' involvement in EM work helped them distance themselves from other, inauthentic men. Since we are always in a struggle to reconcile what is authentic and morally honest with what is inauthentic and socially right (Waskul 2009), EM work provided male activists the space to do this reconciliation work.

Authenticity serves as both motive and motivating resource for action because people

will engage in activities that confirm their self-concepts. By participating in social movements, people can develop feelings of authenticity. My analysis indicates that the desire to actualize an authentic self may be especially motivating for men in gender-based movements. It is unlikely that ally activists in other social movements are motivated by actualizing the very self the movement critiques. For instance, it is unlikely that whites who engage in anti-racism activism are motivated by the desire to actualize an authentic “white” self. Rather, white activists might be motivated by actualizing an authentic liberal self, or an authentic Christian self. Heterosexuals who advocate on behalf of gay, lesbian, transgender, and queer rights are less likely motivated by their desires to actualize an authentic “heterosexual” self than an authentic activist or progressive self. Why, then, are men so invested in their gender identities that they can’t stray from it, even in gender based movements? Perhaps sexism and patriarchy are so pervasive and enduring that even men who “get it” cling to the notion that being a man is a special thing. The irony that men’s involvement in women-led movements is motivated, in part, by actualizing an inherent maleness lends itself to further investigation.

The Framing/ Identity Nexus

A primary concern of social movement scholars is how movements recruit and mobilize people to engage in collective action. Two concepts that have been useful for examining mobilization processes are framing and collective identity construction (see chapter four). My research contributes to theorizing that examines the framing/identity nexus. As Hunt, Benford, and Snow (1994) suggest, identity construction is inherent in all

framing activities, as it is through framing processes that individuals and groups are ideologically connected (or divided). Also, because frames are devised to move a particular audience to action, frames must be sensitive to the emotional needs of that audience. Anti-violence activists constructed motivational frames that offered men identity incentives. Through framing processes, male activists were defined not only as different kinds of men, but better men. It was an emotionally satisfying message, but one that had unintended costs. A pitfall of mobilizing dominant group members to work on behalf of minority activists is that ally activism is motivated, in part, by reproducing the hierarchical categories that sustain dominant-subordinate relationships. My research demonstrates how framing and identity construction processes draw from and reproduce existing social hierarchies.

My research also showed how social movement campaigns define activists as moral actors. EM campaigns and programs offered identity incentives that reflected how they men wanted to see themselves, which was as strong and willing to stand up for what's right. If strength and courage were traits of anti-violence men, then men who got involved in EM work were strong and courageous. By using phrases such as "well-meaning men" and "men of conscience," activists and organizations sought to motivate men's involvement by uniting the men under a collective identity.

CONFRONTING PRIVILEGE IN ALLY MOVEMENTS

Social movement scholars have found that, despite the many benefits of mobilizing dominant group member allies, these movements will inevitably confront the issue of privilege. Doug McAdam's (1988) research on whites in the Civil Rights Movement showed

how white activists carried more social and political clout than black activists. Washington and Evans (1993) and Myers (2008) argued that heterosexuals have legal rights that privilege them over gay and lesbian activists in the gay rights movement. This research suggests that the inclusion of dominant group allies is likely to reproduce, in part, the very privilege the movement is working to overcome.

As Reason and Broido (2005) suggest, “the balance between supporting and coopting is not clearly delineated in most instances and must be negotiated by individual allies within the context of social movements” (87). As my analysis in chapter three illustrated, however, because male activists benefit from male privilege, even the most “supportive” ally might inadvertently coopt women’s leadership. My research contributes to our understanding of how activists confront this support/coopt tension within the movement. Specifically, I showed how the alliance between women and men is shaped largely by the struggle to confront male privilege and inequality within the movement.

Ideological Support vs Practical Integration

One of the most persistent tensions in the movement arose out of the overvaluation of men’s contributions. Although some women activists were quick to criticize the glorification of male activists, it was other women activists who exaggerated men’s contributions and applauded men’s minimal efforts. I found that while many women activists critiqued men’s “undue praise,” it was mostly women activists who were championing individual men in the movement. This contradiction reflects the temptation minority group members feel to latch onto ally involvement to help spread the movement’s

messages to wider audiences (Kolb 2007). The risk minority activists run, however, is that doing so privileges dominant group member voices even further, while potentially undermining and disempowering the voices of the core, minority group member activists.

My analysis of how activists confronted privilege identified a disjunction between the *ideological support* of dominant group member involvement and their *practical integration* into minority movements. In other words, the theoretical basis for mobilizing dominant group member allies is that they provide (and/or possess) something that minority activists do not, and therefore they can advance the movement's goals. As I argued earlier, however, activists' efforts can be hampered by the struggle to confront inequality and privilege within the movement. Despite the frequent critiques and debates over *how* men should be involved, and about how unfair it was that men were lauded just for showing up, not one activist suggested that men should leave. What they *did* say, however, was that men should be "accountable" for their actions. In chapter three, I showed how activists tried to resolve this tension by emphasizing "men's accountability."

Accountability in Ally Movements

Sociological theorizing on accountability practices have examined how members of idiocultures (Fine 1997) transmit and enforce group norms through monitoring and policing individual's behavior. In studies of Christian groups, accountability efforts socialize newcomers by policing undesirable and unwanted behaviors (Bartkowski 2000; Wilkins 2008). There is a major difference, however, between accountability practices in Christian groups and the emphasis on accountability in ally movements, like the MEVAW, which is

the focus on power. Little empirical attention has been paid to accountability practices in ally movements specifically, where accountability practices are intended to reduce power differentials between dominant and subordinate group members.

What my analysis showed, however, is that accountability practices were relatively ineffective at reducing power differentials and/or reducing the impact of male privilege. On a few occasions, male activists were sanctioned for sexist behavior. More often, male activists faced relatively little consequence for sexist behavior. Part of the problem was that accountability was practiced on a case-by-case basis; accountability practices were not institutionalized. This left individuals struggling to figure out how to handle violations when they occurred.

By exposing the gap between accountability rhetoric and practice, and by identifying how inconsistently accountability was practiced, my research sheds light on the conditions under which ally movements may experience conflict between dominant-subordinate group members. Specifically, there seem to be three conditions under which this occurs: (1) dominant group members are inclined to bond with each other; (2) recruitment of dominant group allies is unselective; and (3) accountability is not clearly defined. The challenges faced by all social justice movements are thus to encourage bonding between dominant group allies and beneficiary allies, to recruit dominant group allies who are ready for involvement, and to devise clear, workable, and consensual definitions of accountability.

Beyond the Rhetoric: Recommendations for Institutionalizing Accountability

With the increasing emphasis on men's accountability that has accompanied men's growing involvement, it may benefit domestic and sexual violence organizations to put practices and processes in place that support men's involvement without reinforcing and/or deepening existing inequalities. I outline three recommendations for institutionalizing accountability: (1) capping men's speaking fees; (2) linking men's organizations to women's groups; and (3) requiring newcomers to receive training/education work before stepping into visible male leadership roles.

In terms of pay inequities, one way women's organizations could ensure that male activists were not being paid more than women activists for speaking engagements would be to create an organizational policy that states, "No man will be paid more to speak at our events than women." Despite Lane's claim that "Men probably get paid more money because they ask for more money," a policy like this would eliminate this trend and institutionalize pay equity.

A recommendation for men's organizations specifically is to incorporate a women's advisory group to inform the organization's decision making process. The advisory group could be a collective of women activists and advocates who work for neighboring agencies, or have relevant experience. The point of the advisory group would be to ensure that men are not working in isolation from the direct beneficiaries of the movement's work. To bring power and authority to their voices, marginalized women activists have formed caucuses in women-led organizations. In much the same way, men's organizations could incorporate women's caucuses, or advisory groups into their organizational structure.

To counteract the “expert syndrome,” which often places male activists in visible leadership positions prematurely, organizations could implement a policy requiring new male activists to receive sufficient training and education before stepping into visible, public positions. Every state has domestic and sexual violence state coalitions that provide trainings about the dynamics and impact of men’s violence against women. Newcomers to men’s organizations could be required to attend a series of women-led trainings. If men’s involvement and exposure is to other men and to EM work only, then their involvement is detached from women’s voices, women’s efforts, and the groundwork women’s organizations have developed. Attending events dominated by men, and learning only from men’s voices, reduces the likelihood that men will be accountable to women’s leadership. If men are expected to be accountable to women’s leadership, then they must know what women’s leadership looks like.

ALLY IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

Theorizing about identity construction in social movements has focused mostly on movements that have clearly defined insiders and outsiders, and/or where subordinate group insiders work to resist injustices created by dominant group outsiders. Here, research suggests that activists seek to build a collective “we” to create unity among movement members and to coordinate joint action. We know less, however, about identity construction processes in ally movements, particularly those where dominant group members are recruited as allies to minority group members. Some notable exceptions include Daniel Myers’ (2008) study of heterosexuals who advocate for gay and lesbian civil rights, McCorkel and

Rodriguez's (2009) study of white anti-racist activists, and Munkres's (2008) study of the National Network of U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities. These studies examine the unique positioning of ally activists and the challenges allies face arising from their unique position. That is, allies are neither movement insiders (the direct beneficiaries of the movement's work), nor are they movement outsiders. As Myers (2008) contends, allies are "members of the activist community, but not members of the beneficiary population that underlie[d] the collective activist identity and in fact are, by definition, part of the enemy" (168).

Ally activists have a harder time proving their commitment to the movement than beneficiary activists because their commitment is ideological, rather than experiential (Myers 2008; Munkres 2008). Myers (2008) coined the term "politically gay" to describe the identity of heterosexual gay rights activists. Myers found that heterosexual activists' experiences were different from gay and lesbian activists' experiences because they had not been personally injured by homophobia. Myers said, "Expecting to be welcomed simply because they are on the "right side," they are often disappointed to find themselves criticized for their inappropriate behaviors or simply because they are heterosexual" (176). My analysis showed how male activists faced similar challenges.

In a study of a midwestern chapter of the National Network of U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities, Munkres (2008) found that whites' ability to develop "deep identification" with their "sisters" enabled them to construct a sense of sameness. Munkres argued, however that their success at deep identification limited critical self-examination and, ultimately, hindered "the very development of the insurgent consciousness it was intended to motivate" (2008).

While these studies highlight the identity challenges allies face, my research

contributes to our understanding of how ally activists creates dilemmas for beneficiary activists. McCorkel and Rodriguez (2009) found that black anti-racist activists feared that whites would want to take over and diminish the radical politics of the organization. In response, black activists vetted white activists, differentiating between white “members” and “supporters.” Women in the MEVAW did the same thing; they simultaneously supported and critiqued men’s involvement, expressing *ideological* support for men’s involvement but often resisting men’s *practical integration* into movement spaces. By focusing on how women resolved this dilemma, I was able to shed light on the process of ally identity construction. I argued that in response to weighing the costs and benefits of male activists’ involvement, women activists made a set of claims about the selves of male activists. By filtering through all the enthusiasm about men’s involvement, and by discrediting male activists based on specific behaviors, women constructed the male ally identity. Women constructed the identity code in a way that meant only a small number of men qualified as true allies. By discrediting some male activists based on their perceived inauthenticity, women could also distance those men from the movement’s work, physically and symbolically.

While other studies have explained how beneficiary activists perceive ally activists, my research contributes to our understanding of *how* insider activists construct ally identities. The women in the MEVAW engaged in a three-step process: (1) they defined standards of authenticity; (2) they used standards of authenticity to differentiate between activists; and (3) they discredited some activists, while affirming others. By engaging in ally identity construction, women activists were able to resist the overvaluation of male activists. It thus

appears that minority group member insiders may construct ally identities, in part, to resist the privilege and inequality created by dominant group member involvement.

Although women defined slightly different standards of authenticity, they used three consistent standards to differentiate between men: (1) the recognition of privilege; (2) the willingness to hold other men accountable; and (3) listening to women's feedback and/or being receptive to it. By differentiating male activists based on these criteria, women acted as the movement's gatekeepers, which was also a way to resist the perceived loss of power. By refusing to work with particular men, and by warning other women and organizations about a man's sexist behaviors, women activists could reassert control over movement spaces. Women also reasserted control by constructing men as secondary activists. In so doing, however, they made it difficult for the movement to forge a collective activist identity.

My research thus helps us understand how incorporating dominant-group allies complicates the process of collective identity construction. Since allies are not the direct beneficiaries of movement action, or what Myers calls "beneficiary activists," allies can never really be a part of the core activist collective. Allies, then, must constantly try to prove to insiders that they are "real" activists that can be trusted. This in turn is likely to impede solidarity-building and perhaps make it difficult to secure ally support.

Lastly, my analysis in chapter four sheds light on an important question ally movements must struggle with: Is the main goal to empower minority group members, or is it to reach *up and across* to the political powers that be? Grusec (1991) cautions against the latter, arguing that too much emphasis and dependency on outsiders impedes the empowerment of the core activist community. According to my analysis of men in the

MEVAW, women activists are trying to do both. At the same time that women are making room for men's growing involvement and leadership, they are also working hard to maintain women's empowerment within. The present analysis examined the growing pains that have accompanied this balancing act.

EVALUATION

The present study examined how a historically, women-led movement has been impacted by the increasing efforts to mobilize men as allies. Beyond my analytic chapters, my research contributes to our understanding of the micro-political challenges that arise when dominant group members are mobilized to work on behalf of minority group members. My research offers notable advantages over similar studies that have also attempted to analyze the dynamics of ally movements. For example, my research, unlike McAdam's (1988) examination of white ally involvement in *Freedom Summer*, is based on direct observation of men's anti-violence activism. The data I collected through participant observation provided invaluable insight into *how* male activists were mobilized as allies. Direct observation at EM trainings, workshops, and conferences also allowed me to see how women and men interacted in these settings. I did not have to rely solely on participants' post-hoc accounts.

The interview data I collected with women and men activists complemented the direct observations by providing insight into how women and men made sense of men's growing involvement. Although women and men frequently talked about the importance of "women and men working together" in public settings, they were much more candid about their

feelings during interviews. My in-depth interviews with activists helped get past the politeness of public interactions and uncovered how women and men felt about the tensions and conflicts they experienced.

While other studies have suggested that confronting privilege is an unintended consequence of engaging dominant group allies, my analysis explained how specific patterns of male privilege manifested within the movement. As in the workplace, male allies in women-led movements benefitted from a glass-escalator effect. My research provides more detail and clarity about *how* male privilege manifests within movement spaces. Hopefully, my analysis will stimulate dialogue within the movement about how to integrate men into the movement in ways that complement, rather than contradict, the movement's anti-sexist values. Indeed, these conversations are already taking place, but perhaps will be aided by this systemic sociological examination and analysis.

In studying heterosexual allies advocating for gay rights, Myers (2008) drew from activists' published articles and Internet forums to shed light on the process of ally identity construction. Myers used this data to examine how activists defined and created the "politically gay" ally identity and the challenges that accompanied ally identity construction. The in-depth interviews I conducted broadened the study of ally identity construction by examining how the beneficiary activists (women) constructed the ally identity (for men). My analysis also identified the centrality of authenticity in constructing ally identities, which I argued women emphasized by defining "standards of authenticity."

One of the major limitations of my study is that, because I am a woman, I was not able to observe men in all-male settings. I was denied access to several male-only settings

that might have provided additional insights into EM work. And while many of the men whom I interviewed spoke candidly, my identity as a woman may have influenced their answers to my questions about working with women. A male researcher might have had the same experience with women activists, and so future studies of men in women-led movement would benefit from a mixed gender research team.

Another limitation of my study is that the men I interviewed were committed activists willing to share their perspectives and experiences. I neglected to learn from men who had negative experiences and left the movement because they felt unwelcomed or offended. The men I interviewed were currently active in the movement. Men who had left the movement might have had different perceptions and experiences.

FUTURE RESEARCH

My findings can be used to inform future studies of accountability in ally movements. Do other ally movements also experience a gap between accountability rhetoric and practice? Or have other ally movements been able to implement and institutionalize more effective accountability practices? Indeed, Bartowski (2000) found that that the Promise Keepers successfully built accountability groups into the structure of their movement. Christian accountability groups, however, are intended to transmit group norms, not reduce power differentials between dominant and subordinate group members. Therefore, there may be extra hurdles that ally movements face simply because it is difficult for the oppressed to hold the oppressors accountable. Future research could examine, however, if difficult also means impossible.

Secondly, it would be worthwhile for future research to examine the salience of the “true ally” status in other ally movements. For example, are gay activists in the gay rights movement satisfied when heterosexuals show up to an event or donate money to an advocacy organization? Or do gay activists insist that heterosexual allies “walk the walk” in addition to talking the talk? Are other ally movements as concerned with the connection between values and action, or is this especially important for gender-based movements? Is there something about the interactional dynamics of gender and gender inequality that makes women more leery of men’s alleged inauthenticity? Do women-led movements have more to lose if too many male allies don’t “get it”?

Lastly, my research has examined the major limitation of ally activism and ally movements. Although ally movements are predicated on the assumption that ending inequality requires engaging dominant-group members as allies, my research indicates that their involvement also reinforces inequalities. My analysis thus raises the question of whether ally movements are really more effective than minority-led movements that do not engage allies. Perhaps minority-group movements can accomplish their goals without recruiting dominant-group member allies. Perhaps not. In any case, whether dominant-group members are necessary is an empirical matter that warrants further investigation.

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