WHO ARE THOSE GUYS?
UNDOING THE OILFIELD’S ROUGHNECK MASCULINITY

A Dissertation in
Rural Sociology
by
Matthew R. Filteau

© 2012 Matthew R. Filteau

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
August 2012
The dissertation of Matthew R. Filteau was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Kathryn Brasier  
Associate Professor, Rural Sociology  
Dissertation Advisor  
Chair of Committee

Diane K. McLaughlin  
Professor, Rural Sociology & Demography

Timothy Kelsey  
Professor, Agricultural Economics

Carolyn Sachs  
Professor, Rural Sociology & Women Studies

D. Kelly Davis  
Research Assistant Professor, Human Development & Family Studies

Ann R. Tickamyer  
Professor and Head, Department of Agricultural Economics & Rural Sociology

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School
ABSTRACT

Natural resource-based occupations predominantly employ men. However, what it means to be a man within these occupations has changed over time. Some men now relate to their jobs differently and construct masculine identities around unconventional symbols of manhood. Research on rural masculinities largely examines farmers and loggers, and little knowledge exists on how men construct masculinity in other natural resource-based occupations. Pennsylvania’s Marcellus Shale region is the ideal location to examine how men within the oilfield construct masculinity at work, and how their masculine work identity affects the ways they ‘do’ masculinity at home and in Marcellus Shale communities. I adapt ecological systems theory to assess how broader levels of social organization (economic system and oil & gas industry) affect company policies. I use dramaturgy and structured action theory to understand how these policies shape the ways men construct masculinity at work, at home and in public. This study uses qualitative interviews with employees at a contract drilling company (pseudonym: Magna-Drill), and observations at work and in public to understand how the organization’s structure enables and constrains masculinity among employees. The study finds that Magna-Drill’s organizational structure reinforces domesticity—economic system’s masculine breadwinning norm. This means these men see breadwinning as their primary masculine role. Magna-Drill’s organizational structure emphasizes health and safety policies and collectivist goals, which shape the ways men construct a masculinized occupational community. The formal organizational structure and informal occupational community shape the ways men construct masculinity at work, at home and in Marcellus Shale communities. Thus, Magna-Drill employees are ‘undoing’ conventional roughneck oilfield masculinities. This study contributes to the rural masculinities literature by examining how organizational structures and occupational communities affect masculine performances at work, at home and in energy boomtowns.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.............................................................................................................v

LIST OF IMAGES...........................................................................................................vi

Chapter 1 Introduction.................................................................................................1

Chapter 2 Conceptual Framework .............................................................................13

Chapter 3 Literature Review: Structuring Masculinities - Work, Family, Public........47

Chapter 4 Methodology .............................................................................................86

Chapter 5 Findings.....................................................................................................113

Chapter 6 Conclusion.................................................................................................173

Appendix A Gaining Access: Four Approaches .....................................................185

Appendix B Interview Guide ....................................................................................189

Appendix C Employment by Gender in Extraction Related industries .................192

References ..................................................................................................................193
LIST OF TABLES

Table 4-1: Table of Interview Participants. ................................................................. 94

Table 5-1: Description of Study Participants. .............................................................. 115

Table 5-2: Magna-Drill’s Organizational Hierarchy. .................................................... 119
LIST OF IMAGES

Table 2-1: Conceptual Model .............................................................................................................. 14

Table 6-1: Graffiti on a bridge in Williamsport, Pennsylvania ......................................................... 144
Chapter 1  
Introduction  

Rural masculinities are a part of everyday life for both men and women. They affect politics, economics, media and public discourse on what it means to be a real man (Campbell et al. 2006; Campbell and Bell 2000). Rural men are real men: they drink, (Campbell 2000; Leyshon et al. 2005; Tilki 2006), noodle\(^1\) (Grigsby 2009; Morgan 2006), hunt (Anahita and Mix 2006; Bye 2003), fly fish (Bull 2009), listen to and perform white trash rock and roll music (Eastman and Schrock 2008), collect antique farm tractors (Nusbaumer 2011), and drive fast cars (Campbell and Phillips 1995).

Rural men are “rugged, self-sufficient and self-made” (Courtenay et al. 2006: 156) men who work alone. They complete hard, physical labor in ‘the elements’ by using their bodies and mastering machinery to conquer nature (Bartlett and Conger 2004; Brandth 1995; Campbell and Bell 2000; Liepins 2000; Little 2002; Saugers 2002b). Saws, power equipment, and heavy machinery such as tractors contribute to their masculine identities (Brandth and Haugen 2000; Brandth and Haugen 2005 a,b).

\(^1\) Noodling is a form of hand fishing—anglers submerge themselves under water and catch fish with their hands.
Natural resource-based occupations such as farming, mining, logging and fishing are masculinized occupations, but recently what it means to be a man employed in natural resource-based occupations has changed. Some rural men, especially young farmers, see their occupation as a job, rather than a ‘way of life’ (Brandth 1995; Coldwell 2007). Conventional agriculture has restricted masculine identities, but transitions to sustainable farming practices allow men to perform alternative masculinities that do not emphasize men’s domination over nature, individualism or the gendered roles of men and women (Peter et al. 2000). Although men’s masculine identities are still tied to independence, pride in skill, pride in facing danger, and a sense of being in a unique occupational category (Carroll et al. 2005; Lee et al. 2001), real men also embrace alternative masculine identities tied to caregiving, safety, collectivist goals, and professionalism (Ely and Meyerson 2010; Sherman 2009). For example, agricultural masculinities now demand rational economic decision-making, rather than brute strength and physical labor (Bartlett and Conger 2004; Brandth 1995; Little 2002; Saugeres 2002a). Male forestry who identity with power equipment symbolize a shift in masculine discourse because men no longer require physical strength to complete masculine jobs (Brandth and Haugen 2000). In other cases, shifting economic, environmental and political climates have left rural men unemployed and lacking a viable masculine identity. Men (and women) must recreate masculinity around characteristics such as family caregiving and masculinized forms of recreation—i.e. fishing, hunting, and harvesting firewood (Sherman 2009). The shift in how men relate to their jobs, how masculinity is defined across occupations, and the ways men use work to construct their masculine identity suggests a need to identify and describe potential shifts in other masculinized occupations.
The aforementioned body of work inspired the present study. I examine masculinity within the oilfield, because previous work suggests masculinity is the principle structure within this industry (Collinson 1999). As a structure masculinity does not determine the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors of men; it provides a set of rules that shape the ways men can perform legitimate ‘manly’ behaviors. In contrast to previous research on rural masculinities, I acknowledge the effect broader levels of social organization—particularly the economic system—have on the ways men perform masculinity at work. Although research documents the importance of work for a man’s masculine identity, I extend this analysis by examining how a man’s masculine work identity may affect his masculine identity and performances in two additional spheres: home and public.

**Project Rationale**

Rural communities in Pennsylvania’s Marcellus Shale region are experiencing rapid energy development by oil and gas companies. These companies contract a predominantly male, transient, out-of-state workforce. The pace and scale of development has changed the social, economic, political, and environmental conditions within Pennsylvania’s Marcellus communities (Brasier et al. 2011). Social scientists have studied energy development within rural communities for more than forty years, but this

---

2 Energy workers who work in oil and/or gas extraction typically call themselves “oilfield” workers.
research primarily focuses on residents’ experiences and uses a social disruption lens to chronicle individual, community and environmental change. This work overlooks the population usually blamed for creating these changes: male energy workers (e.g. Kohrs 1974; Little 1977; Parkins and Angel 2010).

Pennsylvania’s Marcellus Shale region is the ideal study location to examine this overlooked population because since 2004 an undocumented number of transient male energy workers have begun working in the region. By studying oilfield workers, this study examines a hyper-masculine occupation new to rural masculinities research. Additionally, by studying this population I critique the social disruption literature; however, this is not a social disruption study. Rather than explore energy development through a social disruption lens, I sample energy workers to examine masculinity among men who work in the oilfield. This is a study about men and masculinity within a hyper-masculine work environment. Why men and masculinity? The energy industry and its supporting industries predominantly employ men (see Appendix C), and masculinity is the principle structure shaping manly behavior in the oilfield (Collinson 1999). Therefore, the purpose of this case study is to explore masculinity among oilfield workers at a contract drilling company.³ Specifically, I aim to answer this central research question: How does organizational structure shape masculinity among oilfield men at work, home and in Marcellus Shale communities?

³ I conceal the company’s actual name with the pseudonym, Magna-Drill.
Conceptual Framework

In Chapter 2, I describe my conceptual model. Using Bronfenbrenner’s (1989) ecological systems theory, I show four specific levels of social organization. Giddens (1976) and Goffman (1959) provide a social constructivist lens to view the recursive relationship between these levels, but particularly organizational structure and agency among employees for creating, reproducing and undoing masculinity. My conceptual framework consists of three interrelated sections. First, I examine gender as a dramaturgical performance, or something we are constantly “doing” (Goffman 1959; West and Zimmerman 1987). I also discuss how under certain structural conditions it is possible for individuals to ‘undo’ gender, or deviate from conventional gender norms. Using Giddens’ (1976) structured action theory, I explain how gender performances constitute structure. Second, I conceptualize the principle structure under analysis: masculinity. Using Risman’s (2004) gender structure theory and Connell’s (1986) conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity, I explore the relationship between masculinity and patriarchy. I also describe the structural conditions that permit or prohibit ‘undoing’ masculinity. Section three investigates how hegemonic masculinity is embedded within our broader social system, a system comprised of elements bound in a recursive relationship with broader levels and sublevels of social organization (Giddens 1979; 1984). I concentrate on the economic system and examine how domesticity within this level shapes other levels of social organization. I delineate industry as the first sublevel; and examine the oil and gas industry’s hegemonic “roughneck” masculine structure. The next level is Organization (or company). I then examine how organizations
structure masculinity among men at the interpersonal level—i.e. work, home, community. My dissertation’s overarching research question focuses on the organizational level and how Magna-Drill’s structure (i.e., rules, policies and procedures) shapes how men perform masculinity at work. Because work identities are interconnected with other spheres (Kanter 1977), I examine how ‘what it means to be a man’ at work also affects a man’s masculine identity at home and in energy boomtowns.

**Literature Review**

In Chapter 3, I review empirical research of how masculinities are structured and performed at the interpersonal levels of work, home and public. In the work section, I focus on the ways men perform masculinity and how gendered organizations (Akers 1990), specifically masculinized organizations (Britton 1997), structure action. I focus on one occupational culture specific to natural resource-based occupations: occupational communities. I discuss how members of occupational communities collectively identify with each other through work identities that form around similar values, norms, and perspectives at work and during leisure (Van Maanen and Barley 1984). Therefore, in the context of a study focusing on masculinities at work, it is important to understand that occupational communities may form around collective masculine work identities. Therefore, *masculinized occupational communities* may exist within natural resource-based occupations. Occupational communities form around collective identities, and stigma solidifies cohesion among in-group members, especially oilfield workers. I review literature on dirty work (Hughes 1958), and outline three stigmatizing elements: physical
taint, social taint, and moral taint (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999). The section concludes with a discussion of natural resource-based occupational communities and how masculine occupational cultures subordinate femininities.

In the next section, I review how men construct masculinity at home. Working is a standard practice of ‘being a man’ (Kimmel 2006; Messner and Bozada-Deas 2009). Men (and women) often equate masculinity with breadwinning (Connell 1995; Cooper 2002; Gerson 1993; Townsend 2002). Social patriarchies (work) and private patriarchy (home) are relational domains that enable and constrain members within each sphere (Kanter 1977). I explore this relationship and domesticity, or the gender structure separating market work and domestic work (Williams 2000). This structure designates men as ‘ideal workers,’ who have little time for household responsibilities, while domesticity marginalizes women by impeding their responsibility and access to market work. Next, I review research on parenting, and recent trends in parenting for married and single American fathers.

The final section reviews how men perform masculinity in public spaces. Men are accountable to the ways other men perceive and monitor legitimate masculinities in the public sphere. Extra-local influence on masculine discourse affects masculinities at the local level (Kenway et al. 2006), and men who perform masculinities in public subject themselves to gender policing by men and women with similar and different masculine ideologies (Bell 1994; Campbell 2000a; Kimmel 2004). I review literature on how men perform manhood acts in public—e.g. acts such as drinking, holding one’s piss, conversational cockfighting, physically positioning one’s self in public, using symbols
(such as the confederate flag) to convey white trash masculinity (Campbell 2000; Eastman and Schrock 2008; Tilki 2006). I also review how the invisible masculine structure in the public sphere may pose detrimental health effects on men—the repercussions being injuries, disabilities or even death (Alston and Kent 2008; Courtenay 2006; Gerschick and Miller 1994; Li Laoire 2001; Rameriez-Ferrero 2005). I then transition to Connell’s (1993) rural ‘frontier’ masculinities, or masculinities performed in public places we typically do not recognize as ‘public,’ because of their rural and remote locations. I close the chapter with a discussion of how the masculine structure is changing within rural areas, and how men are ‘undoing’ rural masculinities.

Methodology

Chapter 4 provides a description of the data collection methods, data transformation techniques (description, analysis and interpretation), and validity considerations. This study uses qualitative interviews and observations to explore the following research question: How does organizational structure shape masculinity among oilfield men at work, home and in Marcellus Shale communities?

To answer this question, I purposively selected Magna-Drill—a contract drilling company. I use qualitative interviews as the primary method of data collection. The sample includes 22 Magna-Drill employees, 5 employees at a production company (Coburn), and 6 pilot interview participants. Additionally, I conduct observations on work sites and in public to see how men construct masculinity under Magna-Drill’s occupational structure.
This exploratory approach allows me to uncover broad themes and meanings other research designs would miss. The qualitative techniques I use promote the acquisition of rich, detailed meanings on masculinity, meanings that otherwise may have been overlooked or lost using a quantitative approach (Maxwell 2005). This approach also allows me to understand detailed meanings of masculinity across jobs, marital statuses, and residences. I use an emergent design, whereby topics and themes emerge from transcripts and field observations.

**Findings**

In Chapter 5, I describe Magna-Drill’s organizational structure. In Table 5-1, I describe my sample, and discuss each employee’s role within the company. An employee’s role depends on their position in the occupational hierarchy, so I describe each worker’s schedule and responsibilities. I then discuss the company’s health and safety policies, and their significance on how workers do masculinity at work. Magna-Drill’s organizational structure prioritizes health and safety policies, and collectivist goals. Therefore, their organizational structure differs from traditional structures in the ‘old’ oilfield. Managers once promoted “frontier masculinities” (Connell 1993): bravado, independence, competition, and unsafe working practices to maximize efficiency and increase profit (Collinson 1998; Miller 2004; Wicks 2002). Although Magna-Drill still promotes and reinforces domesticity’s conventional masculine norm, breadwinning, the company’s structure enables men to perform alternative, legitimate forms of masculinity.
that depend on collectivist goals and safety. I also describe how the company’s zero-tolerance drug policy contributes to the health and safety among workers.

My analysis section examines how Magna-Drill’s organizational structure shapes masculinity among employees at work, home and in Marcellus Shale communities. First, I explore how the organizational structure promotes a specific occupational culture: a *masculinized occupational community*. The company’s emphasis on collective identity stimulates the emergence of a masculine occupational community. To gain membership in the occupational community, employees must not only follow the company’s policies; they must believe in them and reinforce them. Workers create collective bonds around four elements: (1) Magna-Drill employees see themselves as in-group members, while distinguishing themselves from out-group members; (2) members derive similar self-identities through occupational roles; (3) support and confirmation from others create a collective social identity around ‘dirty work’; and (4) physical proximity and restricted social relations blur the lines between work and leisure. These beliefs solidify bonds among employees, who see themselves as “family members,” or “brothers.” They support each other by working together to complete jobs, and care for each other when someone experiences work-family conflicts—i.e. the interface of contradictory family and work identities and responsibilities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Most of all, occupational community members work collaboratively to ensure each other’s safety. Therefore, participants report that collective work identities boost productivity and reduce injuries.

Second, I examine how Magna-Drill’s organizational structure shapes masculinity at home. Although the company’s organizational structure positively shapes men’s work masculinities, long absences from home create work-family conflict, and decrease each
man’s status at home. So, while the organizational structure and occupational community enable men to perform caregiving amongst their coworkers through the collective in-group masculine identity, when they return home, providing additional caregiving can tax their masculine identities. Breadwinning is the unifying masculine role, and these men see their domestic responsibility as breadwinning, not caregiving. In fact, all participants believe their primary role is breadwinning, regardless of marital status. Therefore, participants reinforce the norm of domesticity, because Magna-Drill does—they view breadwinning as their primary domestic responsibility. To account for some of the variation in the sample, I examine differences among participants living in Pennsylvania and participants from out-of-state. Although this work provides a comfortable wage, the rigorous “hitch” work pattern, transient lifestyle and grueling work demands create work-family conflict among workers and their family members.

Third, I explore how inflexible work schedules restrict rig crews from entering Marcellus communities, while crews with greater flexibility, such as Health and Safety Reps and maintenance crewmembers experience greater periods of time and greater amounts of freedom in Marcellus communities. In my interpretation section, I examine how organizational structures may enable and constrain the attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors that appear in the social disruption research as social transgressions perpetrated by energy workers. These performances of “frontier masculinities” (Connell 1993), or what I dub “roughneck” masculinities are common amongst ‘old’ oilfield organizational structures and occupational cultures. However, Magna-Drill’s organizational structure enables men to embrace alternative masculinities; therefore, workers support the company’s policies, which enhances their own safety and contributes to the occupational
community’s values. This alternative ‘legitimate’ masculine identity challenges conventional oilfield masculinities, thereby ‘undoing’ roughneck oilfield masculinities.

**Conclusion**

I conclude this dissertation in Chapter 6, and discuss implications for future research. This study contributes to theoretical and empirical knowledge on rural masculinities, and how gendered, or *masculinized organizations* (Britton 1997), including oilfield companies, enable and constrain the ways men do masculinity at work, at home and in public. The ‘old’ oilfield is known for individualism, machismo and hyper-masculinity, but this study verifies previous rural masculinities and oilfield research: when structural conditions permit “undoing” conventional masculinity, men will construct (and prefer) alternative, legitimate forms of masculinity (Ely and Meyerson 2010). Research that examines how organizational structures enable and constrain masculinity has implications for future research on men, masculinity, work, and natural resource-based communities developing their energy resources.
Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

I adapt Bronfenbrenner’s (1989) ecological systems theory to fit a post-structuralist framework that focuses on the masculine structure within four levels of social organization. Rather than use organic analogies (e.g. chronosystem, exosystem) and the terms macrosystem, mesosystem, microsystem, as specified by Bronfenbrenner, I conceptualize the model’s levels as economic system, oil & gas industry, and organizational structure. The interpersonal level contains three domains: family, work, and Marcellus community. Instead of calling the interface of two microsystems a mesosystem, I conceptualize these realms as work-family conflict and social disruption. My decision to conceptualize levels and realms as stated is more than tautological. This distinction has epistemological relevance for understanding structures within these levels of social organization and the recursive relationship between structure and agency (Giddens 1979; 1984). The present terms specify the exact levels of social organization in the conceptual model, and circumvent debates within sociology and among disciplines with alternative definitions and applications for macro, meso and micro.
Figure 2-1: Conceptual Model

A = Work-Family Conflict; B = Social Disruption

* Adapted from Bronfenbrenner’s (1989) Ecological Systems Theory
The social system contains several broad systems—e.g. economic system, political system, legal system, religious system, education system. In this conceptual framework, I examine the economic system. Like other systems, the economic system contains structures that shape the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors of individuals. Hegemonic masculinity is the principle structure under analysis in this dissertation. The term hegemonic masculinity describes a hierarchical relationship among multiple masculinities; whereby, the hegemonic masculine structure contributes to patriarchal dominance within the economic system. The hegemonic masculinized structure of domesticity shapes masculinity in sublevels of social organization; therefore, I complement the adapted ecological systems model by using a social constructivist lens to help emphasize the recursive relationship between masculine structures within each level of social organization and among individuals (Goffman 1959; West and Zimmerman 1987). I describe how the hegemonic masculine structure of domesticity permeates levels of social organization, and how this structure has implications for the ways men construct masculinity at work, at home and in Marcellus Shale communities.

Structures are rules and resources embedded within systems of social organization (Giddens 1984); whereby systems are “Reproduced relations between actors or collectives, organized as regular social practices” (Giddens 1979: 66). A duality exists between structure and agency—structures not only enable and constrain the behavior of individuals, but individual actors create structures. Giddens states: “Structure [exists] as the medium and outcome of the conduct it recursively organizes; the structural properties of social systems do not exist outside of action but are chronically implicated in its production” (Giddens 1984: 374). Structures within broader social systems not only
shape individual action at interpersonal levels, but attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors at this level may affect broader systems and the structures that comprise them.

I organize the rest of this chapter around three interrelated sections. (I.) I examine gender using a social constructivist lens to conceptualize it as a dramaturgical performance, or something we are constantly “doing” (Goffman 1959; West and Zimmerman 1987). I also discuss ‘undoing’ gender, or how under certain structural conditions it is possible for individuals to deviate from gender norms. Then, I use Giddens’ (1976) structured action theory to explain how gender performances constitute structure. (II.) Next, I transition to the principle structure under analysis: masculinity. I define masculinity, and examine its relationship to femininity. I use Risman’s (2004) gender structure theory and Connell’s (1986) conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity to demonstrate that masculinity is the structure responsible for patriarchal dominance within our broader economic system. I also describe ‘undoing’ masculinity, or how under certain structural conditions it is possible for individuals to deviate from masculine norms. (III.) I review each level of social organization presented in the conceptual model. I concentrate on the economic system and examine how its masculine structure of domesticity shapes sublevels of social organization. Oil & gas industry is the first sublevel of social organization. I specifically focus on this industry’s hegemonic “roughneck” masculine structure. Next, I describe how this structure affects the ways organizations in the oilfield structure masculinity. Because organizational structure may affect the ways men construct masculinity at the interpersonal level, I describe roughneck oilfield masculinity at work, at home and in energy communities.
I) Doing Gender

A number of societal factors shape the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors of individuals. Gender is one of these factors. Gender is often attributed to one’s sex category, but (sex) male and female do not define (gender) men and women. We must accomplish gender. Gender is an outcome. I conceptualize gender as a dramaturgical performance, or something we are constantly “doing” (Goffman 1959; West and Zimmerman 1987).

Scholars who define gender as a performance argue gender is not static, but enacted continually (Butler and Savran 1998). Using Erving Goffman’s (1959, 1967, 1971, 1976, 1977) conception of dramaturgy, post-structuralists conceptualize gender as active public performances—performances that depend upon culture and time. These gendered performances are part of everyone’s identity, and Goffman’s (1959) work helps illuminate how individuals create identities through performances “given” and performances “given off.” The former are open and direct forms of communication, whereas the latter are deliberately given off to convey the performer’s preferred self-identity. Performances given off are the basis for Goffman’s theory. People convey their identities to audiences using verbal and nonverbal dramaturgical performances. Actors must work at their presentations through dramaturgical discipline—a technique limiting the chances of the performance not being construed as the actor intends—to convince audience members that the performance is a legitimate feature of the actor’s self-identity. During this process the actor(s) and audience member(s) work collaboratively to create (and judge) the legitimacy of the actor’s performance. While observing and judging each
performance, audience members (men and women) also assist performers through verbal and nonverbal cues, either confirming or disconfirming the performer’s identity. Therefore, these performances are not merely acts; performances from each temporal location constitute the actor’s identity.

West and Zimmerman’s (1987) argument that individuals are continually “doing gender” draws on Goffman’s dramaturgical conception of gender as identity. They specify that when individuals are doing gender the legitimacy of their performances become “hostage” to their performance of gender norms that are embedded within social structures (West and Zimmerman 1987: 126). Goffman’s “gender display” is useful for understanding the process of doing gender because gender is something accomplished in social situations, something people deem as “natural,” but it requires substantial effort to accomplish. “Doing gender” is not natural, essential, or biological—but it is unavoidable.

The influence of the sex role approach on this theory is apparent because appropriate gendered behavior is often attributed to one’s sex category (West and Zimmerman 1987, 2009). In fact, gender is a socially constructed stratification system weighted heavily on sex category (See Connell 2002; Lorber 1994; Ferree et al. 1999; Risman 1998, 2004), and we are accountable to our sex category for legitimization as we perform gender (Messerschmidt 2008). So for men to do masculinity they must put on convincing manhood acts—bravado, independence, strength—whereas women must perform acts associated with femininity—compassion, nurturing, sensitivity (Schwalbe 2005).
**Undoing Gender**

Although the conceptualization of ‘doing gender’ is widely accepted among gender scholars, Judith Butler (2004) introduced the concept ‘undoing gender’ to explain how under some circumstances individuals may deviate from conventional gender norms. Undoing gender accounts for both the structural constraints permitting or denying divergence from gendered norms, and the agency of each individual. Using Butler’s work, Deutsch (2007) argues individuals are ‘doing gender’ when they follow one or several normative gender expressions appropriate for their sex category, but the concept does little for understanding why individuals resist or deviate from appropriate gendered norms. Deutsch urges scholars to conceptualize “... ‘doing gender’ when referring to social interactions that reproduce gender difference and using the phrase ‘undoing gender’ when they reference social interactions that reduce gender difference” (2007: 122).

**Gender as Structure**

Social structures comprise systems of social organization. By conceptualizing gender as accomplished through reproduced interpersonal relations (Giddens 1979), Risman (2004) argues gender constitutes a social structure. As a structure gender exists as both the medium and outcome of the gendered conceptions it recursively organizes (Giddens 1984). The temporal locations “frontstage” and “backstage” in Goffman’s dramaturgy illustrate how gender constitutes a structure. When people perform their
‘ideal’ gender identity (performances given off) on the frontstage, and reserve illegitimate gender performances for safer backstage performances, it demonstrates how conceptions of legitimate gender performances structure people’s behavior. Therefore, when men and women perform gender appropriate to their sex category, they create gender structures (West and Zimmerman 1987). Illegitimate performances serve to demarcate the structural boundaries.

Social structures are not concrete walls; they are boundaries created through interpersonal interaction among people who occupy various levels social organization and contexts. These structures enable and constrain the behaviors of individual actors, meaning they “... exist as the reproduced conduct of situated actors” (Giddens 1976: 127). Structured action theory highlights how structure and agency are bound in a recursive relationship, whereby individuals create the structures that enable and constrain their attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors. Consequently, as social actors we become accountable to how members within society construct and reinforce legitimate gender characteristics—or how they structure action through rules and resources (Giddens 1984; West and Zimmerman 1987).

II) From Gender to Masculinity as Structure

The gender structure shapes attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors among individuals within society. Using a social constructivist lens of gender, I conceptualize femininities and masculinities as gendered social identities of ‘what it means to be a man’
and ‘what it means to be a woman.’ Although masculinity is the structure under analysis in this dissertation, we must examine how masculinity relates to femininity.

Differentiating masculine from feminine characteristics can be difficult, because in some contexts these attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors overlap. For example, within the context of athletic competition, women can legitimately exhibit competitiveness, and men can legitimately show emotion. Semiotic approaches define masculinity as the opposite of femininity; therefore, absence of feminine qualities represents masculinity, and absence of masculine qualities represents femininity. Kimmel (2004) argues it is easier to define masculinity as what men are not (feminine), more so than from what men are (masculine). However, this claim presents a simplistic binary relationship, and Connell (1995) argues to fully understand masculinity and femininity, we must understand these qualities as a place within gender relations.

Masculinity and femininity are co-constructed (Alvesson 1998; Campbell et al. 2001; Fletcher 1998; 1999; Gherardi 1994; 1995); they cannot exist without each other. The gender boundaries between masculinity and femininity are relational, constructed and policed by cultural members. When a man’s performance falls under what a given culture defines as appropriately feminine, they may face sanctions or gender policing (Kimmel 2004). We are accountable to “doing masculinity” within the confines of the gender structure—if we refuse, we face sanctions that pressure us to conform. Gender policing manifests through interaction and serves to reinforce the legitimate boundaries of gender attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors. For men, sexuality is paramount, and men become accountable to heterosexual rules—these definitions are rigidly protected and well known. Young boys (and men) use the word “fag” as a label for someone
breaking manhood’s heterosexuality rule. Therefore under certain structural constraints it may be appropriate to conform to homosexual masculine rules, but in other situations, gender policing demarcates the lines of appropriate and inappropriate masculinities (Kimmel 2006). These sanctions reinforce the gendered, structural boundaries that shape conventional ways of doing gender (West and Zimmerman 1987).

**What is Hegemonic Masculinity?**

Men juxtapose masculine characteristics with feminine characteristics, but they also compare themselves to other men; therefore, Connell (2001) argues multiple masculinities exist. Men know what is masculine (or more masculine) by comparing themselves to other men (Kimmel 2004). Carrigan et al. (1985) used Gramsci’s notion of *cultural hegemony* when they coined the term “hegemonic masculinity” to understand how masculinities relate hierarchically to other masculinities. Connell’s extensive body of work develops the notion of multiple masculinities, and particularly hegemonic masculinity. Connell describes four types of masculine *positions* that exist in a hierarchical relationship: hegemonic, complicit, subordinated, and marginalized. First, hegemonic masculinities are the idealized male within a culture and during a particular time. Connell (1995) used the concept to describe prominent figures in the labor force and in the public sphere: white, heterosexual, dominant men. The patterns and practices that permit hegemonic men to dominate women and other men, and make it seem normal, validate hegemony’s reproduction (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Second, men adhering to complicit masculinities accept, participate and benefit from hegemonic masculinity’s reproduction. Complicit men benefit from the subordination of other men
and women, and try to avoid subordination. Third, subordinated masculinities occur among men who deviate from the conventional hegemonic system and ideology. ‘Gender policing’ exemplifies how some men are subordinated for illegitimate masculine attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors, while men who comply with conventional norms reproduce complicit and hegemonic masculine norms (Kimmel 2004). Fourth, Connell describes marginalized masculinities as those that occur among men who cannot fulfill the hegemonic masculine norm, often men of color and men with disabilities.

In addition to conceptualizing hegemonic masculinity as a position, Connell uses it to describe a system whereby hegemonic masculinity is embedded in various levels of social organization and structures. Within these domains, hegemony makes it seem normal and natural for men to maintain power over women and other men. These “configurations of practice” have four dimensions: power, the division of labor, cathexis or emotional relations, and the symbolic. Despite tautological differences (systems and structures), there are many parallels between Connell’s argument that hegemonic masculinity is embedded in societal institutions such as government, the economy, and the family, and Risman’s (2004) notion of gender as a social structure. I conceptualize masculinity as a structure because masculinity is a culturally specific way of doing gender that structures everyday life (Connell 2001).

In addition to a position and system of gender relations, Connell (1987) describes hegemonic masculinity as an ideology that reinforces patriarchy’s legitimacy. Hegemonic masculinity structures social life and each person’s conception of reality. Levy (2005) uses the term “hegemonic complicity” to understand four dimensions of hegemonic masculinity as ideology. First, ideal-type masculinity is the conception that there is one
legitimate form of masculinity. Second, *hierarchical ranking* of self and others is a process whereby men compare themselves and others (Lewis 1978). The third and fourth dimensions, *subordination of women*, and *women-like behavior* commonly manifest as sexism, homophobia, or other conventional beliefs about normative behavior for men and women.

Much like Gramsci’s cultural hegemony, hegemonic masculinity is embedded in social structures and its dominance often renders it invisible or taken-for-granted. Connell argues this invisibility serves to reinforce masculinity’s power and dominance, because if the root of hegemony remains latent, it becomes impossible to challenge its dominance (Connell 2001). Too often, men are incapable (marginalized) or unwilling (complicit) to challenge hegemonic masculinities because they reap the dividends of status and power from maintaining the patriarchal order (Connell 1995). But even men who benefit from hegemonic masculinities may experience pitfalls in their power. Hegemonic masculinity is dangerous because hegemonic men are said to be authoritarian, working men who reinforce dominance through public interactions. Kimmel (2004) further clarifies that a hegemonic man is *a man in power and a man with power*. So if men lack power, for internal or external reasons, they become trapped and fail within a gender structure that otherwise gives them the power to succeed (because they are men). This ideal model of masculinity presents a narrow, but powerful depiction of ‘real men’ and their ascendancy to, and grip on power. In my literature review, I describe how the hegemonic masculine ideal presents perilous conditions for men, women, and the social order.

Gender scholars use hegemonic masculinity as the overarching concept to understand the ascendancy of power “… achieved through culture, institutions, and
persuasion” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832). This ascendancy creates a hierarchical order elevating some masculinities to a position of dominance in our patriarchal society (Bell et al. 2006). Therefore, men exist in constant tension with hegemonic masculinities (Connell 1998). Because masculinities are relational, and one cannot exist without the other, subordinated masculinities such as homosexuals and heterosexuals labeled “wimps” or “sissies,” become as integral to the framework of hegemonic masculinity as the “tough guys” with power (Connell 2001).

How hegemonic masculinities are constructed and reinforced will vary with time and by context. These changes occur when structural opportunities permit the rise of alternative or competing patriarchal discourses (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Therefore, what is masculine becomes an unstable construction subject to change. These observations coincide with Dellinger’s (2004) recommendation to understand the time-space phenomenon of hegemonic masculinities. Understanding how hegemonic masculinities are actively constructed within various social situations and contexts enables us to understand how systems of gender power, dominance, and inequality are reproduced and also how they might be challenged (Dellinger 2004; Giddens 1984).

Masculinity is differentially experienced, meaning several characteristics affect how masculinity is structured and constructed. Men present masculinity through ‘manhood acts’ (Schwalbe 2005) often conveying risk/danger tolerance, (hetero)-sexuality, sexual appetite, occupation, geography; and socio-demographic variables such as race, ethnicity, age, class and gender (Connell 1987; 2001; Dellinger 2002; Dozier 2005; Ezzell 2008; Little 2002; Mumby and Ashcraft 2006; Pyke 1996; Schrock and Schwalbe 2009; Taylor 2005). Therefore an intersectional approach to masculinity
research would consider how these characteristics interact to create and/or reproduce systems of privilege and inequality. Risman (2004) advises us to focus on how men compare themselves to other men, which allows one to determine legitimate from illegitimate (gendered) action. What qualifies ‘men as men’ is often hierarchical, whereby dominant masculinities suppress less dominant masculinities. When dominant (hegemonic) masculinities subordinate other masculinities it creates opportunities to challenge conventional masculine performances (Connell 1987).

**Undoing Masculinity**

Giddens’ (1976) structured action theory and Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical approach help us understand how the individual actions of men (and women) recursively create structural conditions that either permit or restrict alternative masculinities. When structural conditions restrict alternative forms of masculinity and subordinate them, the repercussions for deviating from the dominant discourse can be damning; therefore, many men ‘choose’ to comply. However, men (and boys) often comply because they fear others will retaliate if they break the rules of manhood (Kimmel 2006). In some instances, men are able to safely break the rules of manhood, or the rules of manhood differ by context, so behavior deemed illegitimate in one context is legitimate in another context. For example, crying during a movie versus crying when a close relative dies. During fieldwork, Ortiz (2005) was able to reduce masculine behavior by exhibiting more feminine traits during interviews with women, which decreased gender differences between him and female research participants. He described this as an alternative way of doing masculinity. However, some men are unable to manage multiple masculinities this
well and must comply with gendered expectations. Sargent (2005) documented the difficulties among male, early childhood educators because their sex category conflicted with gendered norms and expectations of their role as disciplinarians, and not nurturers. In this case, the masculine structure prevented men from undoing masculinity. Therefore, by complying with gender norms, men reinforce the patriarchal order that prohibits certain behaviors and enables others.

Although the reproduction of the dominant masculine structure is common, the relationship between hegemonic masculinities and other (subordinate) masculinities in the masculine hierarchy creates opportunities to challenge conventional masculinity (Connell 1987). Most studies on masculinity examine how hegemonic masculinities are perpetuated (Carrigan et al. 1985), whereby men maintain the patriarchal order and reinforce the “ideal man” or “the most honored” way of being men (see Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 849; Dellinger 2004). Risman (2009) urges gender researchers to dedicate more attention to the processes of ‘undoing’ hegemonic masculinity, because it presents opportunities to challenge the patriarchal discourse and understand emergent forms of femininity and masculinity.

Examining this relationship through the lens of structured action theory, these changes result from a recursive relationship between structure and agency. If structural opportunities permit the emergence of alternative masculinities, and men actively construct these masculinities, the hierarchical order of masculine supremacy may change within a social system. Structured action theory provides a lens to understand how the individual actions of men (and women) create structural conditions that either permit ‘undoing’ gender or restrict these alternative gender constructions.
III) Hegemonic Masculinity & The Economic System

This study’s conceptual framework describes the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy. Hegemonic masculinity is embedded in all levels of social organization, and it structures the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors among individuals during everyday life. My conceptual model focuses on masculinity within the economic system. Hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987), gender structure theory (Risman 2004), structured action theory (Giddens 1976) and dramaturgy (Goffman 1959) provide a framework to understand how men (and women) create, reinforce and undo the conventional hegemonic masculine structure through the division of labor.

Economic System

Within the economic system, domesticity (the masculine structure separating market work from domestic labor) shapes masculine structures and behaviors. This structure permeates levels of social organization and affects how men construct masculinity within sublevels of social organization—industrial sectors, organizations, and at the interpersonal levels: work, home and public. Because masculinity is a culturally specific way of doing gender, men’s performances of masculinity may vary for each context they occupy (Connell 1995). Work-family scholars document that the characteristics individuals exhibit in one context (work) may affect other domains,
mainly family and community (e.g. Bronfenbrenner 1989; Voydanoff 2001 a,b).

Therefore, this study conceptualizes work as structured action (Giddens 1979), meaning that a man’s masculine work identity may affect how he performs masculinity at home and in public.

Domesticity organizes everyday life (even today) by separating market work and domestic labor. This masculine structure has two defining characteristics. First, in order to fulfill the fulltime norm of breadwinning, *ideal workers* (typically men) have little time for childbearing or child rearing. Men’s jobs prohibit them from equally sharing domestic labor (Williams 2000). Second, caregivers (typically women) are marginalized by a masculinized economic system that impedes their access to responsibility and authority within market work (Williams 2000). Therefore, men and women cannot contribute equally to both domains—they face gendered structural factors that enable and constrain their behaviors in each domain. The workplace privileges masculine norms over feminine norms. Women with children (versus men with children) illustrate how structural factors push women out of professional careers, while men often stay (Williams 2010). This privilege necessitates men become ‘ideal workers,’ who prioritize work over family to fulfill their masculine role. The arrow in Figure 2-1 illustrates how domesticity permeates levels of social organization and affects the ways men ‘do’ masculinity.

Hartman’s (1976) argument corresponds with domesticity; she asserts patriarchy and capitalism are interrelated. That is, they mutually structure social life by subordinating women individually and collectively through the gendered division of labor and sex segregation, while men benefit. For example, women are disproportionately “stuck” in low-wage positions with little possibility of advancement (Badgett 1996;
Badgett et al. 2007; Kanter 1977; Williams and Westfall 2006), while men in feminized occupations such as librarians, elementary school teachers, and nurses, “ride the glass escalator” through advancement barriers that prohibit women (Williams 1992).

Domesticity (hegemonic masculinity) also constrains egalitarian relationships in the public and private spheres, whereby men and women do not equally share family labor and earning a living (Risman 2004).

**Oil & Gas Industry**

In this section, I concentrate on the oil and gas industry, because the company under examination in the present study is a contract drilling company. Energy extraction and affiliated industries predominantly employ men (see Appendix C), which creates a masculinized work environment structuring how men perform masculinity at work (Collinson 1998). The oil and gas industry reinforces domesticity—the industry predominantly employs men and these men must prioritize breadwinning over family caregiving to meet the industry’s transient work pattern (see Family Oilfield Masculinities section). Therefore, the oil and gas industry is gendered (Akers 1990; Martin and Collinson 2002), or masculinized, meaning masculine rules and resources structure interpersonal attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors (Britton 1997; Connell 1987). When oil and gas workers are “doing” masculinity, they generally comply with conventional, masculine norms perpetuated by the oil and gas industry, and their employers.
Several elements of this work reproduce conventional hegemonic masculine characteristics. First, the industry’s long hours, shift work, physically demanding labor, and transience perpetuate conventional masculine norms (Collinson 1999). The conditions are grueling and serve to reinforce an employee’s masculinity—men are exposed to the elements, and fatigue from physical exertion and rotating shifts elevate risks of injury and death (Barnes et al. 1998; Bjortatn et al. 1999; Bjortatn et al. 2006; Gibbs et al. 2002; Harvey 1990). Oilfield work is man’s work, and the predominance of men, rigorous labor and working conditions perpetuate a hegemonic “roughneck” masculine structure within the oil and gas industry. The industry’s structure also shapes masculinity within each organization.

Organizational Structure

To combat work hazards, the oil and gas industry emphasizes a ‘safety culture’ to mitigate risk. However, in an effort to maximize production and profit, management officials within some organizations neglect to enforce safety policies and guidelines. This solidifies the conventional hegemonic masculine “roughneck” norm within these organizations (Hirschhorn and Young 1993; Wicks 2002). Accidents go unreported because hegemonic norms are enforced at the organizational level and reinforced at the interpersonal level within occupational cultures. For example, safety policies are implemented, but not enforced by management, which restrict workers from working safely, because being concerned for one’s safety shows weakness and will tarnish a man’s masculine image (Collinson 1999; Miller 2004; Wicks 2002). To reinforce these
norms, companies connect bonus incentive programs to the number of injuries; therefore, workers neglect reporting incidents, because they fear termination or losing their benefits (Collinson 1999; Wicks 2002).

**Work: Oilfield Masculinities**

At the interpersonal level, employees internalize structural conditions from broader levels of social organization, which may manifest as interpersonal constructions of masculinity. Oil and gas workers overtly construct and reinforce masculine occupational cultures through job titles such as roughneck, roustabout, toolpusher, deckhand, worm and driller to maintain a hegemonic grasp on their perception of self (Miller 2004). Further, beating “lesser men” and proving one’s dominance in the hierarchy is another way workers perpetuate hegemonic masculinities that are structured at the industrial and organizational levels (Kerfoot and Knights 1993: 672). Being a ‘real man’ in the oilfield means handling competition and exerting one’s dominance over others.

The web of masculine assumptions is dense within the ‘oilfield,’ and men sometimes subconsciously reinforce hegemonic male values (Barrett 1996; Messer 2005; Schein 1985). When men face job termination (Collinson 1988), or labels that differentiate them as weaker, subordinate men (Britton and Logan 2008; Miller 2004), undoing gender becomes increasingly difficult because organizational structures and occupational cultures structure masculine behaviors and confine men to conventional
norms. Men who embrace alternative constructions of masculinity are stigmatized as “sissies” for worrying about safety (Collinson 1999: 584), blamed and ridiculed when mistakes happen (Barrett 1996; Collinson 1999; Desmond 2007; Eveline and Booth 2002), and even labeled “homosexuals” (Anderson 2005; Kimmel 1994). Men who are not terminated or run off under these conditions will most likely quit because they are unable to take it like a man. Oilfield workers are prohibited from “undoing” conventional masculinities under these structural conditions.

Although structures at the industrial level often restrict “undoing” masculinity, alternative constructions are possible, even within the high-risk, male dominated ‘oilfield.’ Ely and Meyerson’s (2010) study of two offshore oil platforms juxtaposes the high-risk, male dominated culture of offshore oil drilling with the organization’s unconventional masculine norms, rituals, and policies to understand the meanings of masculinity for offshore oilfield workers (Fine 1996; Martin 2002). The company participating in Ely and Meyerson’s study promotes collectivistic goals and managers reinforce safety policies. This enables workers to construct an alternative (safe) discourse on manhood. Safely completing a job together, rather than proving one’s self-dominance defined masculinity on these platforms. On rigs where alternative masculine structures predominate, workers are chastised for not asking for help in unsafe situations, rather than being labeled sissies when they worry about safety (Collinson 1999), or when an accident occurs (Barrett 1996; Collinson 1999; Desmond 2007; Eveline and Booth 2002). Further, when someone has trouble at home, teammates advise each other to “not push him too hard” (Ely and Meyerson 2010: 18). The collectivist goals and emphasis on
safety reduce the likelihood of harmful gender policing and increase the likelihood of an alternative, legitimate masculine structure.

Early oilfield research documents the pervasiveness of the “roughneck” masculine structure, and its effect on ‘what it means to be a real man’; however, Ely and Meyerson’s work demonstrates that even among high-risk, male dominated oilfield workers, when structural opportunities exist for changing masculine constructions, men will embrace alternative, collectivist masculinities (Ely and Meyerson 2010). This work also demonstrates how structure and agency affect doing and undoing masculinities. At the same time men on these work sites were undoing conventional masculinities, they were doing and legitimating alternative masculinities. Research still needs to examine if policies at the organizational level are changing across this industry, or if these are anomalies in an industry dominated by a hegemonic “roughneck” masculine structure.

**Family: Oilfield Masculinities**

Transient employment exacerbates the masculine construction of domesticity and breadwinning—the hallmark of an oilfield worker’s domestic contribution. Oilfield work is demanding. Typically workers are away from home for long periods (2 weeks, 28 days or 5 months) because they participate in an offshore and international fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) work pattern. As ideal workers, the breadwinning responsibilities for oilfield men take precedence over caregiving responsibilities at home. To fulfill their breadwinning role, workers often miss holidays, weekends and important events in their children’s lives (Collinson 1998; Mauther et al. 2000; Parkes et al. 2005). When workers are absent from
home for weeks, even months, and have little contact with friends and family, personal and familial work-family conflicts occur—also known as intermittent husband syndrome (Clark et al. 1985; Gramling 1989; Shields 2003). Long absences may create confusion between partners about the roles and expectations related to childcare, financial decisions, and household responsibilities (Clark and Taylor 1988; Forsyth and Gauthier 1991; Collinson 1998).

Domesticity shapes the family domain, especially considering independence (i.e. employment and leisure opportunities) increases among spouses during their husband’s absences (Parkes et al. 2005; Taylor and Simmonds 2009). Additionally, the interrelationship between work and family conflict over childcare, financial decisions and household responsibilities demonstrate domesticity’s hegemony. For example, a man’s masculine self-image as breadwinner may spill over into the family domain if they relax at home, instead of helping with the housework and childcare (Hochschild 1989; Miller 2004; Parkes et al. 2005). To manage work-family conflict, oilfield workers and their family members develop coping mechanisms for the extended periods of separation, conflict in their domestic lives, and hazardous working conditions. Families sometimes move with oilfield workers between ‘different lives’ or locations of departure to reduce the distance between the family and the worker, and maintain phone contact during long absences (Parkes et al. 2005; Solheim 1988).
Work-Family Conflict

I conceptualize the interface between work and family domains as work-family conflict—see Figure 2-1, letter “A.” Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) define work-family conflict as “. . . a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985: 77). There are three forms of work-family conflict: time-based conflict, whereby multiple roles compete for a person’s time; strain-based conflict, or when strain in one role affects one’s performance in another role (Pleck et al. 1980); and behavior-based conflict, whereby behaviors appropriate for employees at work such as self-reliance, emotional stability, aggressiveness, and objectivity are incompatible with their family member’s expectations of caregiving, vulnerability, and emotional instability (Schein 1973).

Employees who work high-pressure jobs—long hours, professional occupations, and experience high employer demands—experience the most work-to-family (WTF) conflict (Duxbury and Higgins 1994; Frone et al. 1992; Gutek et al. 1991). Being a breadwinner may enhance their chances of attaining elite hegemonic masculine status. For example, pressure to be the “go-to-guy” at work forces some men to prioritize work over family (Cooper 2000). The household remains a feminine domain, and men prioritize work to avoid losing their preferred masculine status. However, some men feel pressure ‘to do it all,’ and their sense of masculinity is tied to being the best in both worlds. Men who pride themselves on fulfilling work and family roles have a ‘double privilege’ (Solomon 2010). Solomon argues men win if they are successful breadwinners
or by ‘being involved’ in family life (Solomon 2010: 251). Hegemonic masculinity privileges men at work and at home by rewarding them for any involvement at home (Solomon 2010). Therefore, masculinity is a powerful form of informal social control within family and work where identity-based forms of control are paramount (Jurges 2006). The previous section on masculinities within the work sphere and this section on family masculinities attempt to address the recommendations by Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1999), whereby research should go beyond work-family conflict to identify mechanisms that integrate the gendered systems of work and family. Voydanoff (2001 a, b; 2007) highlights the significance of another interrelated sphere: community.

**Community: Oilfield Masculinities**

Future research must document how energy workers’ home communities effect and are affected by masculinized work. While I acknowledge this domain’s importance to broader frameworks, it was beyond the scope of this study. Instead, I examine how masculinized organizational structures and occupational cultures affect the ways men construct masculinities in on-shore communities where energy resources are being extracted (boomtowns). Research on transient oilfield workers is largely conducted offshore; therefore, little knowledge exists on how oilfield masculinities are performed in boomtowns.

It is likely that when development occurs onshore, the maladaptive masculine performances for coping with family and work demands (substance abuse and alcohol
consumption) strain local services and infrastructure, and spill over into host communities as social transgressions documented by social disruption researchers. Parkins and Angell (2010) document rampant drug and alcohol abuse among extra-local energy workers in one Alberta, Canada community undergoing rapid oil sands development. Therefore, when workers enter communities, the hegemonic masculinities promoted by the broader economic system, oil and gas industry, and their employer may spill over into communities and manifest as social transgressions. Workers are blamed for constructing a hyper-masculine culture that contributes to social transgressions within boomtowns. These include: crime (Carrington et al. 2010; Parkins and Angell 2010), drug use and trafficking (Goldenberg 2010; Nikiforuk 2009; Lockie et al. 2009), STDs (Goldenberg et al. 2010; Goldenberg et al. 2008 a, b, c), noise, litter, alcohol abuse, reckless driving, sexual assault, property damage and theft (Lockie et al. 2009). Community residents have stigmatized workers as deviants, excluded them from community networks, and blamed them for social fallout (Parkins and Angell 2010).

**Social Disruption**

I conceptualize the interface between the work and community domains as social disruption—see Figure 2-1, letter “B.” Although disruption may originate from numerous forms of social change, I examine how energy workers and energy development may affect bucolic landscapes, social relations, community structures, and community integration within rural communities (Krannich et al. 1985; Wilkinson 1991). Instead of testing the social disruption hypothesis (i.e. boomtowns enter a period of generalized crisis and loss of traditional routines and attitudes), the present study provides a glimpse
into how masculine attitudes, beliefs, and values may manifest as social transgressions, or behaviors (e.g. drug use, drinking, violence) that contribute to social disruption.

Although research on transient energy workers is largely conducted offshore and little knowledge exists at the work-community interface, social disruption research examines rapid change in energy boomtowns. In rural, isolated boomtowns experiencing rapid energy development, energy workers are often blamed for creating social disruption. The changes that ensue from rapid energy development—mental health problems, resident families breaking up, increasing substance abuse levels, and escalating crime rates and fear of crime increase—are well documented by classic social disruption studies (e.g. Freudenburg 1981; Hunter et al. 2002; Krannich et al. 1989; Smith et al. 2001). However, the social disruption literature focuses on community residents, overlooking energy workers, perhaps the most important population for understanding the antecedents of social transgressions and possibly social disruption. It is unclear what effect masculinity has on behaviors that manifest as social transgressions. This study analyzes one contract drilling company and transient oilfield workers within the Marcellus Shale region to understand how the organizational structure of one company structures masculinity at work, and how this affects a worker’s conception of masculinity at home and in Marcellus communities.

**Boomtowns**

In the 1970’s, researchers began documenting the emergence of boomtowns in the inter-mountain West. Small communities were being transformed by rapid
industrialization and a growing energy industry (e.g. Albrecht 1976; Cortese and Jones 1977; England and Albrecht 1984; Finsterbusch 1982; Freudenburg 1981; Freudenburg and Jones 1991; Freudenburg et al. 1982; Gilmore and Duff 1975; Gilmore 1976; Kohrs 1974; Krannich and Greider 1984; Lantz and McKeown 1979). These rural communities had low population densities and the isolated locations increased their susceptibility to social disruption (Albrecht 1978; Cortese and Jones 1977; Gilmore and Duff 1975; Gilmore, 1976; Kohrs, 1974; Krannich and Greider 1984; Lantz and McKeown 1979). At the time, some scholars argued that by comparison, the infrastructure in urban contexts would more easily absorb the population growth and the social disruptions associated with energy development (Gramling and Brabant 1986; Little 1976). Small communities in the inter-mountain west lacked the physical and social infrastructure necessary to accommodate large-scale energy development and the influx of in-migrants; therefore, these communities experienced substantial alterations.

Research in the rural, inter-mountain west documented predominantly negative social impacts in boomtowns. The scale, pace and influx of transient workers were blamed for breaking up families, increasing mental health problems, substance abuse problems, and burgeoning criminal activity (Freudenburg et al. 1982; Freudenburg 1982; Little 1976). Rapid population growth also increased stress levels among residents, and changed individual patterns of interactions by decreasing community cohesion and altering the character of these communities (Albrecht 1978; England and Albrecht 1984). Accompanying these changes, residents reported a decreased quality of life, weaker ties to other community members, and deleterious mental and physical health impacts.
However, criticisms of this research and the social disruption hypothesis soon emerged. One criticism focused on methodological rigor (Wilkinson et al. 1982). After debating the merits of cross-sectional and longitudinal research, researchers began utilizing longitudinal methods and mixed methodological designs of inquiry to capture the breadth and depth of the effects over time, instead of focusing solely on the boom-phase of development. These debates led to the following conclusion: researchers must account for the complexities affecting social life (Wilkinson et al. 1982).

Subsequent research also shifted its theoretical focus. The question was no longer whether residents in boomtowns experienced negative social disruptions, but which community characteristics and residents experienced change, and to what degree (Freudenburg 1984). Community satisfaction among residents became a substantial focus, because researchers could examine the differential experiences among long-term residents and newcomers (Brown et al. 1989). Longitudinal research by Brown et al. (2005) documented how some communities and individuals may transition through a boom-bust-recovery cycle—or how individuals and communities acclimate to significant social changes after the boom period. By conceptualizing development in stages, this work highlighted the importance of chronicling residents’ experiences by phase of development—how various individuals in the community experience development differentially over time. Using this approach, Brown et al. (2005) found long-term community residents were able to acclimate themselves to significant social change twenty-five years after an energy boom. Time is an important factor because fluctuations in social well-being occur before the onset of rapid in-migration and large-scale development; community satisfaction, attachment, and social integration may decline at
the onset of development (Brown et al. 1989). In addition to capturing changes over time, researchers have used multiple-case locations to understand how energy development affects social well-being indicators across communities (Smith et al. 2001).

**Social Changes**

The prospect of energy development is unsettling for many community residents, despite the industry’s potential spark to the local economy and its multiplier effect. Sometimes communities are forced to welcome ‘dirty’ industries that may transform the local landscape and alter community dynamics (Fitchen 1991). Fitchen’s work illustrates this point: landfills, prisons, and energy development provide economic stability, but they are considered unsavory forms of development. A multitude of risks arise from ‘dirty’ industries, particularly for communities that support the oil industry. Residents may fear social, economic and environmental repercussions from oil spills, and the possibility that oilfield workers will corrode their community’s culture (Gramling and Freudenburg 2006).

Because energy development relies on construction crews with specialized skills, work crews are largely comprised of non-local workers (Fahys-Smith 1982). The high incidence of transience among workers results from the mobile nature of these extractive industries, and the industry’s boom-bust nature. Workers in extractive energy industries are often forced to follow specific equipment or technology to distant work sites (Wieland et al. 1979). Typically, long-term residents in rural communities where development takes place do not have the specialized skills and training necessary to work
in the industry, so companies must recruit qualified workers from other regions (Lovejoy and Little 1979).

When the energy industry and its workers enter communities, changes can be drastic. Truck traffic may increase, creating higher accident rates, damage to local roads, air pollution and water contamination (Anderson and Theodori 2009; Theodori 2009). The population influx strains local infrastructure. Because extra-local workers occupy temporary housing such as hotels and motels, there may not be enough available housing to accommodate additional in-migrants, completely exhausting a community’s boarding options. As available housing becomes scarce (Goldenberg et al. 2010) and rents increase, low-income residents may be pushed out of their communities (Brasier et al. 2011). Low-income and elderly residents (Ryser and Halseth 2011) become at-risk populations for homelessness. Ryser and Halseth (2011) specifically identify elderly, single women as the population most at-risk when rents, supplies and services increase in price. Responding to the influx of wealth, businesses raise their prices for food, supplies, services, and housing.

**The Social Disruptors**

Community residents typically blame energy workers for social disruption. Transient workers are labeled and stigmatized because of social transgressions—e.g. drugs, drinking, and crime. These behaviors may stem from masculine cultural norms within the industry, and understanding this culture may provide a conduit for change.
The “rigger” masculine culture (whereby workers construct a hyper-masculine, sexist apathy toward self-care) among some young men working in the energy industry prevents them from obtaining regular medical care (Goldenberg et al. 2008c). This culture may contribute to health effects for workers and community residents. In northeastern British Columbia, STD rates are 32% higher than the provincial average. Goldenberg (2008a) attributes this rate to transient, oilfield workers and local women who spread Chlamydia among multiple sexual partners. Young industry employees and residents become at-risk populations because they have trouble accessing information and traveling long distances to treatment facilities, and social norms constrain their ability to obtain healthcare (Goldenberg et al. 2010; Goldenberg et al. 2008a, b, c).

An influx of transient energy workers to a boomtown also introduces, or increases, the demand for illegal drugs (Goldenberg et al. 2010). Oilfield workers are often characterized as alcoholics and drug addicts. In Canada’s oil sands, it is said that in some work camps it is easier to order drugs than it is to order a pizza (Nikiforuk 2009). In addition to being stigmatized as drug addicts, workers are seen as criminals (Little 1977). In Australia, Carrington et al. (2010) attribute higher violent crime rates to an extra-local male workforce. It is often said that a culture of violence permeates the lives of these workers—whereby ‘frontier masculinities’ (Connell 2001) become the cultural norm in remote, energy-extractive communities. Further, workers are also culpable for noise, litter, alcohol abuse, reckless driving, sexual assault, property damage and theft (Lockie et al. 2009).

However, other research maintains that not all workers are equally responsible for the aforementioned transgressions. Ruddell (2011) emphasizes how young, single men
are more prone to criminal behavior than older men and married men, although a sub-
population of young, single men may be responsible for illegal behavior. It is unclear
how masculinity is embedded in this industry, among workers, and what effect
masculinity has on workers’ behaviors when they enter communities.

Local residents stigmatize transient energy workers as deviants, exclude them
from community networks, and blame them for social fallout—e.g. crime, delinquency,
inflation, and economic disparities (Parkins and Angell 2010). Some community
residents perceive these men as “oilfield trash,” or people who lack concern for the
natural environment and the communities they work in (Brasier et al. 2011). Researchers
regard community residents as traditional and wholesome, and workers as drug addicts
and sexually promiscuous miscreants who decay public health by introducing STDs
(Goldenberg 2010; Goldberg et al. 2010; Goldenberg 2008 a,b,c). This study explains
how masculinity shapes the behaviors of energy workers in boomtowns.

Chapter Summary

My conceptual framework uses a social constructivist lens to describe gender as a
performance (Goffman 1959; West and Zimmerman 1987), and a structure (Giddens
1976). I focus on one culturally specific form of gender: masculinity (Connell 2001). I
examine how hegemonic masculinity reproduces patriarchal dominance when it is
embedded in the economic system. I adapt Bronfenbrenner’s (1989) ecological systems
theory to demonstrate how domesticity shapes sublevels of social organization. A
hegemonic “roughneck” masculine structure predominates in the oil & gas industry. This
structure shapes how organizations structure masculinity through rules, policies and procedures. These formal structures have implications on men within the following interpersonal domains: work, home and community. Although I acknowledge broader levels of social organization, my dissertation’s overarching research question specifically focuses on how organizational structures enable and constrain masculinity among employees.
Chapter 3
Structuring Masculinities: Work, Family, Public

In this chapter, I review empirical research on how masculinities are structured and performed within three interpersonal domains: work, home and public. The work place is often gendered (Akers 1990), and in some cases, masculinized (Britton 1997), especially within natural resource-based occupations. I focus on one occupational culture specific to natural resource-based occupations: occupational communities. I argue we must characterize these as masculinized occupational communities. Because a man’s workplace identity often spills over into the domestic sphere, I examine how men equate masculinity with breadwinning (Connell 1995; Cooper 2002; Gerson 1993; Townsend 2002). I further explore domesticity, or the hegemonic masculine structure separating market work and family work (Williams 2000). A discussion of recent trends in parenting, among married and single American fathers follows. Because men interact in public spaces outside work, I explore public masculinities. Men are accountable to the ways other men perceive and monitor legitimate masculinities, and I review a number of manhood acts typically associated with men and masculinity—for example, drinking, holding one’s piss, conversational cockfighting, physically positioning one’s self in public, and using symbols (such as the confederate flag) to convey white trash masculinity (Campbell 2000; Eastman and Schrock 2008; Tilki 2006). This review reveals how masculinity exists as a dangerous invisible structure. I then transition to Connell’s (1993) rural ‘frontier’ masculinities, or masculinities performed in public places we typically do not recognize as ‘public,’ because of their rural and remote
locations. I close the chapter with a discussion of how the masculine structure is changing within rural areas, and how men are ‘undoing’ rural masculinities.

Masculinities at Work

Masculinity researchers must examine men at work, because the behaviors or ‘manhood acts’ men perform at work are often their preferred self-identity. Men are considered farmers (e.g., Brandth 1995; Bell 2000; Campbell and Bell 2000), forestry workers (e.g., Brandth 1994, Brandth and Haugen 2000), or hunters (e.g., Bye 2003). Often when men are labeled by their manhood acts, especially within their jobs, they are overlooked for who they really are: men. Therefore, men, the performances of masculinity they embody, and the structures enabling or constraining masculinities are often invisible.

The workplace provides a context and resources for enacting masculinities (Collinson and Collinson 1989; Collinson and Hearn 1994; Hearn 1985). Within work structures and through interaction, individuals construct, negotiate and reconstruct masculine identities. In some instances, this is where ‘men separate themselves from the boys’ (Collinson and Hearn 1994). For men, this is an ongoing process whereby status and power are sought through workplace identities (Collinson 1992; Knights 1990; Willis 1977). The self-made man is a popular depiction of an independent, wealthy, upwardly mobile, achievement-orientated individual (Kimmel 2006). Work is regarded by many men as a proving ground, a place where they are able to dominate other men (and women)—within the sight of other men.
Masculinity is relational, so women and femininities play a role in how men structure, construct and perform work masculinities. Brandth’s (1994) study of rural farm women and men is one example of how women’s participation on farms create the need for men to seek alternative definitions of masculinity through new activities and spaces because women were taking over traditionally male roles. This opens the possibility for changes in the masculine structure. To understand changes in masculine structure, masculinities must be tracked over time, because definitions of masculinity are time sensitive. For example, Brandth and Haugen (2000) examined Norwegian forestry magazines over time and discovered technological advancements (saws, power equipment, and heavy machinery) contributed to alternative constructions of masculinity among forestry workers. Over time, men valued these tools as part of their masculine identities instead of brute strength.

Work provides an opportunity to measure masculinity in multiple ways. Donaldson (1991) uses examples of working class factory and mine workers who use their bodies to complete grueling tasks as a means to assert their masculinity. However, as these men age and lose their ability to perform rigorous labor, they face losing jobs that contribute to their masculine identity. Donaldson argues these men maintain their masculine identity through the acquisition of other skills, mainly knowledge. Kimmel (2006) argues the exploitive class relations found in industrial labor enable men to assert superiority over women and other men, and these relationships may create group solidarity (55). However, although men are valuable to the group, coworkers are likely to become personal competitors for jobs and promotions.
It is also valuable to conceptualize these performances, or manhood acts, as identity work. Identity work varies depending upon each job, and the masculinities aligned with it. The transition from production to consumptive service occupations is not only a shift in economic structure but also the masculine identity structure. This is a symbolic shift from traditionally masculine industrial occupations to feminine social service-based jobs and identities (Faludi 1999). However, patterns transcend classes. Jobs with traditionally feminine behavior, like sitting behind a desk, become masculine—especially when men attain power and move up the occupational hierarchy. Middle class and white-collar workers assert their masculinities from air conditioned offices, working long hours (longer than their coworkers) and exerting power over other employees (see Collinson 1990; Cooper 2000). Other studies show a more nuanced approach to masculinity: lawyers create and present an aggressive, in-your-face style of breaking down witnesses, while fine-tuning these performances for certain judges (Pierce 1995). Interactions between traditional hegemonic masculine identities and dialogic masculinities may result in conflict, if differences in the definition of hegemonic masculinity battle for supremacy (Connell 2005).

Within traditional and nontraditional work environments, the tasks and the performances solidifying masculine status may vary, although, undoubtedly, these ‘manhood acts’ may have negative repercussions for men’s health and family life. Manual workers present highly aggressive performances that tread lines of humor, condescension, and verbal abuse (Collinson 1992; Hearn 1985). Men in these contexts who are unable to “take it” (or “give it”) like a man are ascribed a subordinate masculinity (Collinson 1988).
‘Real men’ are tough; they take it and give it like a man—Independence is embedded in their masculine work ethic, and this ethic may prevent men from seeking help during times of need (Courtenay 2006). Courtenay argues rural, hegemonic masculinity creates pressures for completing a job alone. Complying and withstanding stress afford men male legitimacy: “money, power and respect in their communities.” Therefore, being a “rugged, self-sufficient and self-made man” is important in rural society (Courtenay 2006: 156). Additionally, high-tech machinery is opening the masculine structure for alternative masculinities and altering the face of farm work and meanings surrounding farm work. Rather than being a ‘way of life,’ young farmers view farming as a job (Brandth 1995; Coldwell 2007). However, the prevalence of hegemonic masculinities within conventional agriculture and among older farmers threatens men. Some men face extreme danger and pressure to fulfill their masculine role, which causes some men to commit suicide when they fail, rather than live with the shame of failing as men (Alston and Kent 2008). The prevalence of suicide among rural male farmers internationally, especially in Ireland and Britain, has been attributed to a lack of social support for farmers, a lack of social services and the out-migration of women from rural areas (Ni Laoire 2001).

Juxtaposed to the rural masculine work ethic, men in urban spaces construct masculinities indoors. Being the “go-to guy” depends on technical knowledge, expertise, and being a hard worker (Cockburn 1988; Cooper 2000; Hacker 1990; Turkle 1988, 2005). Aspiring for this ‘hardworking’ status can have repercussions. This invisible “masculine work ethic” (Kanter 1977: 22) requires long hours, and men must suppress
outside obligations, such as family responsibilities. Dellinger (2002) and Woods (1993) document how men who successfully separate their personal world from their professional world are labeled “true professionals.”

While performances are important for men’s ascription to the male sex-category, other physical features are important as well, one being a masculine body (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009). The meaning of the male body varies by men’s sexuality, occupation or other social conditions. Some gay men prioritize large, muscular bodies to counteract their subordinate masculine sexuality (Hennen 2005); these bodies resemble those of men who work ‘the most masculine,’ rigorous, hands-on occupations (Collinson and Hearn 1994).

The values surrounding labor and the male body are evident in school-aged boys, who equate intellectual work and paying attention in school with femininity, and physical labor with masculinity (Fine et al. 1997). However, some occupations do not prioritize manual labor, because it is not important for completing the job. Therefore in these cases, men place no importance on a man’s body size and physical ability; technical knowledge and a masculine work ethic are more important for creating legitimate masculinities (Cooper 2000). Therefore men can be “fit” either physically, intellectually (and)/or emotionally for certain jobs (Jackall 1988).

**Organizational Structure & Occupational Culture**

Organizational structures (policies, rules, procedures) enable and constrain how men do masculinity on the job. These structures control the ways men construct
masculinity, and the organizational cultures (attitudes, beliefs, values, behaviors) that reinforce masculinity. Although organizations have formal rules, some structural constraints are informal and therefore invisible. These norms serve to reinforce power processes, and inevitably, the normative definition of ‘what it means to be a man’ within that organization (Stobbe 2005). Collinson and Hearn (1994) argue, “... masculinities are frequently embedded (but often unacknowledged) in organizational power relations, discourses and practices” (10). It is possible to recognize these masculinities through patterns of interaction among men, because men separate in-groups (men who perform legitimate masculinities) from out-groups (‘other’ men and women) (Collinson and Hearn 1994). Therefore some jobs are clearly masculine occupations, because we recognize them as man’s work, or occurring in masculinized contexts—i.e. construction, trucking, plumbing, and oilfield work.

Gender scholars “... frame organizations as systems of power relations that are embedded in gender, arguing that they cannot be adequately understood unless gender is acknowledged” (Martin and Collinson 2002: 258). Therefore the workplace is a, or the, milieu where masculine identities are constructed, reinforced and altered. Acker’s (1990, 1992) theory of gendered organizations helps us understand how policies and practices within organizations structure legitimate and illegitimate behavior, selection decisions, and how sexual divisions remain dominant in organizations. Mainly, an organization’s policies cater to men and the traditional constructions of masculinity within the workplace.

Despite legislation prohibiting sex discrimination, occupational and job segregation still persists. Joan Acker (1990) coined the term *gendered organizations,*
where “... advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine” (Acker 1990: 146). This work merges gender studies with organizational research to place women and men’s work experiences in a gendered context. Research on gendered organizations examines how inequality is produced and reproduced over time and within various organizations and occupations.

Therefore, cultural norms reinforce and reproduce industries and organizations as gendered, especially those that are masculinized (Connell 1987). Acker (1990) discusses four processes gendering institutions and organizations. First, a division of labor distinguishes masculine from feminine labor, work locations and acceptable attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors for men and women within these locations. Second, language and culture within these contexts reproduce this division of labor. Third, men and women realize these divisions through interpersonal communication; therefore, gender is socially constructed. Fourth, gender structures organizational structures. This work supports Giddens’ (1976) assertion that structures “… exist as the reproduced conduct of situated actors” (Giddens 1976: 127), meaning the organization’s gendered culture stems from the bureaucratic structure, but employees reinforce this culture by subscribing to conventional gendered scripts. Britton (1997) urges scholars to think of gendered organizations theory as “masculinized” organizations theory, whereby advantages are recreated for white, male workers, while women are disproportionately “stuck” in low-wage positions with little possibility of advancement (Connell 1987; Kanter 1977).
Numerous studies have documented the importance of organizational structure for distinguishing various forms of legitimate masculinities (see Mennino et al. 2005 for a review). Work in this area highlights the importance of occupational culture within organizations: not only does where you work matter, but your position within the organization matters when presenting legitimate or illegitimate masculinities (Dellinger 2002). This happens because men’s identities often have roots in their occupations (Morgan 1992). Dellinger’s research is particularly helpful for understanding how organizational cultures “shape the ways men do masculinity at work” (562); and how workplaces either encourage or discourage men’s differentiation from women and other men (Dellinger 2004). Her study locations were stark contrasts, accounting departments at a men’s pornographic magazine and a feminist magazine. Dellinger’s interviews and observations uncovered how cultural norms within each company demarcated the pornographic magazine as a “safe” place for doing conventional masculinities and the feminist magazine as an embattled place—men perceive accounting as the only evidence of masculinity at the feminist magazine. Her argument solidifies the need to consider multiple *hegemonic masculinities* within organizations and occupations to better understand workplace relationships. Therefore the ways male accountants relate to the company and their coworkers may provide insight into how they are doing masculinity. More research is needed, however, to understand the ways that hegemonic masculinities vary from place to place in the same historical moment.

Within organizational cultures, the sex category ‘male’ affords men a status of competence, whereby they are capable of doing a job to the fullest. That is, men are viewed as “real officers” or even, “real men” (Britton 1997: 813). In some occupations,
such as the auto components industry, women are perceived as “unable to do the heavy, dirty work that characterizes this industry” (Stobbe 2005: 113). The structures underlying most organizations are inherently masculinized, and assign power to men (Britton 1997). This norm explains the prevalence of men who ascend to managerial status, which reinforces a symbolic masculine work domain (Hearn and Collinson 1994). The interaction among individual workers within occupations plays a substantial role structuring masculine actions, while creating the organization’s culture. This highlights how structure and agency exist in a recursive relationship.

**Occupational Communities**

When discussing how organizational structures shape the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors available to employees, we must also account for masculinity among employees that emerge as occupational cultures. Masculinity is the principle structure at the organizational and occupational levels within many companies, and the characteristics organizations ascribe to masculinity filter down and shape how employees construct occupational cultures that either reinforce or challenge the company’s organizational structure. Although occupational cultures are ubiquitous, there are several types of occupational cultures. I would like to introduce the reader to a specific form of occupational culture: *occupational communities*.

Occupational communities are groups of people bound by occupational cultures—members who form similar social and work identities (Van Maanen and Barley 1984). While some occupational cultures may permeate companies and industries, occupational
communities may be more localized. Therefore, a company’s organizational structure may promote occupational cultures, but members may struggle to create collective bonds that resemble an occupational community. This section examines occupational community because the organizational structure of the company under investigation in the present study promotes the emergence of a masculinized occupational community.

The conceptual model for occupational communities has expanded—there were initially three components to an occupational community. First, members within an occupational community generally see themselves as their occupational role, i.e. teacher, police officer, or accountant. Second, other community members act as a reference group for constructing and affirming each member’s individual and collective identity; and third, members often make friends with other occupational community members, as opposed to outsiders (Salaman 1974). Occupational community members not only perform the job, but also prescribe to a shared value system, including attitudes, beliefs, norms, and behaviors that serve as markers of in-group versus out-group identity.

The concept of occupational community originated from a study of unionized printers who worked irregular hours (Lipset et al. 1962). This group of men identified themselves as printers. The irregular schedule forced them to develop friendships with other printers, whereby their work became valuable for leisure periods. These friendships and their identification as printers demarcated the lines of this reference group, and the position afforded them a high status because of the complex work and specialized skills needed to perform the job.

Over the years, scholars have begun expanding occupational community’s conceptual framework (see Blauner 1960; and Lockwood 1975a, 1975b; Salaman 1974).
Van Maanen and Barley (1984) are largely credited for designing the framework used in occupational community research today. They define an occupational community as:

... a group of people who consider themselves to be engaged in the same sort of work; who identify (more or less positively) with their work; who share a set of values, norms, and perspectives that apply to, but extend beyond work related matters; and whose social relationships meld the realms of work and leisure” (Van Maanen and Barley 1984: 295).

The authors further develop the definition of occupational community by specifying four elements that are analytically separate but interconnected empirically. First, boundaries between in-group and out-group members must be established, and the most effective way to designate these boundary lines is to use lines set by in-group members (Gusfield 1975; Van Maanen and Barley 1984). The authors specify occupational community’s first characteristic: “people who consider themselves ‘to be’ members of the same occupation rather than people ‘who are’ members of the same occupation.” Van Maanen and Barley (1984) use Miller and Van Maanen (1982) as an example for how distinct occupational communities can exist among “traditional fishermen,” and “non-traditional fishermen” because each group has unique attitudes, beliefs and values on fishing practices.

Second, the authors specify, “members derive valued identities or self-images directly from their occupational roles” (298). Drawing on seminal work in symbolic interaction, including Mead (1930) and Blumer (1986), Van Maanen and Barley (1984) argue: individuals develop social selves that are constructed and reconstructed through interaction with others “as people learn to view themselves from the point of view of others” (298). Van Maanen and Barely argue three aspects promote one’s identification with their line of work. A) Each individual ascribes various levels of importance to the
roles they play, and these roles are integral to their social selves. For instance, one’s position as a farmer may contribute more to a man’s sense of self than his role as a father. However, although occupational identities are often integral to one’s self-image, social contexts are important for people establishing identities and self-images.

Albert Hirschman (2002) introduced the notion of “shifting involvements” where individuals balance their involvement in conflicting commitments such as work, family and other communities, and may therefore alter their identity based on their present role. B) Another factor contributing to identifying with one’s occupation occurs when members of an occupational community believe they possess “certain esoteric, scarce, socially valued, and unique abilities” (Van Maanen and Barley 1984: 300). This provides members with a specialty in a certain field to separate themselves from general laborers or others in entry-level positions. C) Members promote their self-identification with work position as a responsibility. Van Maanen and Barely (1984) use Gamst’s (1980) example of locomotive engineers who view themselves as important because the safety of the train, passengers, and cargo depend on their skills as an operator.

The third factor is also tied to symbolic interaction, mainly Mead (1930) and Blumer (1969). Van Maanen and Barley (1984) argue: “To maintain a social identity, support and confirmation from others is required” (303). This means occupational community members police their own behaviors and the behaviors of other community members who subscribe to values, norms, and beliefs set by the occupational community. In-group and out-group members police this culture to ensure members prioritize the community—members face (I) stigma, (II) extensive work demands, and (III) rigorous
socialization processes which serve as evaluation methods to gauge their devotion to the group.

I) Members of occupational communities within stigmatized occupations stick together and protect each other by justifying the necessity of their position and defending themselves against outsiders. Hughes (1951, 1962) introduced the notion of ‘dirty work’ to explain how good people are stigmatized, and collectively maintain face when their occupations are perceived as physically, socially, or morally “disgusting or degrading.”

Some workgroups wear the occupation’s dirtiness as a ‘badge of honor’ (Drew et al. 2007), while other groups use techniques of neutralization (Sykes and Matza 1957) to justify the behavior.

In my dissertation, I frame energy workers as ‘dirty people’ who do ‘dirty work’ (Hughes 1957; 1962). Some see energy development as a threat to the natural environment, and the workers as threats to a community’s traditional lifestyle. A participant in Craig Forsyth’s study describes how communities in Louisiana must balance the community’s economics and aesthetics: “Oil is dirty work, and the shipyards and pipe yards and all the other support businesses are ugly, and if they were not here we would be prettier and much poorer” (Forsyth 2007: 296).

Often, dirty work is essential to everyday life, but we often take it for granted, and stigmatize dirty jobs. Hughes (1962) argues that society assigns dirty work to people so ‘others’ may remain distant from the work they mandate. For example, society relies on oil and oilfield workers, but much animosity exists surrounding the thought of oil development and oilfield workers. Despite fulfilling a valuable role, dirty workers are stigmatized and cast in a similar light as their work: distasteful, disgusting, and polluting.
Douglas (1966) argues people see cleanliness as goodness and dirtiness as badness—and badness threatens the social order. Simply put, people who ‘do the dirty work’ are perceived as “dirty workers,” although people are otherwise satisfied with the completion of these jobs (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999).

Three forms of occupational taint exist, and energy development and energy workers fit all of them: physical taint, social taint, and moral taint (Hughes 1958).

Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) explain:

- Physical Taint: occurs where an occupation is either directly associated with garbage, death, effluent and so on . . .
- Social Taint: occurs where an occupation involves regular contact with people or groups that are themselves regarded as stigmatized . . .
- Moral Taint: occurs where an occupation is generally regarded as somewhat sinful or of dubious virtue . . . (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999: 415).

These forms of taint are not mutually exclusive and the lines between these concepts are sometimes ‘fuzzy.’ Working in the oilfield is dirty because workers get physically dirty on the job; workers associate with stigmatized workers and companies; and popular culture views the oilfield as morally offensive because of environmental destruction and oil spills.

Regardless of the stigma (or in spite of it), workers form occupational cultures and rely on their job as part of their identity. While local residents stigmatize transient energy workers, exclude them from community networks, and blame them for social fallout (Parkins and Angell 2010), these workers band together. Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) argue that the stigma associated with dirty work fosters occupational communities, whereby individuals view themselves as in-group members—those who
oppose their work are seen as adversaries. As community residents renounce energy workers, the workers form their own in-group around their occupation’s culture.

A masculinized occupational culture predominates in the oilfield (Collinson 1999). In fact, masculinity permeates organizational structures—a company’s rules, policies, work responsibilities—and enable and constrain the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors among workers at the interpersonal level. Men in the oilfield generally comply with conventional, masculine norms perpetuated by their employers (Dellinger 2004); therefore to understand social transgressions, research must examine how masculinity is embedded within broader levels of social organization and how this structure and culture permeates sublevels and affects the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors among individuals. Because the energy industry predominantly employs men (See Appendix C), and a hyper-masculine culture pervades the industry’s culture, understanding masculinity among oilfield workers may provide insight into social transgressions and social disruption within the Marcellus Shale region.

II) “Occupations that penetrate multiple aspects of a person’s life also create conditions favorable to taking members of the occupation as one’s primary reference group” (304). Because some occupations require workers to accept a certain style of life, the behaviors of members are limited to those acceptable for the position; a pastor is one position where respecting church traditions in the community limits one’s public behaviors. If the oilfield’s ‘roughneck’ masculinity manifests as drinking, drug use, and fighting, these behaviors may spill over into Marcellus Shale communities, and a worker’s home and work domains.
III) Some jobs require rigorous socialization processes that become a right of passage for those who personify the occupational standards created by community members. Rights of passage are harder to endure in stigmatized occupations, or those deemed as dirty work. Therefore, occupations with rigorous standards often provide the most potential for creating cohesiveness among members—workers have no one else to confide in (Van Maanen and Barley 1984).

The fourth defining attribute of an occupational community “. . . is the blurring of the distinction between work and leisure activities within occupational communities” (305). This attribute contains four conditions that promote social relations at work and during leisure periods—(i) physical proximity, (ii) restricted social relations, (iii) kin-based relations, and (iv) occupational intrusion.

(i) Workers who are geographically isolated are forced to live near their work, or live at work. The close physical proximity restricts social relations outside the occupational community; therefore, when in-group members recreate, they must do so alone or with other in-group members. This places a physical and social restriction on work and leisure.

(ii) The restriction of social relations enables co-mingling among occupational community members, while it constrains relationships with outside members. The organizational structure, including “Shift work, night work, extensive travel, isolated postings, long periods of work-induced isolation followed by extended periods of leisure, all tend to mitigate opportunities for establishing friendships outside work” (Van Maanen and Barely 1984: 306). In-group members may perceive interactions with out-group members as threatening to the in-group’s attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors.
(iii) Some occupational communities are “kin-based and entered by virtue of birth [which] lead to an extensive overlap among social and work relations” (306). Farming and fishing promote social relations within the work group, and create a family lineage. The occupational reins are passed down from generation to generation.

(iv) The final condition blurring work and leisure “arises through a sort of occupational intrusion into all aspects of a person’s life” (306). Goffman’s (1957) notion of ‘total institutions’ captures the pervasiveness of some occupations (such as the military) where separating social and work obligations becomes impossible; therefore, lines between work and leisure are blurred.

The aforementioned factors become part of a worker’s self-identity. To more accurately understand identities, Drew et al. (2007) argue the occupational level of analysis is more important than the organizational level because employees are likely to work for six to eight employers in their lifetime. Further, they assert that a worker’s skills are transferable to other organizations, making occupational culture a more accurate measure of identity. Lee and Field (2005) support Drew’s assertions: occupations span geographic locations, so occupational communities are described as non-territorial groups where interrelationships and networks among members revolve around work.

However, these arguments underestimate the role of organizational structure (company policies, rules, procedures), which ultimately enable or constrain the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors available to employees in occupational communities. So, a worker’s sense of identity may emerge from the occupational community, but the meanings accessible to workers originate at the organizational level. For example, organizational structures enable and constrain how men perform masculinity, and how
cultures construct and reinforce masculinity. Dellinger’s (2004) study of organizational structures at a pornographic magazine and a feminist magazine, and other’s oilfield research (e.g. Collinson’s 1999; Ely and Meyerson 2010; Martin 2002) exemplify this pattern. Therefore, the (masculine) attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors available to occupational community members depend on how the organizational structure enables and constrains these characteristics among workers (Gidden 1976). The present study examines the relationship between an organizational structure and the occupational community that workers create.

**Natural Resource-Based Occupational Communities**

Research on occupational communities covers an array of occupations—from office work (e.g. Lawrence 1998; Marschall 2002) to studies in natural resource-based occupations. In fact, much of the information on occupational communities focuses on work groups within male dominated natural resource-based fields. Horobin (1957) studied the first natural resource based occupational community when he explored a fishing community. Fishermen lived on Hessle Road; know by locals as ‘a world in itself,’ while the fishermen themselves were “a group apart” from the rest of the city. Members of this fishing community, like other natural resource-based occupations, possess a collective identity interconnected with their work (Lawrence 1998; Salaman 1974). These communities pass down norms, values, work procedures, and the occupational identity of community members from one generation to the next (Marschall 2002).
In another example, inshore fishermen in van Ginkel’s (2001) study entered into a socialization process that cultivated pride when men obtained their fisherman identities, through adherence to in-group values, behaviors and norms. Adherence to these rules was essential to becoming an insider, doing the work properly, and legitimizing their work world (van Ginkel 2001). A natural hierarchy among generations of in-group crewmembers emerged: “. . . the seniority of the father or elder brother makes for a natural hierarchy that facilitates playing down lines of command” (180). The age (or experience) of each member demarcated the boundary lines for each member, including appropriate and inappropriate behavior. The status distinctions acquired offshore spilled over into maritime communities and were reinforced; therefore, fishing became an occupational subculture. Because only a few residents cherished the tenets of the fishing community, while others stigmatized its way of life, the actual ‘community’ must be distinguished from the village (Nadal 1984). For residents in Nadal’s (1984) study, members of the fishing community were ‘true villagers,’ and demonstrated their adherence to this group by romanticizing and mythologizing about fishing identities.

Occupational community members possess strong ties, which vary by community and type of labor. When labor is hard, physically demanding, dangerous, or requires substantial skills, members develop strong emotional bonds to the group’s identity (Salaman 1974; Turnbull 1992). Mackenzie et al. (2006) argue that among groups with a history of hard, physically demanding, dangerous work, employment or the absence of employment, are important for individual and group identity. In this study of ex-steelworkers, members of the steelworkers’ occupational community built a positive self-image on their traditional resilient work ethic, despite negative public perceptions of
steelworkers (MacKenzie et al. 2006). This exemplifies Van Maanen and Barley’s (1984) assertion that the norms, opinions, and values of other in-group members are more important than those of out-group members. Further, steelworkers look to in-group members and draw from workgroup ideologies when introspectively forming their identity and sense of self (Blumer 1986).

There are many examples of occupational communities within natural resource-based employment, and identity formation among in-group members with a collective consciousness. Over the years, Northwestern loggers have solidified traditions and collective values, and passed these down through generations of fallers and buckers, rigging crew members, logging road builders, and logging truck drivers (Lee et al. 2001; Carroll et al. 2005). These loggers maintain a masculine identity by prescribing to four themes: independence, pride in skill, pride in facing danger, and a sense of being in a unique category (Carroll et al. 2005). Workers favored rural areas that upheld their sense of frontier masculinity, and allowed them to remain in geographically isolated areas close to other in-group members (Carroll 1995). Other forest workers develop work-group ideologies through mushroom gathering networks (McClain 2000) and fruit harvesting ties (Carroll et al. 2003). Similar to loggers, these forest workers obtain their identities collectively through workgroup relationships. Members are afforded certain resources such as access to information on productive picking locations, advice for avoiding authorities, and permission to access members at all time, blurring the distinction between work and leisure.

Lupo and Bailey’s (2011) comparative case study between a metropolitan and non-metropolitan pulp and paper mill also supports Van Maanen and Barley’s (1984)
framework: family members play an integral role getting jobs for their relatives; workers adhere to work group social ties because irregular work schedules, shift demands, and organizational structures provide little time for friends not enmeshed in a similar work schedule. These researchers also illuminate the need to consider how out-groups influence the in-group—they claim community size can drastically alter the structure of an occupational community within the same industry. Strangleman’s (2001) examination of the UK coal industry is one example where the relationship between social ties and work-based networks are more fully developed. The study documents how behaviors, norms and values transcend work and non-work settings, within locations, among classes, and through family members and generations.

Subordination & Reinforcement of Masculinities and Femininities

Organizational structures and occupational cultures often promote hegemonic masculinities that subordinate women (and men) through the division of labor (Stobbe 2005). These subordinate masculinities and femininities reinforce the gender hierarchy through the co-construction of dominant and subordinate discourses (Mumby and Ashcraft 2006). Once the gender structure within an organization is set, hegemony will persist unless the structure allows for alternative, legitimate discourse on masculinity. However, such a structural condition may provide an opening for alternative hegemonic masculinities that will continue to subordinate women and other men (Coldwell 2007; Peter et al. 2000). The effort to maintain hegemonic masculine domination takes considerable effort, mainly by excluding women and lesser men (Bird 1996; Stobbe
Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) frame this as “. . . ‘historical process,’ not a self-reproducing system” (844). This means history constructs previous, current and future masculinities through the duality of structure and agency (Giddens 1986).

Constructions of masculinity are not confined to one sphere; spillovers between two or more spheres are possible. The “masculine ethic” (Kanter 1977) common within organizations can have crippling effects on men and their families. When men are forced to comply with rigorous ten-hour workdays and company functions, work, and the masculinities within that organization, are prioritized over family obligations (Cooper 2000). Men and women monitor this behavior by policing the organizational and occupational masculinities, and sanction men when family obligations interfere with work (Hochschild 1997; Kimmel 2006). Therefore, to maintain their masculine image, some fathers self-sacrifice, silence work-family conflict, disguise the care they do perform at home, and turn to women (both at work and home) to help them reconcile their demands in their public and private lives (Cooper 2000).

Masculinities at Home

Some scholars argue, “. . . extra-familial arenas such as business, sports, or politics” are more influential to a man’s sense of masculine identity (Adams and Coltrane 2004), but the domestic sphere is the initial context where boys are introduced to masculinity. Boys are masculinized through various socialization techniques. Boys are often brought up to value independence away from the home and in the public sphere (Adams and Coltrane 2004), whereas parents restrict girls from similar forms of
independence (Dunkley 2009). The roles men play within the family sphere are interconnected with work, because men (and women) often equate masculinity with breadwinning (Connell 1995; Cooper 2002; Gerson 1993; Townsend 2002). Working is a standard practice of ‘being a man’ (Messner and Bozada-Deas 2009). The relationship between social patriarchies (work) and private patriarchy (home) is relational; meaning each form of patriarchy enables and constrains the other.

Domesticity is the gender system separating market work and family work, and it reinforces the ‘ideal worker’ norm among men (Williams 2000). Williams asserts domesticity has two defining characteristics. First, in order to fulfill the fulltime norm of breadwinning, *ideal workers* have little time for childbearing or child rearing roles. Second, caregivers are marginalized by a system that impedes their access to responsibility and authority (Williams 2000). This system restricts many women from the workplace and many men from the domestic sphere. Within both spheres, the quality or quantity of interactions acceptable for reinforcing masculinity depends on the other sphere. This relates to Dellinger’s (2004) argument asserting the need to examine multiple hegemonic masculinities within different contexts and similar time periods.

*The Breadwinning Trend*

Although women are less dependent on male breadwinners than ever before, continued research on gendered norms within families is instrumental for understanding how (and why) masculine and feminine norms are constructed and structurally reproduced within public and domestic spheres. The gender strategies defined by
Hochschild (1989) are instrumental for understanding gendered norms within American households. Most notably, women are charged with completing a “second shift” (housework and childcare) after they return from work. This pattern emerged among households with two incomes, regardless of how many hours each spouse worked. Housework is still considered women’s work.

Subsequent work defined gender as a norm, rather than a role. Therefore, under this paradigm, gender is “…a social relation characterized by power inequalities that hierarchically produce, organize, and evaluate masculinities and femininities through the contested but controlling practices of individuals, organizations, and societies” (Ferree 2010: 424). In the case of Hochschild’s second shift, hegemonic masculinity reinforces patriarchy’s grip on the domestic sphere. Other theories and interpretations have emerged describing gender’s relationship with socially constructed meanings, and the political structures that formally enable and constrain masculine and feminine behavior: gender relations theory (Lorber 2005), gender as social structure (Risman 2004a; 2009), and gender as an institution (Martin 2004).

The male breadwinner and female dependent is a common depiction of family life; in fact, many structures including sex-segregated occupational structures, state welfare policies, and the ‘family wage’ still support this model (Brines 1994; Ackers 1988). Generally, however, gender is associated with work and family roles, because women devote fewer hours to paid work than men, especially in families with children (Greenhaus and Parasuraman 1999). And although some men report high levels of involvement within the family sphere, men often overstate their contributions (Coltrane 2000). Structural conditions often necessitate that families prescribe to economic
dependency, whereby women exchange unpaid labor within the household for a portion of their husband’s income; or the symbolic exchange model, where women complete housework to enact their femininity and men avoid it to preserve their masculinity (Brines 1994). This transfer of earnings is credited to domesticity, or a structural precedent privileging masculine norms over feminine norms in the workplace (Williams 2010).

Domesticity supports the traditional separation between work and domestic spheres, and pressures men into breadwinning roles and women out of them (Williams 2010). This privilege necessitates men become ‘ideal workers,’ who prioritize work over family, who do not succumb to the pressure to work overtime but rather embrace the opportunity (Williams 2007; 2010). When men fail to successfully fulfill their masculine, ideal worker role they face sanctions: being labeled ‘wimps’ and losing their work identity, a major piece of masculinity.

The masculinities enacted within social spheres (work, public) reinforce each man’s sense of masculinity, but in the private sphere (family) these ideals may constrain masculinity. We regard the domestic sphere as feminine, and social patriarchy delegitimizes much of the behavior common in this sphere—i.e. caring, nurturing and serving the needs of others (Adams and Coltrane 2004). Therefore, masculinity often forces men to seek refuge from the feminized other: the domestic sphere and relationships within it. Interestingly, the more men rely on their wives for economic support, the less housework they complete. Brines (1994) argues the gender structure compels men to perform less housework to preserve their sense of masculinity, because succumbing to feminine behavior would tarnish men’s masculine identities. Men often
see themselves as breadwinners, not caretakers, so they spend considerable time and effort trying to maintain this identity to preserve their ideal sense of masculinity (Brines 1994). Fathers with faltering careers are sensitive to this ideal identity—they assume financial responsibility for their children’s well-being and become less involved in day-to-day childcare responsibilities (Marsiglio and Hutchinson 2002).

Macro and micro structures and social constructions reinforce the household as feminine. But still, some researchers challenge this citing parental/household role, rather than sex, accounts for the amount of housework done. But common discourse, such as men “help” around the house or fathers “babysit,” reinforces the view that housework is women’s work. These gendered norms may create family conflict over appropriate gendered behavior, a topic of debate among family scholars. Wilcox and Nock (2006) argue wives are much happier when they fulfill traditional “women’s work.” Springer (2007) identified Wilcox and Nock misrepresented happiness among wives, and argued that when men ‘undo’ traditional masculine scripts (such as sturdy, silent, unexpressive, hegemonic masculinity), marriages thrive (Please also see Risman 2009; Sherman 2009). Men face difficulties undoing these norms, and they often utilize strategies of deferment to avoid housework. Further, men relinquish control (a masculine trait) at home because this sphere is viewed as a woman’s “natural domain”; for men, careers are their defining characteristic, not housework (Coltrane 1989; Pyke 1996). In other situations, men flat out refuse to participate in the household, citing work, incapability, or the belief that it is “women’s work” (Brines 1994; Schrock and Schwalbe 2009).
It Takes More (or Less) to be a Dad

Over thirty years ago, men in Hochschild’s (1989) study described significant events in their children’s lives, rather than the day in/day out responsibilities of parenting. However, recent changes in fertility patterns have decreased the number of fathers and the number of children per father, which may explain why fathers report increasing emotional connections and higher levels of involvement in their children’s day-to-day lives (Coltrane 2004; Eggebeen 2002). In the U.S., two-parent families are decreasing (either from high divorce rates, declining marriage rates, increasing birth rates among single-mothers or other relevant factors), while father involvement within two parent families is increasing (Coltrane 2004). Ultimately, these patterns offer certain benefits and detriments for men employed in jobs with rigorous work hours, labor demands, and attachment levels. Coltrane (2010) argues research needs to understand the connections between housework, childrearing, parenting style and interactions with children, specifically the differences between how men perform paid and unpaid labor.

Married men who depend on their wives for economic support often show discontent, because they cannot fulfill the traditional masculine breadwinning norm. These men alter their regular work pattern, work longer hours, and refuse to complete housework in an effort to compensate and reclaim their breadwinner status (Hallerod 2005; Sherman 2009). In addition to understanding how men strive to maintain the masculine norm, it is also important that we explore how men and women ascribe meaning to their involvement in family life (Greenhaus and Parasuraman 1999). Although men’s and women’s behaviors and parenting roles are often relegated to
masculine and feminine scripts, some men who earn less than their wives adapt and prescribe to more egalitarian relationship statuses, deemphasizing the importance of breadwinning and traditional masculine norms (Zuo 2004). Some evidence suggests egalitarian parenting couples share ideological views on parenting roles, creating alternative discourses on legitimate masculinities in the domestic sphere (Deutsch 1999). This strengthens the argument that parenting need not be gendered (Deutsch 1999; Lorber 2005; Risman 1998), but gender often does affect parenting.

**Single Fathers**

Masculinity in the family sphere becomes more complicated among single fathers. State welfare policies support the breadwinning role for men, and single men are forced into domesticity roles, although they are the sole provider and caregiver. These roles can create conflicts and problems among single fathers because they are more likely to be out of the labor force and poorer than married men (Townsend 2002). Additionally, only 7% of non-cohabitating single fathers receive child support (Brown 2000). The construction of masculinity within the household is strongly tied to economic structures and breadwinning: hegemonic masculine discourses subordinate masculinities that embrace feminine caregiving norms (Hook and Chalasani 2008). And single men do adopt traditionally feminine, mothering tendencies. Risman’s (1987) analysis of ‘men who mother’ describes how single fathers fulfill traditional mothering roles: being warm, child orientated, nurturing. These are all adjectives used by social scientists to measure femininity, but under the structural condition of single father, men’s identities took on
conventionally feminine traits. Therefore, despite gender/sex, the microstructural conditions create an environment where men can adopt alternative masculinities.

**Public Masculinities**

People of all demographic characteristics (e.g. races, genders, ages, classes) may gather, interact and structure masculinity’s meaning within the public sphere. Geography is an important factor because masculinities are constructed within local contexts (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009), and communities are sometimes the nexus of conventional and alternative masculinities. Men who perform masculinities in public subject themselves to gender policing by men and women with similar and different masculine ideologies (Bell 1994; Campbell 2000a; Kimmel 2004). Local hegemonic masculinities are not static; extra-local, hegemonic masculinities constantly challenge local hegemony.

The potential for masculine discourses to change in rural and urban communities from outside influences is evident in the work of Kenway et al. (2006), who identify globalization as a purveyor of new masculine dialogues. Therefore, when dominant extra-local constructions of masculinity enter the local context, they may subordinate or marginalize local masculinities.

The public sphere is a place of convergence; men and women evaluate masculinity through numerous lenses, and create normative masculinities for each context. If masculinities persist, they persist because structures and individuals construct and reproduce their legitimacy. In previous sections, I demonstrated the importance of social context for masculinity. For example, men performing manual labor show physical
strength at work to maintain control (Collinson 1992), and at home men resist housework and childcare (Hochschild 1998). Social environment also determines masculinity in the public sphere (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009). In bars, masculinity often depends upon music preference, heavy drinking, and aggressive behavior (Eastman and Schrock 2008; Tilki 2006). In his study of pub-community masculinities, Campbell (2000) identified pub(lic) masculinity as the dominant hegemonic order in New Zealand pubs. Men reinforced this public masculinity and defended its legitimacy by demeaning other men in conversations, holding one’s liquor, and excluding women. Men and women constantly police public masculinities through bullying (Kimmel and Mahler 2003; Messerschmidt 2000), and gay bashing (Tomsen 2002). Other public masculinities are marked by certain symbols. Eastman and Schrock (2008) describe the confederate flag, poverty, drinking and violence as integral for reclaiming and glorifying “white trash” masculinities in the Southern United States. This example demonstrates the situatedness of masculine structures, performances and identity.

Public masculinities are often invisible, because we take-for-granted that men control a substantial amount of resources (Connell 2001). When men are compelled to abide by the dominant masculine discourse—despite lacking a means to do so effectively—masculinities may become destructive. Sometimes to fulfill their preferred sense of masculinity and maintain a ‘tough guy’ image among a social group, men commit crimes (Messerschmidt 1998). Structural inequalities and patriarchal control become dangerous when linked with masculine performances, given that men are armed more often than women (Connell 2001). In other contexts, men produce masculinity by creating international security threats (Hooper 2001). But apart from violence,
masculinities that pervade as hegemonic present challenges for men, women and societies.

*Manhood Acts*

Hegemonic masculine control can be emotionally debilitating, and physically dangerous. From the time boys enter school the term “sissy” (and more vulgar forms of gender policing) plague them and create informal networks of social control (Kimmel and Mahler 2003; Messerschmidt 2000). Most (maybe all) boys experience intimidation or symbolic forms of intimidation as mechanisms for expressing masculinity—extreme examples are found in subcultures such as gangs or white supremacist groups (Stretesky 2007; Kimmel 2007). This control may result in victimization for those violating legitimate masculinities, and sometimes men policing the boundaries of legitimacy retaliate with force when men commit the most egregious forms of deviance: sexuality breaches, or violating gendered norms engrained in the public discourse (Tomsen 2002). The publicity of Matthew Shepard’s brutal beating and murder are a stark reminder of how men (and women) police public masculinities and punish illegitimate masculinities.

Less extreme, but no less important, are other public displays of masculinity. Campbell’s (2000) study of workers in the agricultural industry highlighted the importance of in-group status among a hierarchical aggregate of men. These men constructed and maintained hegemonic masculinity through two in-group dynamics. First, disciplines of drinking encouraged men to consume large quantities of alcohol, demonstrate a vast local knowledge, and perform masculine bodily control—not going to
the bathroom, or “holding their piss” (Campbell 2000: 575). Second, conversational cockfighting encompasses a number of conversational tests. Whether a man can “take it” (withstand insults and intimidation from in-group members) or insult and make visible the differences between out-group members and ‘real men,’ in-group members. Men also distinguished themselves as masculine by using double entendre and playful banter that borders or crosses lines of appropriate conversation for most public spaces. These behaviors demarcate lines of masculine norms and help men differentiate between masculinity and femininity. The predominance of public masculinity renders it invisible to men within the in-group, through a naturalization process; therefore, hegemonic masculinity becomes naturalized in most cultures.

In areas experiencing significant social change—including depopulation from mechanized labor, and vanishing social support networks—hegemonic masculinities are able to maintain their dominance despite marginalizing the majority of men (Laoire 2001). Laoire’s study among rural farmers in Ireland reveals the need for research focusing on the changing gender patterns in locations with competing forms of masculinity. Her example contrasts traditional farming ideology and the new ‘pub-football’ culture. These examples illustrate how competing masculinities can create consequences for marginalized men, and rewards for those adapting to new, powerful, hegemonic masculine identities (Laoire 2001: 233). Sometimes the most effective way to convey one’s masculinity within a social context is to demonstrate resistance to regionally legitimate hegemonic masculinities (Wetherell and Edley 1999). However, to do this effectively, men must deviate through legitimate behavior, lest they face policing by individuals upholding the hegemonic discourse.
Alston and Kent (2008) document how an invisible structure of masculinity is advantageous for men’s earning power and privilege during good times, but harmful during stressful times. During the time of their study, Australian farmers were experiencing a period of drought, which made it difficult to farm—an act capable of affirming a man’s sense of masculinity, or in this case, presenting them with imminent failure. Despite the extreme weather conditions, the dominant masculine structure did not relent and men were forced by their ‘farmer’ status to define themselves as failures. Alston and Kent concluded that rural masculinities are “inherently unhealthy” for men, and the “stoicism” which demarcates rural masculinity hinders their ability to seek help during emergencies (144). The pressures men face to reproduce and comply with the masculine doctrine may present unhealthy repercussions such as injuries, disabilities or even death, including suicide (Courtenay 2006; Gerschick and Miller 1994; Ramirez-Ferrero 2005). The hyper-masculine swagger that epitomizes masculinity is regarded as unhealthy for men because it leaves them unable to seek help when they need it most (Campbell et al. 2006).

**Rural ‘Frontier’ Masculinities**

Similar to the relational properties of masculinity and femininity, no rural masculinity can be separated analytically from an urban masculinity ((Campbell et al. 2001; Campbell and Bell 2000). There are two distinctions for how masculinities and rural spaces interact: “By the masculine in the rural, we mean the various ways in which masculinity is constructed within what rural social scientists would recognize as rural
spaces and sites. [. . .] By the rural in the masculine, we mean the way in which notions
of rurality help constitute notions of masculinity” (Campbell and Bell 2000: 540).
Masculinities research is expanding within sociology and among rural sociologists, in
particular. Much of this research specifies that rural masculinities are important for
understanding the most crucial behavior associated with masculinity: manhood acts (See
Coldwell 2010 for summary).

The notions of masculine in the rural and rural in the masculine (Campbell and
Frontier masculinities describe masculinities built upon romanticized notions of Daniel
Boone, Paul Bunyan and cowboys—rural, ‘frontier men.’ These are public masculinities,
but often occur in places not recognized as ‘public,’ because of their rural and remote
locations. Several studies have explored the idea of frontier masculinities. Bonnett (1996)
depicted a romanticized ideal of nature and men’s connection to it, while Kimmel (1987)
argued masculinity asserts men’s domination of nature.

Other studies document men’s physical strength, masculine body and
independence in the outdoors as key components to frontier masculinities (Little and
Leyson 2003). Further, Anahita and Mix (2006) describe Alaska’s frontier masculinity as
mythological and fantasy based—idealized and supported by state-level policies
regulating (or deregulating) the hunting of wolves. Another study on the oil and gas
industry in Canada demonstrated three strategies for men to maintain their frontier
masculinity, including the use of language to exclude women from formal and informal
networks of interaction, ideological precedents on the division of labor among engineers,
and a romanticized image of themselves as cowboys (Miller 2004). This body of work attests to the varied strategies men use to construct a masculine, frontier image.

Dangers found in the wilderness and rural areas are crucial for our conceptions of the masculine in the rural, rural in the masculine and frontier masculinities (Emel 1995). These locations are also viewed as places men ‘can go wild’ and not be constrained by feminized cities and domestication (Bell 2000; Bonnett 1996; Kimmel 1996). Therefore, in these locations the strength and courage men show in the face of ‘true’ danger allots them a higher masculine status (Little and Leyson 2003). This strength, when not exerted through competence, but as a weaker portrayal—for example, one’s ability to kill a wolf from an airplane (Anahita and Mix 2006)—may pose challenges to a man’s sense of masculinity (Emel 1995). In situations like these, masculinity can be used as a tool for ideological or even ecological purposes. For example, Alaska’s Department of Fish and Game renounced challenges to wolf-eradication through masculinized tactics, framing opponents as sissies and hunters as heroes. Hunters were also portrayed as family providers, while wolves were defined as competition for hunters trying to provide food for their families (Anahita and Mix 2006).

The many spaces where masculinities are constructed contribute to how the various types of masculinities are performed and perceived. No space is more revered for representing masculinity than rural spaces. It is in rural areas where men can be men (see Stobbe 2005 for examples of frontier masculinities). Urban masculinities and the “modern man” are often portrayed as consumers (Pendergast 2000), corporate “suits” or fashionable metrosexuals with earning potential (Hogan and Pursell 2008), but these men are less masculine than frontier men. Urban masculinities are more closely associated
with femininity; they are largely consumptive, weaker masculinities whereas rural masculinities are about men working in production, dominating nature or both. Even in Alaska, a rural state laden with the mystique of frontier masculinity, Hogan and Pursell (2008) conclude that although Alaskan men ascribe labels of dominance to rural masculinities, the importance of urban masculinities is growing.

**Undoing Rural Masculinities**

Rural sociologists are making strides to understand how men are “undoing” masculinity. One example can be found among farmers. Farmers engaged in conventional agriculture must adhere to conventional masculinities and risk their lives to preserve their masculine image (Alston and Kent 2008). These farmers belong to structural support networks that oppose alternative masculinities—so when these men fail as farmers, they fail as men (Peter et al. 2000; Coldwell 2007). Alternatively, sustainable agriculture provides men an open structure for discovering and performing multiple legitimate masculinities (Peter et al. 2000). Other scholars argue alternative masculinities can develop from love of land and the outdoors, care for environment, and viable family farming (Ni Laoire 2002).

Expanding Connell’s work, rural social scientists argue additional theoretical windows are necessary for understanding the intricacies of masculinity (Peter et al. 2000; Campbell and Bell 2000; Coldwell 2007). By utilizing new theoretical perspectives, Peter and colleagues contend it is possible to better understand how men are “doing” and “undoing” masculinities. Bakhtin’s (1986) theory of dialogism is one lens these scholars
utilize to understand how hegemonic masculinities can be challenged or ‘undone.’ Two social conditions dominate this perspective: monologic and dialogic. Men adhere to monologic masculinities when they present rigid gender distinctions such as the image of invulnerability, physical toughness, technical infallibility, and emotional detachment (Bell 2003; Coldwell 2007; Peter et al. 2000). Monologic masculinities are equated with conventional, hegemonic masculinities; therefore, hegemonic masculinities are a monologue that reproduces the patriarchal order (Coldwell 2007). It is valuable to note here Goffman’s (1959) finding: nothing can ever truly be a monologue, because even presentations given and given off by a performer’s audience structure, construct, reproduce or undo hegemonic masculinity. Alternatively, dialogic constructions of masculinity are open to the needs of others, while masculine language and categories adapt to the interactive conditions of the social context (Coldwell 2007; Peter et al. 2000). Dialogic constructions promote the emergence of alternative, subordinated masculinities through reflexivity (Coldwell 2007).

These scholars urge us not to think of concepts as hard categories, but rather ideal types. For instance, in their study on rural, Iowa farmers Peter et al. (2000) document that structures permit dialogic masculinities among sustainable farmers, and these farmers are more likely to identify with and prescribe to multiple, alternative masculinities. However, the conventional farming industry is dominated by monologic discourses surrounding masculinity; therefore, performances among conventional farmers more often comply with single-voiced discourse on ‘what it means to be a man,’ a farmer or a success. Even when monologic masculinities prevail, dialogic conditions are still possible. They are, however, less common. Therefore within each structure, it is important to flesh out the
circumstances permitting and prohibiting monologic and dialogic masculinities. Coldwell (2007) points out, young farmers are more attuned to structural constraints and this knowledge contributes to their self-image and their adherence and acceptance of alternative masculine discourses. Ultimately, in circumstances where monologic masculinities are “unhealthy” it is disadvantageous for men to prescribe, construct and reinforce these masculinities; therefore, dialogic masculinities become advantageous (Campbell and Bell 2000). As a result, it is more likely that masculinities will be “undone” within structures permitting dialogic masculinities.

Research on “undoing” masculinities reveals that monologic and dialogic masculinities exist across time and space, and these definitions are subject to change (Coldwell 2010; Giddens 1986). Therefore it is important to understand how men (and women) are doing and undoing masculinities through time and in various contexts. Second, masculinities (masculine in the rural, in particular) marginalize men and women, and govern appropriate masculine performances, while sanctioning alternative illegitimate forms of masculinity. Finally, discourse on masculinity and rurality constantly interconnect and the structure of rural social interaction is “aggressively masculine” (Campbell and Phillips 1995).
Chapter 4

Methodology

The prevalence of men in the energy industry (See Appendix C) creates hyper-masculine organizational structures and occupational cultures. Organizational structures enable and constrain the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors—i.e. occupational cultures. Men in the oilfield generally comply with conventional, masculine norms perpetuated by their employers (Dellinger 2004). These factors contribute to masculine occupational cultures (Collinson 1998) that have implications for masculinity at work, home and in public. Therefore, the purpose of this case study is to explore masculinity among oilfield workers at Magna-Drill—a contract drilling company that completes the drilling phase of oil and gas development. I use Connell’s (2001) definition of masculinity as a culturally specific way of doing gender. Specifically, I aim to answer this central research question: How does organizational structure shape masculinity among oilfield men at work, home and in Marcellus Shale communities?

Natural gas development in the Marcellus Shale region is the ideal context to explore this study’s central research question. I take a qualitative approach to compare masculinity across various occupations and to understand how men ‘do’ masculinity
(Donaldson 1991; Miller 2004). This study relies on an emergent design examining *how* organizational structure and occupational community affect workers’ masculine identities. This qualitative technique promotes the acquisition of rich, detailed meanings about masculinity, meanings that otherwise may have been overlooked or lost using a quantitative approach (Maxwell 2005).

**Operationalization**

To answer this study’s research question(s) and fulfill the primary research objective, I use a case study approach—a case study examines issues within a bounded system (Stake 2005). I focus on the Marcellus Shale Regional Field Office of Magna-Drill, the contract drilling company under investigation. Using a single instrumental case study, I examine how masculinity is structured and constructed within one single bounded system: Magna-Drill (Stake 2005). Magna-Drill’s field employees and managers are the units of analysis.

To understand this case, I focus on two research objectives. 1) I describe Magna-Drill’s organizational structure—including rules, policies and procedures. 2) I examine how Magna-Drill’s organizational structure shapes the ways men ‘do’ or construct masculinity, because men often subscribe to conventional masculine norms that their employers perpetuate (Dellinger 2004).

**Organizational Structure: Objective 1.** I describe three organizational structural factors.

A) Hierarchical structure: I examine the regional field office’s hierarchical structure, and
I describe each position within the company’s field office. This is important because previous work finds men maintain a hegemonic grasp on their perceptions of self through their job title (Miller 2004). I also describe the roles and responsibilities of men employed within each position. B) Work day: This description includes information on the length of each worker’s shift and the duration of their work pattern. Previous research identifies shift length and work pattern as factors that structure masculine performances at work (Barnes et al. 1988; Bjortatn et al. 1999; Bjortatn et al. 2006; Gibbs et al. 2002; Harvey 1990). C) Workplace policies: Health and safety (H&S) policies are instrumental for how men do gender in the oilfield; therefore, I examine Magna-Drill’s H&S policies (Collinson 1999; Miller 2004; Ely and Meyerson 2010; Wicks 2002). It is important to understand how these policies pertain to workers’ attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors—i.e. whether they reinforce Magna-Drill’s policies or reject them. A crucial policy within the oilfield is the drug policy, because anecdotal evidence and previous research suggest the oilfield’s bad reputation may derive from traditionally lax drug policies. These structural factors contribute to the workplace culture and the ways men are doing and undoing masculinity.

Masculine Constructions: Objective 2. For the second theme, I examine how the aforementioned structures shape the ways men construct masculinity in three spheres: work, home and Marcellus communities. I examine their attitudes, beliefs, values and masculine behaviors (performances) within each sphere. First, I examine how men do masculinity at work. I define this factor as the *occupational community* (Lipset et al. 1962; Salaman 1974; Van Maanen and Barley 1984). I operationalize Magna-Drill’s occupational community around four factors. 1) I discuss how Magna-Drill employees
define themselves as in-group members, while distinguishing themselves from out-
groups. II) I explore how community members derive valued identities or self-images
from their occupational roles. III) I explain how in-group members maintain a social
identity through the support and confirmation of other members. IV) I show how the
organization’s structure—high level of transience and confinement—blurs the lines
between work and leisure.

Second, I explore how men do masculinity at home. In this section, I examine
three factors. i) How men contribute to cleaning, housework, and childcare
responsibilities; ii) How residence (PA residents versus out-of-state workers) affects the
ways men contribute at home; iii) How a man’s identity is tied to the work and family
spheres through the masculine breadwinning norm (Connell 2001; Cooper 2002; Gerson
1993; Townsend 2002), and how this norm prohibits men from participating equitably in
each sphere (Williams 2000).

Third, I explore how men do masculinity in Marcellus Shale communities. To do
this, I compare how rig crew workers and maintenance/HSE Reps spend time in
Marcellus Shale communities. These workers adhere to different work patterns,
schedules, and levels of flexibility; therefore, I interpret the implications these crews may
have on social disruption within Marcellus Shale communities.

In the rest of this chapter, I describe the research site and my sampling
procedures. I outline my data collection process, and I explain how I transform the data
using description, analysis and interpretation. I conclude with a discussion of validity,
reliability, generalizability, and a discussion of ethical considerations.
Research Site & Sampling

I purposively selected Pennsylvania as the research site because the state is undergoing rapid, large-scale natural gas development. State College is in the heart of Pennsylvania’s Marcellus region, which offers a cost effective, proximate launching point for data collection. Also, the workers’ rigorous shiftwork and limited time off necessitate that I collect data during short windows of access, at the convenience of my participants. Further, I have existing key informant contacts in Pennsylvania, and through Penn State Extension Educators, industry representatives, government officials, and members of several local Marcellus Shale Community Task Forces. These individuals were invaluable to this study, and served as gatekeepers and key informants able to vouch for my character and the legitimacy of my research.

Access

It was difficult to access companies and workers in the gas industry. Researchers in the Marcellus Shale region have reported low response rates among gas companies (See Brasier et al. 2011; Brundage 2009; personal communication with Tim Kelsey 2011). Reasons for this are unclear, although the competitive nature of developing unconventional energy reserves, coupled with negative media coverage and the politicized debate regarding large-scale natural gas development in the Marcellus Shale are possible factors. To manage these challenges, I enlisted the support of previous researchers who studied energy workers, prominent scholars who obtained permission to
study workers on offshore oil platforms. These conversations were helpful when framing this study’s research design to prospective participant-companies. Over email we discussed how to generate information on company policies—including health and safety, family and work. Under the advisement of research texts, committee members, and scholars in the field of organizational research, I used five approaches to obtain access to gas companies and workers—one yielded full access to a contract drilling company with operations in the Marcellus Shale region. Please see Appendix A for a discussion of the four unsuccessful recruitment approaches.

Research Site

Numerous “oilfield” companies contribute to the exploration, development, production and distribution of the energy products we buy—heating oil, gasoline, and natural gas. Often, people colloquially describe all of these companies as ‘oil companies,’ or ‘gas companies’; however, companies play unique roles in the aforementioned processes. For instance, a production company will hire independent seismic companies to explore potential resources, land agents to lease land, excavators to construct well pads, and a number of other service companies to perform drilling, cement casing, fracing, trucking, welding, pipelining etc. My focus here will be to describe how production companies (actual oil/gas companies) hire service or contract companies to perform specialized tasks throughout the exploration and development process. The

---

4 I am grateful for the support offered by David Collinson and Robyn Ely.
company under examination in this study is one of these service companies. Magna-Drill is a contract drilling company hired by production companies with leaseholds in the Marcellus Shale region to drill wellbores. Therefore, when I refer to a ‘drilling company’ in this study, I am explicitly referring to companies that drill the wellbore.

**Strength of Weak Ties**

The strength of weak ties through preexisting networks contributed to my access (Granovetter 1973). After sharing emails with a local government official, I was invited to attend a committee meeting on the current status of Marcellus Shale issues in the official’s respective county. While in attendance, I was introduced to committee members, and the businessman I had coincidentally, ‘bumped into’ in the parking lot. This businessman was highly recommended by the organizer of the event because of his personal relationships with oil and gas operators and contractors. We extended our conversation, and he expressed an interest in my research. After we exchanged business cards, he instructed me to email him because he had the contact information for industry representatives, and he was willing to share it. After the meeting convened, I emailed my informant, thanked him for his interest in my study and his willingness to help. I added, “anything he could do would be much appreciated.” He offered me the names of two companies and a representative within each company to contact. After speaking with these representatives, I determined only one was within close proximity to State College. I called Bill, the Operations Manager for Magna-Drill. He answered and I told him the name of the businessman who referred me to him, explained my project, and asked if I
might speak with him about his work. Bill later granted me access to his company and the names and contact information of the men managing each department—from here I used snowball sampling by asking managers for the names and contact information of their workers (Creswell 2007).

**Sampling**

Upon gaining access to Magna-Drill, I combined several sampling techniques to maximize representativeness of my sample to the company’s employee base. Purposive sampling was my primary technique; however, because I was an outsider and unfamiliar with the structure of a contract drilling company, I relied on emergent patterns and themes to learn the departments, and who I needed to interview (Creswell 2007; Maxwell 2005). This likened my primary technique to theoretical sampling, often used in grounded theory (Straus and Corbin 1990).

Because I built my sample on an emergent theoretical foundation, I needed to identify potential participants whose positions were of theoretical relevance to this study—also known as maximum variation sampling criteria (Creswell 2007; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Miles and Huberman 1994). I included all departments within the contract drilling company for a total of twenty-two Magna-Drill employees. In addition, I also included six employees responsible for overseeing drilling operations for a production company operating in the Marcellus Shale—at the time of this study, Coburn was contracting Magna-Drill to drill on their leased land. During a drilling site visit with one of Magna-Drill’s Drilling Superintendents, I established a point of contact with Hank, the
drilling supervisor for Coburn, the production company contracting Magna-Drill. I also sampled six Coburn employees who supervised drilling operations. Coburn was initially included as an organizational structure ‘check’ to understand whose organizational structure influenced the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors of Magna-Drill’s fieldworkers: the largest group of transient energy workers and the population blamed for social transgressions in local Marcellus communities. After determining that each company has a unique organizational structure and occupational culture, I began to focus exclusively on Magna-Drill. See Table 4-1 for the sample’s distribution.

Table 4-1 Table of Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magna-Drill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Safety</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rig Crew</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coburn</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The theoretical sampling technique provided access to emergent properties and categories essential for representing workers/positions directly responsible for drilling operations at Magna-Drill and Coburn. This sampling technique also ensured my study would encompass heterogeneity in the population, and inclusion of men who represent various demographic characteristics within the participating companies—i.e. gender, marriage/family status, occupations—that previous research has shown influences the meanings of masculinity and the behaviors among men (Connell 1987, 2001; Dellinger 2002; Dozier 2005; Ezzell 2008; Little 2002; Mumby and Ashcraft 2006; Pyke 1996; Schrock and Schwalbe 2009; Taylor 2005).

My genuine interest in each participant’s life helped me maximize validity. I built trust reflexively, and the relationships I developed with my participants allowed me to access their work site, trainings, and even their homes (Maxwell 2005). Cultivating these relationships required a considerable amount of personal and professional investment, meaning I made myself available to them twenty-four hours of the day, seven days a week. These relationships are the crux of my reflexive research design, and because my initial meetings with gatekeepers and key informants were treated with the utmost care, I was able to collaboratively generate knowledge valuable for participants and this study (Brydon-Miller 2001).
Methods of Data Collection

The data collection period for this study was November 2011–February 2012. I selected a qualitative approach because it captures rich details on how organizational structures and occupational cultures structure masculinity among oilfield workers. Semi-structured interviews and observations are the two data collection methods. Triangulating these methods of data collection reduces this study’s chance of systematic biases; it also solidifies the validity of this study’s findings (Maxwell 2005). Each interview occurred using a constant comparative approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967). This approach uses a “zig zag” process whereby the researcher collects data, scrutinizes it, and returns to the field to supplement theoretical themes or the categories from which the sample was drawn (Creswell 2007). Finally, I finished collecting data once saturation was reached—information gleaned no longer provided new themes or theoretical relevance to categories (Creswell 2007; Glaser and Strauss 1967).

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with thirty-three transient oilfield workers were the primary method of data collection. Interviews with this study’s participants provide concrete descriptions of organizational structures and occupational cultures, and information on masculine performances (Weis 1994). Semi-structured interviews allowed me to capitalize on the strengths of structured data collection methods such as ascertaining differences among or between occupational categories (across individuals),
times, and settings. Further, I also utilized unstructured approaches, including probing, which allowed multiple meanings of masculinity to emerge (Maxwell 2005). Unstructured probes were helpful for determining emergent themes on how masculinity is structured through the hierarchical structure, work day, and work place policies, and how men construct masculinity within the occupational community. Interviews ranged between 40 and 180 minutes; they averaged 90 minutes.

The interview guide for this study was informed by the theoretical and conceptual lenses provided by previous research(ers), theory and discussions with members of my committee (Creswell 2007). First, previous research and theory on masculinity were instrumental for designing interview questions—Ely and Meyerson’s (2010) study, and contact with Robin Ely aided this study’s design, research protocols and instruments. In addition to gaining access and sampling, contact with scholars who previously studied energy workers allowed me to more fully interact with the literature and their methods of data collection. Most of the interview questions used in this study were from Ely and Meyerson’s (2010) study of offshore oil platform workers, but I adapted them to the onshore, Marcellus context.

Testing these questions in the onshore context provides a reliability check on how masculinity is structured and constructed in the oilfield. This approach also provides useful information for generalizing between onshore and offshore contexts. Second, I refined my interview guide while working in consultation with my dissertation committee. Several members provided advice and warnings on the framing of interview questions. See Appendix B for the interview guide used in this study.
Ideally, all interviews would have taken place in person; although, out of necessity, most were conducted over the phone. Telephone interviews accommodated the worker’s rigorous work and travel schedules. On many occasions I traded contact information with workers during field visits, but because they were working, I was unable to interview them during their tower. Because the majority of my participants lived out-of-state, within two hours of their hitch ending, they were on a plane home. Face-to-face interviews took place in public venues, such as restaurants, bars, recreation halls and truck stops; and private spaces such as offices, company headquarters, and the private residences of participants. All interviews were conducted with each participant’s consent, audio recorded and transcribed verbatim to provide an accurate record of the interview. Additionally, during each interview, field notes and jottings were taken to capture reflexive knowledge, feelings, emotions and nonverbal cues before, during and after each interview (Maxwell 2005).

Observations

As the research instrument in this qualitative study, my eyes and ears were important tools for ascertaining the meanings ascribed to interpersonal relationships within the lives of transient gas workers (Maxwell 2005). I used observations at work (drilling sites or training sessions) and in public (local eateries, pubs and restaurants) to supplement interview data. I conducted seven observations: four in public, two on drilling

---

5 Tower: pronounced “tour” is the term use for shift.
sites and one during a health and safety training course I attended. These observations were useful for understanding how the lives of oilfield men were structured and constructed through the theoretical lens provided by previous work on masculinity, and through self-reflexive perceptions. Observations were largely unstructured and consisted of “hanging out” in bars, temporary residences, stores, and work sites for “incidental observations,” and what appeared to be “casual conversations” (Maxwell 2005: 79). The information I gathered during my observations emerged from individuals and each context observed. These patterns provided insight into how structure enabled and constrained masculinity among men at Magna-Drill.

**Work Sites**

Work sites were the most important location to observe how Magna-Drill structured masculinity. These observations were useful for understanding workplace performances of masculinity (Dellinger 2004). Observations were an effective strategy used by Collinson (1999) when he discovered how an invisible masculine structure, reinforced by the organization, prevented men from using the company’s health and safety policies. And later, a similar approach led Ely and Meyerson (2010) to conclude that undoing conventional masculinity was possible when the organizational structure supported occupational and individual efforts to undo the traditional masculinities observed in Collinson’s study. Building upon the knowledge of previous research, this study’s observations were helpful for understanding the interrelationship among organizational structures and occupational cultures and how they enable and constrain
manhood acts among Magna-Drill employees (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009; Schwalbe 2005).

**Public Spaces**

In addition to observing the workplace, I also observed my participants while we were in public spaces. The work of previous researchers helped frame possible observable moments. For instance, knowledge of body reflexivity (Connell 1995); bodily control, conversational cockfighting (Campbell 2000); tolerance for drunkenness through ‘drinking fitness,’ and holding skills (Leyshon 2005) were sensitizing constructs helpful for understanding how the lives of oilfield workers were structured and constructed. I was also mindful of other behaviors, such as positioning within certain locations and understanding the meanings associated with these locations for men. Through observations of space, I paid attention to prime and marginalized locations, because understanding how men were integrated, relegated, and ostracized from masculine statuses and places provided additional information on masculinity and hierarchy.

**Recording Observations**

Because my observations were largely “unstructured,” I was conscious of my note taking, although participants knew I was a researcher. Overall, they were open to my questions and “nosiness.” I feel my on-site jottings were seen as natural, and I believe my note taking was minimally invasive. During observations, my field notes and jottings
captured behaviors and conversations—I expanded upon these notes by creating more detailed narratives (of people, positions, moods and events) at my earliest convenience (Emerson et al. 1995). Further, field notes contained key phrases (industry terminology and ‘native language’), quotes and key words (Lofland and Lofland 1995).

Ideally, direct field observations of workers would have occurred at home, at work, and in public; however, the predominantly out-of-state workforce, time and financial constraints of this project eliminated this possibility—it is a major reason why this project focuses on how occupational structures and organizational cultures enable and constrain masculinity at work. More importantly, observations at work and in public were more vital for understanding this study’s central research question, because work plays a pivotal role in a man’s masculine identity. This also helped my interpretation of how the masculine structures and constructions may contribute to a worker’s sense of masculinity within the domestic sphere, and on social disruption because these men work in Marcellus communities inundated with other oilfield workers.

When compared with interview data, these observations and conversations helped uncover invisible meanings, deception or impression management by participants (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Sharing my observation notes and thoughts with participants provided a validity check because I was able to reconcile differences or understand the reasoning behind certain structures or constructions.
I transformed the data in three steps: description, analysis, and interpretation (Wolcott 1994). Within these three steps a number of qualitative techniques may be used to transform the data, and I matched my techniques to address this study’s central research question. Careful examination of the data provided me information on how to most accurately transform the data and understand the central research question. All data were transformed using NVivo Qualitative Software using first cycle and second cycle coding procedures (Saldaña 2009).

**Description**

The first step in my description process was initiated during the data collection phase: the *constant comparative* approach or “theoretical sample” (Glaser and Strauss 1967) helped me build relevant categories (departments) and properties (participants). I expanded upon these initial categories using the first cycle procedure commonly known as Attribute Coding—documenting descriptors such as demographic characteristics of the participants, useful for future data management and reference (Miles and Huberman 1994; Saldaña 2009). This process incorporated the emergent and reflexive design of grounded theory and avoided using pre-determined categories because they were unknown at the study’s inception. I use the following substantive categories for attribute coding: company, job title, marital status and gender. The distribution is represented in Table 5-1.
These categories added depth to the *single-case analyses*, allowing me to make comparisons within each descriptive criterion: company, job title, marital status, residency (Pennsylvania resident, out-of-state resident, Pennsylvania transfer), and gender (Creswell 2007). These comparisons also allow for richer detail on how structures enable and constrain constructions of masculinity. Further, this allows for internal generalizations on masculine behavior within each substantive category.

**Analysis**

Transforming the data using analysis helps uncover the experiences of each participant and their interpretation of events. When considered individually and in comparison to other participants, these findings are the most informative to understanding how organizational structures enable and constrain constructions of masculinity at work (Wolcott 1994). To do this, I followed several coding procedures that enabled me to dissect the data and reduce elements into manageable units. Each coding procedure followed the common sequence among studies using a theoretical sampling design.

First, I began using a first cycle coding method called Holistic Coding. This approach helps retain basic themes and captures important issues in the data (Dey 1993). As opposed to line-by-line coding, this approach lumps data into major categories or themes, thereby consolidating information into more manageable units. The themes identified and used in the coding structure for this round of analysis were determined at the outset of the study, from reviewing the literature, during pilot interviews, and as the study progressed. I use the following major themes to understand masculinity during
Holistic Coding: *Dirty Work, Family, Occupational Community, Organizational Structure*, and a *General* category. As a preparatory approach for additional first and second cycle coding procedures, Holistic Coding set the groundwork for future thematic coding (Saldaña 2009).

Next, I used the first cycle approach, Initial Coding to build from the Holistic Codes. Charmaz argues this approach allows the researcher to “. . . remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your readings of the data” (Charmaz 2006: 46). The themes identified and used in the coding structure for this phase of the analysis are broken down by each Holistic Code—*Dirty Work*: Black gold, Environmental Harm, Oil Field Trash, Public Perceptions; *Family*: Work-Family Conflict; *Occupational Community*: Membership Rules, Relationships, Communication (including verbal communication and nonverbal actions), Family Atmosphere, Undoing Roughneck Traditions; *Occupational Structure*: Follow Operating Procedures, Cooperation not Competition, Good Employer, Good Money, Hard Work, Health and Safety, Length of Tower, Time Off; *General*: Mean to be a man, Job Description.

These codes allow me to break the data into parts and compare them across participants. By using this approach, I was able to account for the nuances in this data and the population, and understand how they pertain to the research question (Saldaña 2009). This approach complements the subsequent second cycle coding procedures because it serves as a foundation for future theoretical findings (Glaser 1978).

The third phase of data analysis moved beyond first cycle coding procedures, and utilized Focused Coding—a second cycle approach useful for developing major themes from the data (Saldaña 2009). Here I was able to use *multiple-case comparisons* to
compare themes across participants and substantive categories—job title, family/marital status, gender. Complementing this study’s design, the Focused Coding approach relies on emergent information; therefore, categories were constructed and reorganized as important themes emerged from the data (Glaser 1978). The following themes emerged from this phase of analysis and were used in the coding structure and write-up:

Organizational Structure—health and safety policies structure ‘what it means to be a man’; Family—the breadwinning and caregiving norms conflict; Occupational Community—reinforces alternative forms of masculinity and allows men to fulfill their caregiving roles (among their coworkers, “brothers”); Dirty Work—stigma and negative public perceptions of oilfield workers contribute to their identity, and the solidification of the occupational community.

**Interpretation**

The interpretive process for this study draws on two of Wolcott’s interpretation approaches. I turn to theory and connect with professional/personal experience because this study is theoretically oriented, and these approaches allow me to expand my analysis without extending too far beyond my data or professional experience (Wolcott 1994). These two techniques advance this study’s implications for men, masculinity, oilfield work, and social disruption by combining descriptions and analyses with theoretical insight, and my professional field experience interviewing community residents and local Marcellus Shale community stakeholders. In Chapter 6, my interpretation examines how
masculine performances may manifest as social transgressions (drinking, drug use, violence), which may manifest as social disruption in Marcellus Shale communities.

To extend this study’s contribution, I use theories that conceptualize men (e.g. Bell 2000; Campbell 2000; Cooper 2000; Connell 1993, 1995, 2009; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Kimmel 2006) to inform the interpretation process of how masculinity, when enabled and constrained by organizational structure, may influence the ways men do masculinity in communities undergoing rapid energy development. The universal conceptualization of men in competition with each other served to enhance this study’s breadth by explaining how occupational communities foster collectivist goals and cooperation around health and safety, rather than competition, bravado, and independence.

My final self-reflexive effort was to acknowledge that it is impossible to sever my interpretations from my four years of personal and professional exposure to Marcellus Shale topics (Wolcott 1994). My field experiences and opportunities to document events as an “I-witness” (Geertz 1988: 73) have enabled me to personalize each self-reflexive interpretation: first, to describe the masculinities among oilfield workers as I understand it through my professional and personal experiences; second, to describe how the research experience has affected me (Van Maanen 2011). Undoubtedly, gathering data during fieldwork with community members and now understanding the “other” side of energy development through the perceptions and lived experiences of oilfield men has changed my perspective on energy workers and social disruption. In the next section, I use the self-reflexive “Impressionist Tale” and offer my final thoughts on gas workers, social disruption, and energy development (Van Mannen 2011).
The impetus for this study emerged out of my previous interviews and casual conversations with hundreds of key-informants, community leaders and Pennsylvania residents. During fieldwork, participants often blamed ‘those guys’ for social disruption. It is impossible to sever my interpretations of this work from my four years of personal and professional exposure to Marcellus Shale topics (Wolcott 1994). From 2009 until today my “I-witness” (Geertz 1988: 73) fieldwork with community residents has taught me that ‘those guys’ threaten Pennsylvania’s rural communities: those guys are criminals, deviants, sexually promiscuous (STD carrying miscreants) men here to destroy communities and the natural environment. This project challenged my perspective on energy development and oilfield workers. It empowered me to see these workers through a new lens. When I began this project, I feared ‘those guys.’ I too, believed (shamefully now) ‘those guys’ were nothing but oilfield trash.

I was not a member of their in-group, but they permitted me to access Magna-Drill. There were no conditions, something that surprised me after failing to secure access with thirty-seven companies. ‘Those guys’ were welcoming, but they wanted to convey a clear message: the oilfield has changed. They allowed me to examine their lives, and illuminate how companies and workers vary within the oilfield. Many of these men wanted to sever their ties with the ‘bad boy’ old school oilfield image. This reframing allows them to sever themselves from the broader industry’s dirty past (Ashforth et al. 2007), and frees them from confining hyper-masculine structures and constructions that impede their development as men. I had a genuine connection to these men, because in a
state of self-reflexivity I have a gender; I too am a man, and I have felt many of the pressures I observed and heard ‘those guys’ describe (Middleton 1992). I feel our connection as men, and in many cases our socialization into traditionally male endeavors such as outdoor recreation (fishing, hiking, boating, etc.) benefited my legitimacy as a man, but also my credibility as a researcher. Within Magna-Drill’s structure, I was one of the guys—not an oilfield man, but one of the guys.

We worked in different occupations, but our identities were intertwined with our occupations and our work ethics (Dellinger 2004; Kimmel 2006). Oilfield men are invisible doing and undoing constructions of masculinity—undoing among Magna-Drill employees (Connell 2001). Unfortunately, many (including myself before this study) stigmatized ‘those guys.’ The lives of these men are rich with examples of decency. ‘Those guys’ are fathers, brothers, sons, coworkers, and neighbors—but foremost, they are men. Within all these contexts, these men face challenges, some insurmountable.

The oilfield is plagued by a bad reputation and dirty image—accidents are bound to happen, and the physically, socially and morally “dirty work” labels restrict alternative understandings of these men (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999). These men are judged on the failures of other companies—the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill, the recent Deep Water Horizon spill, and numerous other infractions. But more than anything, these guys are doing a job and a gender that can have devastating effects on a man’s sense of self (Mackenzie et al. 2006; Risman 2009).

This project has changed my perspective of oilfield workers and energy development, but also my perspective on social disruption within natural resource-based communities developing energy resources. This study affected me on a personal and
professional level (Van Maanen 2011). I initially viewed energy development only through a social disruption lens, whereby residents from communities experiencing development shaped my reality of how energy development differentially affects the population. Undoubtedly, gathering data during fieldwork with community members and now understanding the “other” side of social disruption through the perceptions and lived experiences of oilfield men has changed my perspective on energy workers and social disruption.

**Validation**

My first technique for establishing validity was an extensive review of the literature. This study was built upon a strong empirical and theoretical framework—I couch this study’s research design in previous research and theory. Methodologically, I created my interview guide after discussions with my committee and experts in masculinity, energy and organizational research. Additionally, the theoretical and conceptual lenses provided by previous research were also influential when developing my interview guide (Creswell 2007).

Further, by triangulating my data collection techniques, semi-structured interviews and observations reduced this study’s chances of systematic biases (Maxwell 2005). Because this study uses a gatekeeper and key informants, “key informant bias” is a risk (Pelto and Pelto 1975: 7). To reduce the likelihood that my sample was confined to participants with atypical views (key informant bias), I used purposive, theoretical sampling—in addition to snowball sampling—to represent heterogeneity in the
population, or typical workers (Maxwell 2005). To ensure the patterns, themes, categories and subcategories derived from the analysis and interpretation processes were accurate, I used *member checking* by maintaining face-to-face, phone and email dialogue with Magna-Drill’s department heads, other study participants and dissertation committee members (Creswell 2007; Miles and Huberman 1994). Through email, face-to-face conversations and phone communication, I have been sharing my notes and thoughts as I solidify my findings and conclusions. Finally, the self-reflexive interpretation process where I acknowledge my views, biases and experiences within each situation (Creswell 2007), instead of eliminating my reflexive influence, was critical for understanding how I became part of the social world I was studying (Maxwell 2005).

**Reliability**

My steps to strengthen this study’s research design also serve to enhance the reliability and replicability of my findings. By constructing a well-defined research process, future researchers have a roadmap for recreating this study and testing it in similar or dissimilar contexts. Because this dissertation is an individual research exercise, I was unable to use inter-coder agreement with other researchers to ensure the transferability of interpretive codes (Miles and Huberman 1994). However, because I used a grounded theoretical coding approach, member checks with study participants not only reinforced validity, but also supported the transferability of my findings. Participants often made linkages between categories and subcategories for me (see Northcutt and McCoy 2004), thereby assisting with the coding process, but careful field notes and
NVivo coding complement this process. My findings rely on this study’s emergent design, and while this does not eliminate the subjectivity of my interpretive coding process, the most beneficial inter-coding members were my study participants (Corbin and Strauss 1990). Testing these questions in the onshore context provided a reliability check within the oil and gas industry, and gleaned information pertinent for generalizing between onshore and offshore contexts.

**Generalizability**

This study’s small, nonprobability convenience sample may, at first blush, seem incapable of establishing external generalizability, but the high transferability of workers among companies does lend support for the representativeness of this study’s findings. However, as I later argue: organizational structures and occupational cultures were strong determinants on how masculinity is structured among energy workers; therefore, findings may have “face generalizability,” meaning there is no reason to believe these findings do not apply to other companies or workers (Maxwell 2005). Therefore external generalizability is most likely among companies with a similar organizational structure and occupational culture. This study does strive to establish internal generalizability within Magna-Drill. The purposive, theoretical and snowball sampling techniques were beneficial for representing the various job titles and demographics within these two companies, and Focused Coding supported this effort.
Ethical Issues

This study complied with all federal, state, and local regulations and guidelines administered by The Pennsylvania State University’s Office for Research Protections.⁶ All interviews were conducted with each participant’s consent, kept confidential, and all quotations are reported anonymously. Pseudonyms were used for company names, and participants consenting to interviews and observations (Creswell 2007). The privacy and anonymity of this study’s participants have been my primary responsibility as a researcher. I am the only one with access to the identities and contact information of this study’s participants, each company’s identity and their locations of operation. The goal of this study was to conduct a thorough investigation and accurately represent the lives of transient oilfield workers in the Marcellus Shale region, while doing no harm to research participants.

⁶ Pennsylvania State University, Office of Human Protections Number: 35929
Chapter 5

Findings

Description: Organizational Structure

Broader levels of social organization—economic system, oil and gas industry—affect masculinity at the interpersonal level; however, my findings focus on Magna-Drill’s organizational structure and how the company shapes masculinity. Magna-Drill’s organizational structure reinforces the masculine norm of domesticity perpetuated by the economic system. Similar to other oilfield companies, Magna-Drill reinforces the industry’s masculinized structure and culture (Britton 1997; Connell 1987) by employing men to work on their drilling sites. Drilling oil and gas wells is heavy, physical, dirty work: man’s work.

The theoretical and snowball sampling strategy helped me understand Magna-Drill’s organizational structure. This approach allowed me to sample employees within each job category at Magna-Drill’s Marcellus Regional Headquarters, and understand the company’s hierarchical structure. The company’s corporate headquarters oversees several regional “field” offices, where field managers oversee drilling contracts. These managers also serve as liaisons between Magna-Drill’s regional field operations and corporate headquarters.
Table 5-1 outlines the participants in this study’s sample. I included participants from pilot interviews and participants from Coburn, a production gas company that hires Magna-Drill to drill oil and gas wells. The pilot interviews and interviews with Coburn employees were integral to the design of this study; however, my dissertation predominantly describes the participants from the case under investigation: Magna-Drill. I used five attributes to describe the sample: company, job title, marital status, residence, and gender. I selected these attributes to cover all occupations within Magna-Drill, and understand the domestic statuses, residential patterns and genders of participants at the company and in my sample. I categorize participants by their sector in the company: management, health and safety, maintenance, rig crew.
Table 5-1: Description of Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MagnaDrill Management</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Reisdence</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operations Manager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>PA Transfer</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DrillingMiddleManager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>PA Transfer</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MaintenanceSuper</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>PA Transfer</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DrillingSuper1</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>PA Transfer</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HSESuper</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>PA Transfer</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Health & Safety         | HSERep                           | Married        | Out-of-State| Male   |
|                         | HSERep2                          | Married        | Out-of-State| Male   |
|                         | HSERep3                          | Married        | Out-of-State| Male   |

| Maintenance             | LeadMechanic                     | Married        | PA Transfer | Male   |
|                         | FieldMechanic1                   | Divorced       | PA Resident | Male   |
|                         | FieldMechanic2                   | Divorced       | PA Resident | Male   |
|                         | FieldMechanic3                   | Married        | PA Resident | Male   |
|                         | FieldMechanic4                   | Married        | PA Resident | Male   |
|                         | FieldElectrician1                | Single         | PA Resident | Male   |
|                         | FieldElectrician2                | Married        | PA Resident | Male   |

| Rig Crew                | DrillingRigManager1              | Married        | Out-of-State| Male   |
|                         | DrillingRigManager2              | Divorced       | Out-of-State| Male   |
|                         | Driller1                         | Married        | Out-of-State| Male   |
|                         | MotorHand                        | Married        | Out-of-State| Male   |
|                         | DerrickHand                      | Married        | Out-of-State| Male   |
|                         | FloorHand1                       | Married        | Out-of-State| Male   |
|                         | FloorHand2                       | Married        | Out-of-State| Male   |

| Pilot Management        | SubDistrictManage                | Married        | PA Resident | Male   |
|                         | SubUpperManage                   | Married        | PA Transfer | Male   |

| FieldWorker             | DerrickMan1                      | Single         | PA Resident | Male   |
|                         | FracFieldSuper                   | Married        | PA Transfer | Male   |
|                         | Pipeliner1                       | Married        | PA Resident | Male   |
|                         | WellSiteGeologist                | Single         | PA Resident | Male   |

| Coburn Management       | ProductDrillingManager           | Married        | PA Transfer | Male   |
|                         | Engineer                         | Married        | PA Transfer | Male   |
|                         | EnviroSuper                      | Married        | PA Resident | Male   |
|                         | ProductEngineer                  | Widowed        | PA Transfer | Female |

| FieldWorker             | CompanyMan                       | Married        | PA Transfer | Male   |
Management officials include an Operations Manager, a middle manager, and superintendents responsible for three specific fields: Drilling, Health and Safety, and Maintenance. Magna-Drill’s management officials were all married, at the time of this study, although several have been divorced in the past. These men moved to Pennsylvania from other regions of the country to oversee Magna-Drill’s Marcellus Region field office. All managers, except for the Operations Manager, have a four-year college degree; the operations manager worked his way up the hierarchy during a thirty-plus year oilfield career.

Health and Safety Representatives (HSE Reps) were all married at the time of data collection. These men are out-of-state residents with paramedics training. Three HSE Representatives participated in this study. Maintenance workers include Mechanics and Electricians—five Mechanics and two Electricians participated in the study. Six of the seven are Pennsylvania residents, one transferred to Pennsylvania from the south. All six Pennsylvania mechanics and electricians have one, or at the most, two years of oilfield experience. These men have backgrounds working on other types of heavy machinery. One electrician is single, four are married, and two are divorced—these men were divorced prior to oilfield employment. Five positions comprise the “Rig Crew” category: Drilling Rig Manager, Driller, Motor Hand, Derrick Hand and Floor Hand. The Drillers, Motor Hands, Derrick Hands and Floor Hands work on the drilling rigs, while the Rig Managers are onsite supervisors. These men are all from out-of-state, and participate in fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) labor. All of these men, but for a Rig Manager, were married at the time of this study. The sample includes two Rig Managers, one Motor Hand, one Derrick Hand and two Floor Hands. I included two Rig Managers because
they are supervisors, and I wanted to understand the experiences of top ranking rig crewmembers—two Floor Hands were included to understand the experiences of entry-level workers.

**Hierarchical Structure**

Magna-Drill designates one Operations Manager to oversee drilling, health and safety, and maintenance in each region. Workers within these three branches fulfill specialized roles in during the drilling process. Drilling Superintendents oversee multiple rigs and maintain a relationship with the operator (the gas company holding the lease and contracting Magna-Drill). Rig Managers are responsible for direct on-site supervision, ordering supplies and communicating with the operator’s onsite representative, known as the “company man.” Next, drilling crews comprise four positions: Driller, Motor Hand, Derrick Hand, and two Floor Hands. As stated by the title, the rig’s Driller runs the controls and directly supervises the rig crew. The Motor Hand and Derrick Hand occupy equal ranks, but each has specific tasks. Derrick Hands work the derrick: positioning pipe into stands during “tripping operations” and monitoring the mud pumps to ensure the proper viscosity. Motor Hands are responsible for maintaining machinery such as water pumps and steam lines, but during the drilling process and while tripping pipe, they run the ST-80—a machine used to make pipe connections and breaks. Floor Hands are general laborers responsible for cleaning, positioning pipe for connections and breaks, and other necessities.
Participants describe health and safety as a major component of the drilling process; in fact, they emphasize personal and environmental safety as their priority. The Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Superintendent oversees several HSE Field Representatives who monitor drilling sites for safety violations. These representatives are assigned several drilling sites where they observe and instruct Magna-Drill’s drilling crewmembers, mechanics and electricians, and third-party employees on how to safely complete their daily assignments. HSE Reps must also ensure third-party employees abide by Magna-Drill’s safety standards while they work during a Magna-Drill contract. HSE Reps are charged with teaching a Health & Safety Orientation class for the company’s newly hired employees. Lastly, HSE Representatives perform random drug tests, and tend to minor injuries if someone gets hurt.

The Maintenance Superintendent oversees the Maintenance Department. This branch of Magna-Drill stocks and manages an extensive supply of tools and equipment to keep Magna-Drill’s rigs running. Mechanics and electricians are the fieldworkers responsible for completing routine service checks, they must also respond to emergency repairs.
Table 5-2: Magna-Drill’s Hierarchical Structure

Work Day

Magna-Drill’s organizational structure conforms to the masculinized oil and gas industry—workers endure long hours, shift work, physically demanding labor, and transience (Collinson 1999). Most drilling contractors require a 12-hour day or a “tower” (pronounced tour) for fieldworkers. This workday and the 24/7 schedule necessitates
workers be on hand for lengthy periods of time (Collinson 1999). The “hitch” work schedule predominates. The length of a hitch varies. For example, some companies require a 28-day hitch, and 14 days off, while others (like Magna Drill) require a 14-day hitch and 14 days off for drilling crews and Rig Managers. The hitch schedule provides equal work and time off for drilling crews. Therefore employees generally work six months per year. Workers favor this schedule, a Floor Hand comments,

> Uh, you’re busy for two weeks and then you got two weeks off, I mean it’s a part time job with full time pay, with benefits and I believe I wouldn’t be able to take time off or make the same amount of money if I was working a regular nine to five job.

Each site employs two drilling crews to work the two shifts: the night tower (12 hours) and the day tower (12 hours). Although workers are scheduled for 12-hour towers, they are on call for the duration of their hitch; therefore if an emergency should occur, it’s “all hands on deck.” Therefore, workers have rigid, inflexible schedules.

The length of the hitch work schedule varies within Magna Drill. Maintenance crewmembers (Electricians and Mechanics) work a 14/7 hitch, and 12-hour towers—14 days on and seven days off. Maintenance crewmembers are also on call 24 hours a day during their hitch because rigs frequently require routine and emergency maintenance. Maintenance crewmembers average 85-95 hours in a typical workweek, 180 hours per tower. When asked why the hitch for maintenance crews differs from drilling crews, the Lead Mechanic explained:

> I think it has a lot more to do with retaining people if things slow down. You know, like if we were to go from, 13 rigs to 2 rigs overnight, which in
a downturn that can happen pretty quickly. They don’t want to have to lay off a bunch of skilled workers.

Not all contract-drilling companies employ a Maintenance Department; some sub-contract this work to service companies who specialize in drilling rig repairs. However, middle managers at Magna-Drill believe employing knowledgeable electricians and mechanics increases productivity and safety because the company can replace dangerous equipment at little cost, proactively address issues before they arise and tackle unforeseen problems when they do. Magna-Drill keeps a log of each rig’s maintenance record: each repair made, upcoming scheduled maintenance, and the workers who have done the repairs.

Middle managers work Monday - Friday, predominantly in the office, although they occasionally make site visits to speak with their crews and observe a drilling operation. Magna-Drill’s office is open for ‘standard business hours,’ but each manager’s workload determines their work schedule. Because drilling operations run 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, problems may arise after standard business hours, so middle managers are always on call. The HSE Supervisor states: “I don’t have a 8-5 job, it’s 24/7. I carry my cell phone with me everywhere I go, can’t be without it.”

The work schedules of middle managers, drilling crews and maintenance crews provide or require different living options. Hitch scheduling among drilling crews enables trained men from outside the Marcellus Shale region ample travel time to and from the worksite (Fahys-Smith 1983; Lovejoy and Little 1979; Wieland et al. 1979). At the time of this study, Magna-Drill was covering the travel costs for drilling crews, because of an
inadequate pool of qualified local workers. During a conversation with the Operations Manager, he stated the company spends approximately $350,000 per month transporting out-of-state workers to and from the Marcellus region. Therefore, training local workers would relieve the company of overhead. Typically, with the exception of offshore operations, travel costs are each worker’s responsibility. Trained workers have experience working throughout the US, abroad, and offshore, so the 14/14 hitch schedule allows drilling crew members to “commute” to work on their final day off, and return home on their first day off. The 14/14 schedule provides out-of-state workers twelve full days off. Magna-Drill employees described their preference to work in emerging ‘plays,’ because of job opportunities and higher wages. Generally wages are higher in emerging plays because qualified local workers are scarce.

Similar to drilling crewmembers, some electricians and maintenance workers were still commuting to the Marcellus region for work, but at the time of data collection, Magna-Drill predominantly employed local workers with the proper experience and certifications to service their rigs. Some out-of-state workers did move to the Marcellus region, because the wages and ample work opportunities were far more appealing than what was available in their previous location. However, this trend is rare. Typically, wages decline once locals are trained to work in this industry. When this occurs, wage incentives for out-of-state workers diminish. Additionally, mechanics and electricians work 14 day towers and receive 7 days off, meaning out-of-state workers must travel on two of their five days off; this further reduces the FIFO work pattern’s benefit for maintenance crewmembers.
Unlike drilling and maintenance crews, middle managers do not have the option to travel or relocate. Middle managers must maintain direct and indirect supervision, therefore the company requires them to move to the Marcellus region. Unlike employees who work a hitch schedule, managers are scheduled for 5 days on and 2 days off. Managers who work in the region must relocate and reside in close proximity to the office.

Workplace Policies

The work schedule is one way the organization’s structure enables and constrains the lives of workers—health and safety policies/procedures are others. Magna-Drill’s managers prioritize safety and productivity. The company’s organizational structure ensures safety by undoing traditional constructions of what it means to be a ‘roughneck.’ In fact, the company no longer uses this term, exchanging it for the position’s official title: Floor Hand. This change may seem miniscule; however, it exemplifies how the company structures communication among its workers: the organizational structure subordinates frontier masculinities (Connell 1986, 1995), or what I call roughneck masculinities. Yelling, cussing, and any demeaning banter is prohibited. The verbal abuse and physical aggression reported in previous oilfield studies—the stereotypical communication among roughnecks—is prohibited, and may result in termination. Similar to Ely and Meyerson’s (2010) findings, Magna-Drill strives to make their worksites ‘friendly’ places to work. They emphasize teamwork and cooperation, rather than competition and dominance. Employees at Magna-Drill work together, as this Floor Hand
explained: “[If] you see someone doing something, and you’re not already busy, you always go over and make sure they don’t need help. Somebody is always there to assist you, no matter what.” During a drilling site observation, I witnessed a Floor Hand tell his Drilling Rig Manager that ‘the boys’ were having trouble adjusting a piece of equipment. This supervisor left his office and after an hour, he came back covered from head to toe in oil. I asked him what had happened and he said, “Sometimes you have to show these guys how to do something, and that means you absorb a gallon of oil.” The Drilling Rig Manager became the butt of a few jokes, but when he left the room to change, the Drilling Superintendent and Operations Manager made it clear that this was an example of what they meant by cooperation onsite. They expressed how working together, rather than competing against one’s coworkers, enhanced health and safety, because workers—no matter their title—chip-in and help each other, rather than trying to complete dangerous jobs alone.

Magna-Drill promotes collective goals by requiring Rig Managers to assign new hires a “mentor,” or someone the new hire can ‘shadow.’ Each mentor must teach Magna-Drill’s new employees the position’s procedures and job responsibilities. This approach also bolsters safety on site. As an additional safety precaution, the new hire must wear a yellow hard hat—a different colored hat from the rest of the crew. This makes him more visible to Magna-Drill employees and third party crews. The mentoring system emphasizes the company’s collective goals, because employees are not encouraged to compete with each other, but rather, help each other advance.
Health & Safety

The company’s emphasis on safety creates a sense of pride, and an expectation that performing under safe working conditions will ensure future drilling contracts. Magna-Drill employees see their employer as the industry leader, and embrace contributing to the company’s competitive edge. This organizational structure is ‘undoing’ conventionally masculine constructions of masculinity within the oil and gas industry (Butler 2004). Similar to Ely and Meyerson’s (2010) findings, Magna-Drill promotes an alternative (safe) discourse on manhood—safely completing a job together, rather than proving one’s self-dominance redefine masculinity. This structure descends levels of social organization and shapes the interpersonal level. Previous research documents how oil and gas workers once took pride in out-competing their coworkers (See Barrett 1996; Collinson 1999; Desmond 2007; Eveline and Booth 2002); however, Magna-Drill employees take pride in their ability to out compete rival companies for contracts because their safety record far exceeds their competitors, affording them the distinction of most efficient drillers in the business.

Add all that up, definitely out of the 6 companies I worked for this is by far the best company and the safest company, our safety record shows that we’re the greatest contractor out here. –Driller

This rig here has gone 5 years without any OSHA reportable and I believe we’re almost 2 years without an LTI. 7 –Rig Manager

Those are the two biggest factors out here—it doesn’t matter how fast we can drill a well or…or how good we can look, none of this is going to look any good if we can’t protect ourselves and our environment. –Operations Manager

7 LTI—Lost Time Incident
Previous studies document how managers once perceived safety policies as impediments to production and profit (Hirschhorn and Young 1993; Wicks 1993), but Magna-Drill’s managers explained that drilling at an unsafe pace can actually impede the operation’s progress, because lost time incidents (LTI) make the drilling process more challenging. Injuries force crews to work short-handed. This may cost service companies contracts, especially among large operators concerned about their own safety records. Magna-Drill’s HSE Reps stress, their rules are “written in blood,” meaning employees got hurt in the past, and the current rules/regulations prevent workers from operating in the same manner. To reinforce these rules, drilling crews and maintenance crews have meetings before every shift. Drilling crews meet with their Rig Manager on site, but maintenance crews are dispersed throughout the region, so these meetings generally occur over the phone. The daily meetings cover the day’s work, documentation from the previous shift, and it opens a dialogue on the day’s plans and procedures for tackling them. In addition to the daily meetings, crews meet weekly for Formal Safety Training to address emergent problems and strategies for mitigating threats.

To supplement these trainings, workers are required to complete “Prevent Cards” at the end of each hitch. These cards document when employees witness or prevent a Magna-Drill employee, third party employee, or production company employee from using improper technique, equipment, or other worksite violations. Magna-Drill’s corporate headquarters collects Prevent Cards to record and chronicle the safety record of each rig—internationally, domestically, and offshore. During an interview with a third-party employee who has experience working on Magna-Drill’s sites, he expressed
skepticism in the Prevent Cards’ effectiveness. He believed they are “dog-housed,” meaning many are forged at the end of the tower (work day). I asked the HSE Super about this and he acknowledged that some were “dog-housed,” but he stressed: “At least they are thinking about it, at least safety is on their mind . . . It is a proven stat that the rigs with the higher number of Prevent Cards had less injuries.”

Magna-Drill’s emphasis on safety and the collectivist goals benefit from the importance they place on leadership. To further develop the leadership capabilities of the company’s supervisors, Magna-Drill requires managers to attend leadership classes. Drillers, Rig Managers, Superintendents and Operations Managers attend annual and bi-annual leadership classes that instruct them on how to supervise and communicate effectively with employees.

**Drug Policy**

Previous research documented the risks and hazards men endured when working on competitive drilling rigs (Collinson 1999; Fine 1996; Wicks 2002). These risks were compounded by the seemingly pervasive acceptance of drugs. A Magna-Drill Floor Hand describes his impressions of the ‘old’ oilfield: “You know, you heard from people that the oilfield—it’s just a drug industry. Everybody’s drinking at work and that’s kind of the thing that I pictured in my mind.” Magna-Drill employees discussed how the industry has changed, and they embrace their employer’s zero-tolerance policy, because it eliminates some dangers from already hazardous work. A middle manager states:

And to just kinda give you an example of our dedication. We just recently added synthetic marijuana. It’s not illegal in Pennsylvania today, but it
alters your state of mind. We don’t want that. We don’t want somebody with an altered state of mind on our rig. So we added it to our drug testing line and we have fired people over it. –Middle Manager

Drug testing is frequent on a Magna-Drill worksite. Employees are subject to random urine and Breathalyzer samples. A first offense typically results in probation, and employees are terminated after they fail their second drug test. Magna-Drill employees who have worked for other contractors believe the standards for sobriety and safety are much higher at Magna-Drill than at their previous employers. In many cases, Magna-Drill’s safety record drew them to the company, because the company’s safety record ensures their health, crucial for their livelihood.

*Magna-Drill’s Distinction*

Magna-Drill’s managers believe their organizational structure differs from other companies because their company policies exceed the federal, industry, and local standards. In fact, several participants commented that OSHA’s standards “are a joke.” Admittedly, I was skeptical because previous research claims health and safety policies reduce profits and productivity (Hirschhorn and Young 1993; Wicks 2002). During my attendance at a health and safety training course, the instructor lectured two new hires about safety and money. He asked them, “Why are you here?” Both students said “money.” The instructor went on:

Right, money. The world revolves around money. So, do we care about you guys? Of course we do. Do we want you to get hurt? Of course not, but the world revolves around money. Our policies are strict because keeping you safe saves us money. I’m not going to lie to you. You’re here
to make money, so don’t fault Magna-Drill because the company is trying to make money.

While the new hires took an in-class exam on safety policies, I pulled the instructor aside and talked with him about his statement. I told him his comments surprised me. He said “They didn’t hire me to bullshit ‘em.” The company’s strategy to maximize profits and productivity means avoiding injuries and downtime, which suggests the influence of the broader legal system on the oil and gas industry as a whole and Magna-Drill’s health and safety policies. The HSE Rep teaching the course also went on to say that for many of the larger contractors, the lawsuits from employees and worker’s compensation were too much to bear because legal fees were cutting into profits. Therefore, Magna-Drill’s safety policies are also economic policies—as safety standards decrease and safety records worsen, the company may lose contracts from larger production companies.

Analysis

In this section, I describe how men perform (or ‘do’) masculinity at the interpersonal level in three domains: work, home and Marcellus communities. These behaviors do not occur in a vacuum; Magna-Drill’s organizational structure shapes the ways men construct masculinity. Work: I describe how the organizational structure promotes a specific occupational culture: a masculinized occupational community. This occupational community has four elements: (1) In-Group & Out-Group, (2) Self-Identity & Occupational Roles, (3) Social Identity & Collective Confirmation, (4) Blurring Work & Leisure. These four elements solidify collective values among workers and informally structure the ways men perform masculinity at work. Home: Participants see their
primary domestic responsibility as breadwinning. I examine differences among participants living in Pennsylvania and participants from out-of-state. Although this work provides a comfortable wage, the rigorous “hitch” work pattern, transient lifestyle and grueling work demands create work-family conflict among workers and their family members. **Marcellus Community:** I explore how inflexible work schedules restrict rig crews from entering Marcellus Communities, while crews with greater flexibility, such as HSE Reps and maintenance crewmembers experience greater periods of time and greater amounts of freedom in Marcellus communities.

**Work**

**Occupational Community**

“... a group of people who consider themselves to be engaged in the same sort of work; who identify (more or less positively) with their work; who share a set of values, norms, and perspectives that apply to, but extend beyond, work related matters; and whose social relationships meld the realms of work and leisure” (Van Maanen and Barley 1984: 295).

In this section, I discuss how Magna-Drill’s organizational structure shapes the ways men perform masculinity at work. The organizational structure fosters a *masculinized occupational community* among coworkers; thereby allowing them to ‘undo’ conventional oilfield masculinities. I examine four analytically separate elements that are connected empirically with occupational communities (Van Maanen and Barley 1984). First, I discuss how Magna-Drill employees define themselves as in-group members, while distinguishing themselves from out-groups. Second, I explore how
occupational community members derive valued identities or self-images from their occupations. Third, I explain how in-group members maintain a social identity through the support and confirmation of other members. Lastly, I show how the organization’s structure—high level of transience and confinement—blurs the lines between work and leisure.

I. In-Group & Out-Group

My discussion focuses on company-wide membership rules, and how they influence broad informal membership rules. While informal membership rules are important, they are bound to formal rules in a recursive relationship. Therefore, I explain how men adopt these rules and enforce informal rules among in-group members.

Membership presupposes employment, and to work for Magna-Drill, employees must embrace the collectivist goals of safety and performance mandated by the company. Workers are formally required to wear PPE (personal protective equipment), special flame retardant clothes, steel toe boots, hearing and eye protection, and other specialized equipment when performing particular occupational responsibilities. For Magna-Drill employees, the company’s emphasis on safety differentiates employees and the company from competitors. But like other oilfield companies, employees at Magna-Drill must informally buy-in emotionally to the work identity and nature of employment. This is an emotional investment into their work identity, but also the collective identities employees socially construct. These informal membership rules are evident in the ways men embrace daily life. In some ways, these men informally reinforce traditional oilfield
rules. Showering and sleeping arrangements are routine daily requirements affected by hegemonic masculinity. Men shower in order of rank: Drillers first, Motor Hands and Derrick Hands second, Floor Hands shower last. In the living quarters, Drillers, Motor Hands and Derrick Hands take their preferred beds (typically the bottom bunks), while Floor Hands take whatever is left. Rig crewmembers describe this as “the way it’s always been.” This evidence illustrates how conventional masculine attitudes, beliefs and behaviors still persist within Magna-Drill.

However, Magna-Drill’s organizational structure promotes collectivist goals, and this enables men to ‘undo’ the conventional masculine norms (e.g. independence, competition, bravado) found by previous oilfield research (Britton and Logan 2008; Collinson 1988; Miller 2004). This collectivist mentality fosters teamwork, instead of getting ahead independent of one’s coworkers. Magna-Drill employees work, sleep, live, and recreate together, and describe themselves as a family. Therefore, in-group members are not merely coworkers; they adhere to tighter collective identities as brothers. To become an occupational ‘family member,’ workers must embrace the aforementioned formal rules, their oilfield status and their role within the company. Workers informally control communication. A Field Electrician discusses how fieldworkers communicate and handle problems.

Magna-Drill is, they’re a pretty tight-knit group of guys. You know what I mean? Everybody seems to get along and Magna-Drill actually, I don’t know if I shouldn’t use the word but they don’t, they don’t put up with degrading somebody. If you have an issue you can tell your superiors and they’ll take care of it. You can’t just say “Hey, you, dumbass!” like that, they frown upon that.
The company’s structure enables and constrains how employees communicate with each other, but communication can differ depending upon the situation. Occasionally formal communication breaks down—a Floor Hand explains:

I did see tempers flare a couple times, I mean, when you’re cooped up with the same people for 14 days, you eat with ‘em, you sleep in the same room with ‘em, you work in the same place with them, I mean sometimes tensions flare, you know. And I mean you gotta be an adult about it, and get through it like an adult, you know.

[Interviewer] How are those tension usually dealt with?

Well, you holler and cuss at each other, and say what you want to say, and let it go. I mean that’s the way you gotta deal with ‘em.

[Interviewer] Does any of that stuff get physical, or . . .?

No, I haven’t seen nothin’ get physical, I mean, we’re all friends. Not like when you were a kid—ever get into an argument with your best friend and be mad at each other for a little while, and then be best friends again?

Workers discussed how their relationships with coworkers were built upon mutual respect, and they conveyed respect through verbal and nonverbal communication. A Rig Manager talks about the importance of conveying respect through actions and words.

[Interviewer] So what attitudes or behaviors will earn people’s respect?

Treat other’s how you want to be treated basically. That’s exactly what a lot of people out here do. Nobody wants to be hollered at or cussed at so anything like that but it, on that same note, if somebody does do something wrong, you know, not every, not every supervisor will handle things in a certain way. Me, somebody that does something wrong, I’ll take ‘em to the side one on one and chew their butt out to make them realize that they were about to hurt themselves, you know? Beat it in their head so they don’t make that mistake again. And there’s other guys up here that will use their supervisor’s situation to a different level—to just to let everybody know, ‘Hey I’m the boss.’ Really, everybody knows you’re the boss and you don’t necessarily have to belittle somebody in front of everybody, you know? You don’t have to put them down or make them feel like less of a man. [. . .] For instance, my crew out here—there’s not a
single one of them that doesn’t want to be out here. They all enjoy it out here, it’s—they’re comfortable about it and when they do screw up on something…they come let me know. That’s a big important part, ‘cause if they screw up on something it could be a dangerous situation out there for somebody else and if he handled it in the wrong way…he’s going to say, ‘Well I ain’t going to let my supervisor know, the last time I did he made me look bad and put me down in front of everybody,’ so that unsafe situation is left out there on the rig not taken care of.

Despite the formal policies, some employees do yell, and cuss out other employees. But supervisors speak with workers to ensure they comply with the company’s policies, this reinforces the company’s structure. During an interview, I asked a driller about working with ‘big mouths,’ and how he handled that type of guy.

[Interviewer] So you must have worked with some guys that are kind of big mouths

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. This is my eighth Magna-Drill rig I worked on, and I mean there are some like that, some people are just naturally like that. Some people can’t help their character.

[Interviewer] How do you deal with a guy like that?

All you can do is try to sit there and talk to him and say look, ‘we don’t need to holler, you know, we’re not goin’ to have a holler.’ I’ll say ‘you’re not gonna holler at them, they’re not goin’ holler at you.’ I mean, everybody is there to do a job and arguing and bickerin’ and fightin’ is not the way to do a job. We’re there as a team, we’re six men, we have to work as one to accomplish our goal. There’s not goin’ to be one person on this, one person on that, no, we done with that. It’s all as one. There’s four crews out there, six men apiece, and not one bit of, ‘Oh, so and so done this or somebody off the rig done that.’ We goin’ to work as one.

[Interviewer] You feel like it’s effective or is it just kind of like their personality and that’s the way they are?

I think it’s effective ‘cause I had worked with some people that yelled and screamed and hollered at me and I didn’t want to do nothing for ‘em. I don’t like him—hollers too much. I don’t want to do it. I mean ‘cause that’s someone’s mentality, if someone screams at you, you’re not gonna want to do what they say. I mean, no one wants to be treated like a child.
We’re all grown men out there, talk to them with some respect and they’ll do anything you ask ‘em. From what I see, I’ve been drillin’ 15, 16 months and so that’s the way I’ve done it. I’ve never had a problem about anything. –Driller

Supervisors try to convey respect by pulling employees aside, telling them what they did wrong, and ensuring they understand not to make the same mistake again. This ensures a worker’s mistakes are not made public, and do not embarrass them in front of their peers.

A Drilling Superintendent states: “I want to be one of them. When I go out that door, I wanna be one of them. They may see me as Bill Belichick, you know, but I don’t want to be perceived as that.” This manager’s preference to be seen on an even level demonstrates how managers see themselves as “one of the guys,” instead of the boss.

Managers at Magna-Drill have worked their way up the ladder to management positions from Floor Hands, and they want to identify with their workers. [Interviewer] “You want to be perceived on an even level?” Drilling Superintendent: “On an even level, yes. You know, that’s just how I feel—I’d rather be on their level, the crew’s, rather than being on top.” [Interviewer] “What do you gain from that?” Drilling Superintendent: “Their hard work, their respect, that’s what I gain. With us going no accidents, and my rigs being the best looking, operating the best, that’s what I gain from them.”

Similar to Gamst’s (1980) study where a worker’s sense of importance stems from his job, each supervisor’s sense of workplace manhood and masculinity emanates from their responsibility to keep their “brothers” safe and productive. During a site visit, a Drilling Superintendent walked me around the site and explained the equipment and job responsibilities for each position. We were discussing what Floor Hands do, and I asked him to compare his work to theirs. He pointed to the rig floor and said, “See that, that’s
young man’s work [laughing].” Then he pointed to the Rig Manager’s house and said:

“We sit on our brains in there.” Supervisors valued their experience levels, because they were (generally) older than rig crewmembers, and as they described, “out of shape.”

Therefore, similar to Donaldson’s (1991) findings, Magna-Drill’s supervisors value knowledge and mental aptitude, instead of brute strength. The ways men construct masculinity differs by job responsibilities. Drilling crewmembers, mechanics, electricians (non-supervisors) define masculinity as toughness, physical labor and pulling his weight, although a secondary characteristic is “being able to use one’s head.”

[Interviewer] So for you, I mean, what makes a job more masculine than others?

I guess it would be the physical aspect of it. I mean it’s not easy to get out there and tool slips [sp] or swing hammers or stuff like that for 12 hours, it’s, I mean, you’re wore out by the time you get off. I mean, anything below a driller, it can get to be physical, I mean workin’ the floor itself is probably one of the most physical jobs there is. –Floorhand

So, men who use strength to perform their job value it as part of their identity, while the company’s managers primarily value their experience and knowledge.

Employees reinforce formal policies and workplace practices informally by expounding upon formal practices and personalizing them. For example, the company stresses teamwork and cooperation as a way to increase worker safety. This policy brings workers closer, so instead of competing against their coworkers, Magna-Drill employees work together and become “brothers.” A driller states: “They’re more like brothers than coworkers. I mean, it’s like a family. We live in the same house, go to the same places. It’s just like—it is a family.” The ways workers care for fellow employees varies; however, the caregiving role (hard to fulfill in the domestic sphere because of their ‘ideal
worker’ status) emerges in the work sphere. Workers counsel their coworkers, listen to stories, and work through family issues while at work. They provide a ‘shoulder to cry on’ when Magna-Drill employees need help coping with work-family conflict, long shifts, and working in the elements. One rig manager described himself as the “rig counselor and father” to the younger guys who were struggling with family issues. Under this structure, workers are able to fill a void left during absences from home—they are able to fulfill a masculine, caregiving role amongst each other. Workers cultivate a collectivist, masculine identity by looking out for each other’s safety and caring for each other’s job performance.

II. Self-Identity & Occupational Roles

In-group members reinforce the occupational community’s informal rules by identifying with Magna-Drill and the oilfield. Employees embrace the difficult working conditions and some embrace the ‘roughneck’ oil and gas culture. However, Magna-Drill employees differentiate themselves from ‘bad apples’: irresponsible oilfield workers and companies. Therefore they solidify the in-group status of Magna-Drill’s occupational community by separating themselves from other oilfield companies who perpetuate traditional oilfield stereotypes. I feel some of Magna-Drill’s employees viewed my research project as a way to refocus the ‘oilfield’ conversation and differentiate themselves and their employer from conventional, tainted cultures within the oilfield (Ashforth et al. 2007).
Traditionally, men on drilling rig crews have been labeled “roughnecks,” a term that captures the hard, physical, and dangerous working conditions they endure. Magna-Drill formally controls how workers refer to other employees. So, drilling rig crewmembers are known by their position—e.g. a Floor Hand is known by his title, rather than the stereotype, roughneck, and Rig Managers are referred to by their title, instead of “Toolpushers” or “Push” (Miller 2004). This structure enables workers to undo conventional masculine labels. While driving to a rig with a Drilling Superintendent, I asked why Magna-Drill forbids workers from using these traditional labels. He replied: “Respect, for these men and what they do.” The company feels the official title conveys respect, but it also severs these men from the oil and gas industry’s hegemonic roughneck masculine structure. During my observations, middle managers (Operations Managers, Drilling Supers, HSE Supers, and Maintenance Supers) honored this policy—I never heard a manager refer to a subordinate by a stereotype. However, rig crewmembers and maintenance workers use these terms during casual conversations about ‘brothers’ and supervisors. This HSE Rep discusses how the oilfield, and particularly Magna-Drill’s policies structure how employees relate to each other:

There’s no such thing as a ‘manly man’ anymore. You can’t fight on a rig. You can’t cuss anybody out on a rig. You can’t lay a hand on them, so there’s no more ‘Man, don’t mess with him, he’ll kick your ass.’ Those days are over with. You can’t do that anymore.

[Interviewer] Is that a good thing? Is it kinda a transition or something lost?

I think for the most part it is a good thing because you know there’s a lot of Rig Managers years ago that would just cuss you out like you were a dog and it’s demeaning to you and they found that you could get more done with shorter and soft. Having said that, you still don’t have to baby anybody, you know, but you can’t treat them or degrade them. Like I said,
you can’t call anybody a worm anymore it’s an SSE—a short service employee. That’s how you can address them.

Stereotypes of roughnecks as drug addicts (Nikiforuk 2009; Little 1977), criminals (Carrington et al. 2010; Parkins and Angell 2010), and sexually promiscuous STD carrying miscreants (Goldenberg et al. 2010; Goldenberg et al. 2008 a, b, c) contribute to the oilfield’s ‘bad’ reputation. The general public often refers to these workers as ‘oilfield trash.’ Therefore, the structure and culture at the industry level and the traditional disregard for worker safety, reinforces stereotypes of oilfield workers (Collinson 1999). This structure contributes to the identities of some workers and companies. The Lead Mechanic describes how workers show off this identity:

They get tattoos of the rig number they work on, and I’ve seen people, it’s more so down south that you see this, because a lot of these guys up here don’t have their trucks, but you go out to the rig and every one of the trucks is going to say essentially, ‘get on it,’ or maybe a big sticker on the back of the window that says ‘oilfield trash.’ They wear it like a badge of honor; someone who works in the oilfield, and that is supposed to inherently make you, this tough guy. –Lead Mechanic

Images like this confirm Drew et al.’s (2007) explanation of how in-group workers wear their identity as a ‘badge of honor,’ which helps to explain how the tough, independent man, steeped in masculinity (once pervasive in the oilfield) and why some workers feel obliged to show it off (See Collinson 1998). Recent research on masculinity among oilfield workers documents how men are undoing these conventional masculinities (See Ely and Meyerson 2010). I asked workers about the play-hard, drill-hard oilfield stereotype, and they described a transition in today’s oilfield.

[Interviewer] I think the first impression that most people have of the industry is that you know, it’s filled with a bunch of cowboys, real rough
and tumble, play hard, drill hard kind of a place, I mean, to what extent is that an accurate imagine.

Field Mechanic—It’s definitely true.

[Interviewer] Yeah?

Field Mechanic—[Laughs] It’s like I said earlier, ‘I’ll hire ya and I’ll fire ya.’ And I’ve heard people say that and they mean it, but how do I say it? It’s 2011 now and the people who are running this business, they’re in their 40s, I’ll say their 30s, 40s, and 50s, and they grew up in the ‘60s, ‘70s, and ‘80s, and the oilfield in the ‘60s, ‘70s, and ‘80s was a very different business. There was no emphasis on safety; there was no emphasis on the family; there was 100% emphasis on get the job done. So people did a lot of crazy shit back then, there were no safety laws—people were drinking and smoking weed up on the rig floor while they were working. It was just a completely different place back then so a lot of the, you know, stragglers, a lot of the older gentlemen that are now in the office of these companies, they used to be out on those rigs back in the ‘70s and ‘80s and they remember how it used to work back then, and it’s a completely different business, you know, some of them have conformed to the new style which is safety all the way and do it right and do it safe, and some of them haven’t. They just carry this old school cowboy attitude of ‘Well back in my day, we didn’t wait for the proper equipment to do it right’ or ‘We just got it done the way we had to get it done.’ That’s you know, I see more people in the oilfield with missing fingers but they’re usually older gentlemen, they’re usually gentlemen who lost those fingers or whatever back when it was like that.

Shifts in the oilfield’s structure and culture have made it acceptable for men to work safely and undo conventional masculine oilfield identities, such as bravado, independence and drug-use. Magna-Drill’s commitment to health and safety standards reflects these shifts and enables employees to construct multiple masculinities at work (Connell 2001). Most members find portrayals of the stereotypical oilfield offensive, particularly the label “oilfield trash.” In fact, Magna-Drill employees distance themselves from the term. A paradigm shift in safety practices makes Magna-Drill’s culture open to alternative masculine identities, and the collective ties within the occupational community allow
men to express disdain toward symbols they perceive as demeaning. Men in the oilfield are undoing conventional roughneck masculinities built upon danger, but particularly those pertaining to the label ‘oilfield trash.’

[Interviewer] “I heard the term oilfield trash. What does that term mean to you?”

Drilling Super—It’s very degrading. I don’t perceive myself as oilfield trash. I perceive myself as an honest man. I try to make an honest living for my family in this oilfield trade. [. . .] You don’t like to hear the term trash, you know, it’s degrading to you and I don’t know if you watched it on TV here a couple weeks ago about the, what is that, the STD disease, I mean, that’s very degrading to our trade, you know.

Today, some oilfield employees enter the industry solely for the high paying jobs, and it is acceptable to detest stereotypical labels such as ‘oilfield trash’ that were once used to unify members within the oilfield. Regardless of one’s identity, membership in Magna-Drill’s occupational community primarily depends on breadwinning, work ethic and adherence to safety policies, which keep their ‘brothers’ safe. It takes a certain type of man to work for Magna-Drill, because they must adhere to the company’s formal rules, and the occupational community’s informal rules. Mainly, it takes a man willing and able to do it.

Magna-Drill employees feel as though the public does not differentiate between companies, workers, or even phases of development: the public just sees oilfield workers. When asked why the public does not understand the recent shift, the participants blamed news, and other media outlets. A Field Electrician comments:

[Interviewer] In terms of public perception, what you say there is kinda counter to the stereotype of what it’s like to work in the oilfield or on an oil rig. I mean how do you explain that?
I mean other companies might be like that but just like – I don’t know if you’ve watched Black Gold on TV?

[Interviewer] I have.

I mean they’re always fighting and throwing stuff at each other, I mean that wouldn’t – if that happened at a Magna-Drill rig, they would be run off the first time they started throwing each other.

Some workers, including this HSE Rep., feel the public lacks education about oilfield workers and the industry. He states:

I think there’s a lack of education. The perception of men here bar hopin’, women chasing, joint smokin’. Scum of the earth, is what’s comin’ in here. I consider myself a Christian—I attend church. I do NOT do drugs. I drink a few cold beers at the house, you know? I’m happily married, I don’t need to chase the women. And I think the majority of the guys that … are there bad apples in the basket from Magna-Drill, to the truckin’ company, to whoever? I don’t think there’s no less bad apples in our industry then there is in all the rest.

While the formal and informal structures shape how Magna-Drill employees behave at work, the policies of one company cannot change the oilfield’s image. Participants feel stigmatized in the Marcellus Shale region, and in formations around the globe. The stereotype of ‘oilfield trash’ and roughneck culture offend many workers at Magna-Drill, mostly because their organization’s formal rules and the occupational community’s informal rules denounce traditional roughneck behavior.

Employees confirm the effectiveness of Magna-Drill’s zero tolerance policies for enhancing safety, but they fear the public lumps them together with other companies, companies that place less emphasis on corporate accountability, personal safety, and environmental responsibility. In fact, Magna-Drill’s managers believe they make substantial efforts to clean up their image by washing rigs and equipment, keeping the
drilling site free of trash and litter, and updating equipment for safety purposes. Despite these efforts, some workers were hesitant to talk about their jobs in Marcellus communities, because they perceive the public as hostile toward oilfield workers. A Rig Manager stated: “Let’s just say, if someone asks me what I do, I don’t tell ‘em.” Other participants expressed being subjected to public displays of animosity in the Marcellus region.

I guess just the look on their face—of…of disgust I guess. And a lot of people talk trash about, they all—they all thought of us as trash for years and I guess it’s just, you know, alls we’re known for is getting drunk or partying or getting DWIs or getting thrown in jail or whatever. You know, there’s very few out there that give everybody else a bad name.

I wish we could do something to change the image of ourselves, cause for crying out loud, we’re being blamed for STD’s now.

These stories verify that oilfield workers still feel stigmatized as “roughnecks” and “oilfield trash.” While research confirms that energy workers are responsible for social transgressions (drinking, violence, and drug use) that occur in rural communities, not all workers, or all companies, are equally responsible (see Ruddell 2011). Magna-Drill employees feel as though the public does not differentiate between companies, workers, or even phases of development: the public just sees them as ‘oilfield.’ Despite Magna-Drill’s policies, labels such as “roughneck” and “oilfield trash” are pervasive, thereby designating oilfield workers as dirty workers (Hughes 1957, 1962).
III. Social Identity & Collective Confirmation

Public hostility toward oilfield workers irritates Magna-Drill employees, but it also facilitates cohesiveness among occupational community members, and reinforces their estrangement from out-group members. Employees identify themselves as oilfield workers in an industry the public perceives and stigmatizes as “dirty work.”

Concurrently, Magna-Drill employees are stigmatized as ‘dirty’ (Hughes 1951, 1962). When working in the oilfield, workers must cope with the physical, social and moral taint associated with the industry. It is nearly impossible to stay clean if you work on a drilling rig:

It’s a dirty job, probably one of the dirtiest jobs out there. –Floor Hand

Crawling around and getting dirty, you know, pieces of machinery are usually lubricated by oil or grease, or something like that so always something nasty to get into. –Rig Mechanic
Getting physically dirty is the reality of working in today’s oilfield. Therefore, when the public encounters oilfield workers, they will likely be covered with synthetic drilling muds, grease, or any number of materials that stain their clothing and public image.

Socially, Magna-Drill employees are lumped with other oilfield industries, including hydraulic fracturing—a politically charged process of ‘stimulating’ energy formations to extract oil and gas. Therefore, the public does not differentiate among companies or workers; they perceive all companies and workers as “oilfield” or “oilfield trash.” From a moral stance, the public denounces oilfield companies and workers because the industry poses environmental risks. A middle manager describes being accosted by a protestor at a public event: “She was sayin’: ‘I hate you. I don’t agree with drillin’. You’re messin’ up our trees and our land.’” Other workers utilize social weighting (Ashforth et al. (2007) to condemn those who condemn them:

Oh they probably think we’re all dirty and we’re all stupid and we all got big, you know, big equipment that’s gonna destroy their natural environment, and we’re gonna kill all the birds, and we’re gonna kill all the deer, you know, from chemical exposure and contamination and you know they think we’re out there destroying beautiful fields of corn by drilling them up and cutting them up and drilling holes in them and now that’s the way I think some people, some people think. –Field Mechanic

To maintain face, workers must take solace in each other, foster relationships with occupational community members and shun outsiders. The physically dirty, grueling work conditions reinforce each Magna-Drill employee’s masculine identity (Barnes et al. 1998; Gibbs et al. 2002; Harvey 1990). Another factor contributing to a worker’s masculine identity is their belief that Magna-Drill’s personal and environmental safety record far exceeds other contract drilling companies.
Companies with poor corporate accountability, personal safety, and environmental responsibility records become outsiders. Management at Magna-Drill distinguish themselves by comparing their records with these companies: “It’s nice having our history back us up. It’s nice knowing we’re the safest drilling contractor . . .” This confidence allows Magna-Drill employees to put their work into perspective—to recalibrate negative perceptions and emphasize their strong qualities (Ashforth et al. 2007). While their work may pose safety risks, participants explain the risks Magna-Drill poses are less severe and probable than those of other companies. To cope with public outsiders, workers collectively maintain face by highlighting how little the public understands them or their work: “Pennsylvania people don’t want us here, but they really don’t know what we’re about.” In-group members are socialized into the ‘family’ or occupational community and orientated into similar attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors. Members are taught the markers of in-group versus out-group status, and workers who accept this style of life are admitted into the in-group, while members who do not may face sanctions or termination.

Informal Membership

In addition to the social identity formed through occupational roles, workers create informal membership rules through similarities in residences, using tobacco, and participation in masculinized forms of recreation including hunting, fishing, motorcycling, and truck ownership. Informal language also designates occupational community members from out-group members.
The rig workers think of me as the office guy and I’ll get out to a rig and they’re pretty stiff at first. I put in a dip or something as simple as that, I’s suddenly one of the guys. Or they go by where you’re from. Oh Oklahoma, no, I’m from a town of 700. I graduated with 31 people you know? And it’s one of those perceptions ‘oh you’re from a small town like I am. We are way similar then.’ And that’s a lot of the fight is, oh, we aren’t so different I guess. So it’s something as simple as that. And I’m not saying if you went to the rig the first thing you should do is start dipping, that’s crazy. It’s more, if you can find a common ground no matter what that is…that helps you. [. . .] Just showing the picture of the deer I shot or it could be anything. It could be the fish you caught or the motorcycle you own or what your truck looks like. –Middle Manager

Magna-Drill employees must confirm their individual identity matches the collective identity of other in-group members. To do this, all employees, but especially managers who have not worked on the rig floor (such as the manager above), must prove they are ‘one of the guys.’ Confirmation forces some Magna-Drill employees to perform different masculinities at work (Dellinger’s 2004) than they would in other contexts. To fit in, some oilfield workers (especially supervisors) must suppress personal characteristics, and elevate others—therefore they must do culturally appropriate masculinities.

I’d say it’s definitely; definitely a different side of me around here than of people outside work. You know, I probably try a little too hard sometimes to fit into that old stereotype of oilfield workers, you know? Outside of work, I’m a lot more constrained, or what’s the word, filtered? Maybe? [laughs]. You know, it’s funny how being around a certain type of people you start to act like ‘em and talk like ‘em, and you know, even if that’s not what you were like previously.

[Interviewer] So give me an example. I mean, how have you changed your behavior to sort of, I guess, fit in?

Well, like even just the swearing and stuff, you know. My dad’s a pastor. I grew up in a Christian home, you know, I still attend church, part of a church, a small group, and you know, that’s how I act by myself as a Christian, you know, and sometimes I don’t act the part when I’m around here, and you know, that’s my own fault, it’s just my lack of self-control, I guess, but you get around guys who are cussing every other word, and you
Informal membership rules affect how workers relate to each other, but employees may change their personality to fit with the hegemonic masculine oilfield norms within Magna-Drill. Swearing and shorthand speech such as “nipplin’ up” or “nipplin’ down” (meaning: put together and take apart) confirms that Magna-Drill’s worksites are masculine work environments; places where members are still doing masculinities that resemble the conventional oilfield. However, informal rules allow men to undo conventional oilfield masculinities, which reinforce Magna-Drill’s formal policies. Informal rules form around collective health and safety goals and identities which allow men to construct masculinities around their resistance to danger and adherence to teamwork.

But I mean, this job ‘specially, what makes a man to me? What makes a man is someone who’s willing to step up and do things safely. What makes a man is someone who’s going to express his real opinion instead of bowing down to some authority because to me, authority don’t mean shit. If you’re paid more than me or you have more deciding power than me, it doesn’t mean that you get to decide what happens to my body or life. –Field Mechanic

Magna-Drill employees undo conventional oilfield masculinities around bravado, danger, and independence (Collinson 1998). Their behavior and values promote their own health and safety and the health and safety of their coworkers. Similar to Ely and Meyerson’s (2010) research, Magna-Drill’s organizational structure enables men to undo
conventional masculine performances at work. This collective mentality allows workers to cultivate friendships at work.

IV. Blurring Work & Leisure

Over the course of a hitch, it becomes hard to differentiate between work and leisure, because workers are geographically isolated and live on the worksite. Physical proximity constrains when Magna-Drill employees can socialize and who they can socialize with, but also formal and informal membership rules. Drilling sites resemble total institutions (Goffman 1961), because workers’ social and work activities are largely confined to the drilling site and in-group members.

I live with the guys on the rig more than I see my whole family. But my family means everything else. So I mean, they’re more like brothers than co-workers. I mean, it’s like a family. I mean, we live in the same house; we go to the same places; it just like … it is a family. I wouldn’t say it’s a bunch of guys working together, it’s a family. Family away from family. I mean, come Christmas time I will put up a Christmas tree in our crew house, decorate the crew house in Christmas lights. I had my rig dressed up like that last year. Like I said, I hadn’t been home in five years so when that other crew got there, I mean, and saw that Christmas tree, Christmas lights. I kinda make the whole thing known to maybe make Christmas a little easier. –Driller

But I guess you’d say that some of the friends that don’t work out here they’re—I guess they’re just a little bit more laid back. They don’t want to … get up and do as much or—I—the reason why it’s kind of hard for me to explain it is I really don’t have too many—I have—matter of fact: I don’t have any friends outside of here. Ah the best friend I have, I grew up with for 27 years, I ended up breaking him out in the oil field about 4 years ago. –Rig Manager

Well there’s like the Rig Managers, I deal with them everyday and I was at the rig working one day and got done at about 5:30 in the evening. He’s an older fellow from Louisiana, he’s actually retiring in a couple weeks. I said ‘Well, Mr. Joe, I’m gonna get out of here.’ He said ‘No you’re not.’ I
said ‘What else you got?’ He said ‘I got meatloaf and mashed potatoes and gravy and corn bread and corn. You’re going in there and eat before you go anywhere.’ I mean it kinda like your grandmother’s house. She wanted to feed you before you go. –Field Electrician

Workers blur the lines between work and leisure by decorating their crew house during Christmas time and even going out in the community together after their shifts to buy groceries or other supplies. Their inflexible work schedule and limited time for social engagements constrain their social ties; therefore, periods of work are broken up by meals and social banter. Interestingly, the Rig Manager above tried to describe how relationships with his friends at work compared to relationships with friends he has outside work, but while doing so, he realized he didn’t have any real friends outside work. Therefore, his friends have the same masculine identity as him—they are shaped by Magna-Drill’s organizational structure.

Confirming the Rig Manager’s quote, oilfield workers often enter the industry through immediate or extended family members, and close friends. The oilfield’s structure and culture, and Magna-Drill’s structure permeate multiple aspects of each employee’s life. So, families are notoriously “oilfield families,” whereby families and even individuals from certain geographic areas socialize their relatives and friends into the oilfield.

But you definitely still come across the people who, you know, their daddy was a driller and their granddaddy was a driller, and their great-granddaddy was a driller, and you know, that’s just the family business. You’ll meet a lot of those people coming out of places like [town name], Louisiana. I don’t know if you’ve heard that. In that town like everybody seems to be involved in the oilfield. –Maintenance Supervisor

A lot of the guys workin’ on these rigs they know the guys who hired them so you don’t wanna hire somebody out there and then they come out
there and get killed and their family is left without a father or a husband
you know, you wanna take care of these guys and teach them the right
way to do things. —HSE Rep

Socializing kin into the oilfield allows in-group members to control who obtains in-group
membership, and enables members to reproduce the occupational community and
insulate in-group members from out-group individuals. This strengthens cohesiveness
among the in-group because masculine identities are passed down from generation to
generation through the occupational community (Risman 2004: 436). The connections
also informally ensure health and safety protocols among employees because they work
to ensure the safety of their friends.

Magna-Drill’s organizational structure also permeates the lives of these men by
bringing the families of transient workers (mostly middle managers) together. Therefore,
spouses become entrenched in the occupational community and form their own support
network.

[Interviewer]: [Operation’s manager’s name] had said this is kinda a 24
hour 7 days a week job. What does that do for say family life?

Oh, it’s not too bad. You know, most of us are married up here so you
know that’s the other thing, once we moved up here you don’t know
anyone, but the people you work with. Everybody becomes a little family.
We do barbeques and try to get together often and so the wives can get
together often as well so they have a circle of friends. So, you know for us,
like me, there’s dudes that have only been here a year and it’s their first
field experience you know it’s nice to have the wives to talk to.
[Operation’s Manager’s name]’s wife for a lack of another term is the den
mother. If they [wives] have questions or something like that, she’s always
there. —Middle Manager
This presents a new angle to view relationships between community residents and transient energy workers. It is unclear whether the spouses of workers ban together because their husbands share similar identities, or because community residents stigmatize the worker population as deviants, exclude them from community networks, and blame them for social fallout (Parkins and Angell 2010). This relationship needs further attention.

**Family**

Magna-Drill’s organizational structure—i.e., work schedule, policies, procedures, travel demands—reinforces the economic system’s hegemonic masculine norm: domesticity. Oilfield men are akin to ideal workers (Williams 2000), men who work demanding jobs for their family’s well-being. These jobs affect men’s participation at home, because the oilfield and Magna-Drill’s structure prevent men from being egalitarian partners at home—i.e. fulfilling equal caregiving, housework, and childcare responsibilities (Williams 2000). Similar to previous research done on offshore oilfield workers, all Magna-Drill employees identify breadwinning as their primary domestic responsibility (Mauther et al. 2000; Parkes et al. 2005). Therefore, industry and organizational structure affect how men do masculinity at home. In the next section, I discuss how organizational structures enable and constrain masculinity in the domestic sphere. Later, I describe how the same organizational structure in the onshore context may differ for men depending upon their residential status.
Domestic Masculinities

The mandated breadwinning role affects how men do masculinity within the domestic sphere. They fulfill their domestic duty one paycheck at a time. To accomplish their role, men must leave home for lengthy periods—the 12-hour tower, hitch scheduling and transient lifestyle require long absences from the domestic sphere. When asked: What does a family man look like in this industry? Respondents largely discussed how they fulfilled their domestic role at work.

Family man? Works for his family, that’s the only reason why you’re there, to work for your kids and your wife. You know, if your wife stays at home, you have to go to work and hope that most of the time they understand that. –Derrick Hand

To me, most of the people I work with are family men. You know? Most people that I work with family is number one, the job is number two, you know, they’re going to take care of their wife, they’re gonna take care of the kids, they’re gonna take care of cousins, brothers, and their parents, and that’s what’s most important to them and I very must respect that and you know, there’s kind of an attitude in the oil field, you know, H&P is H&P but my family, that’s why I’m here. I’m here for my family, I’m here to support my family, I’m here to take home paycheck, that’s why I’m here and that also says a lot about working safely. You know, there’s those out there that are out there and are kind of cowboys, and excuse my language, they say “Fuck it. Let’s do it. You know, I don’t care how we do it, let’s get it done.” And there are those that say “You know what, I don’t play that game, I’m going to home, I have a family to go home to so I’m not going to do those dangerous things. I’m going to do it safely. –Field Mechanic

I followed this question later in the interview by asking: what does being a man mean to you?

Lead Mechanic—What?!! [laughs]. What does it mean to be a man? Well, I don’t know how to answer that.
[Interviewer] Yeah. What does being a man mean to you?

Lead Mechanic—[Pause]. Takin’ care of my family, I guess, that’s the biggest thing. Financial security. [pause] Being trusted, basically. The biggest thing to me is this financial security. I think that’s the biggest thing you could do. A lot of divorces and problems like that all come to money, so, if you don’t have to worry about that, then you’re pretty good.

What does it mean for me … [pause]. I don’t know what else to say. [Long pause]. I’m trying to think of an answer to that question. What are you asking me, what does it mean for me to be a man? I mean the biggest, the biggest thing here for me is that it’s a very well-paying job that allows me to provide for my family, and it’s also the kind of job that I enjoy telling people about it because it does have, I feel a little bit of pride in telling people that, you know, that I work in this industry and that I’ve succeeded in this industry and that’s, you know, I think, you know, not to sit here and brag or something, but you know, I feel like for having only been in the industry as long as I have and never having even seen a drilling rig before this, that I’ve done pretty well, and so that kind of gives me a … I seem to, the way you ask it, I kind of equate what you’re saying is like maybe a feeling of pride in your manhood or something – you know, I’m not sure if that’s really where the question was going but maybe you’re just trying to . . . –Lead Mechanic

To be a man? To be a man, to me personally, is providing a living for my family, you know, that’s the main thing. Man to me is that’s what you’re supposed to do, provide for your family, be there for any of them, and that’s it to me, that’s what I look at. –Drilling Super

Being able to provide, I guess. Provide for your family if they need anything, having a good job and I don’t know. –Field Electrician

Ugh….going to work, do your job and being—being dependable to your job and to your family and takin’ care of your family. Supportin’ your family. –Field Mechanic

‘What does being a man mean to you’ was my favorite question to ask participants.

Participants struggled to explain their sense of manhood, but they all reached a consensus: breadwinning defines ‘what it means to be an oilfield man.’ Domesticity is embedded within the economic system, and affects how the oil and gas industry and Magna-Drill structure work, but also work and family life for these men.
A contradiction exists between breadwinning and caregiving. Participants describe cleaning, housework, and childcare responsibilities (picking kids up from school) as their contributions during their days off. However, one Floor Hand explains his wife’s dissatisfaction with his domestic contributions:

I think my wife’s ready for me to go back to work now. She said the house is cleaner when I’m gone than it is when I’m home. [. . .] I think she says I don’t help around the house enough, but I don’t know what else to do to help her. I mean, I’ll try to keep dirty dishes clean and try to keep you know everything picked up, and we got three kids under the age of six, so it’s a full-time job tryin’ to keep the house clean. The kids won’t clean up after themselves. I don’t know, she says I’m the fourth child so.

Participants describe ‘helping’ with housework, which confirms they perceive the domestic sphere as a feminine domain—careers and breadwinning are their defining masculine characteristics (Coltrane 1989; Pyke 1996). However, within the domestic sphere, men accomplish masculinized household tasks. A Mechanic describes his domestic responsibilities:

I think a man is also responsible for putting up with some of the bullshit women won’t put up with, which is getting dirty, getting scratched, ... fighting lizards, and spiders, and snakes…

[Interviewer] Are you blowing smoke up my ass now? Or…

No, I’m serious. Look, if there’s a snake out in the yard. Who’s going to take care of it? The husband or the wife? Like fuck, I don’t wanna get bit by a poisonous snake but I know my wife ain’t gonna do it, so I gotta go do it.

This quote emphasizes how men and women are doing gendered household responsibilities. However, this Mechanic also discusses some of the ways he is undoing
gender at home, although his recent divorce makes it difficult to understand how he may have performed these responsibilities during his marriage. He states:

Well, it’s 2011, so I think a lot of men are expected to do a lot of things that would be in previous decades considered womanly. [...] I mean, I’m a single man, I’m 27 years old. I’m here in my own home and I’m doing laundry and hanging curtains. I don’t have a problem with that, you know. If my buddy calls me and says ‘Hey, what are you doing?’ I say ‘I’m hanging curtains.’ You know, he’s not gonna say ‘Oh, you’re girlie’ or whatever cause of that. It’s different. But if you were to call me in 1965 and say, ‘Hey, what are you doing?’ And I would say, ‘Oh, I’m hanging curtains,’ you know, that would have been like ‘oh my god’ that would have been the neighborhood talk. ‘So-and-so hangs his own curtains.’

In some ways, men are undoing conventional masculinities within the domestic sphere. It is hard to assess the extent to which these men are undoing gender, but their transcripts demonstrate oilfield men are undoing conventional masculinities at home. Interestingly, if these men work a 14/14 rotation, they spend equal amounts of time at work as they do at home. Therefore, these men are accustomed to performing certain domestic duties while at work, including parenting. One Floor Hand describes how when he is away from home, he still fulfills his role as a disciplinarian.

I don’t think it [oilfield work] changes my role in the family, you know, as far as my kids. I try to discipline my kids when I can, if they need discipline. Like with my girls gettin’ in trouble at school or something . . . and I’m gone, I try to talk to them over the phone just like I would if I was at home and try to tell them, and make them understand what they were doin’ was wrong. You know, if they have a good day at school, you know, I tell them they did a good job and I’m proud of them. But I don’t really think it changes my role ‘cause they understand that I’m workin’ and why I’m gone, that I’m not . . . that I haven’t just left them.

Oilfield workers try to construct normalcy around the “hitch” work schedule, particularly when allocating extended periods of time off with family members. The previous
respondent tries to fulfill his disciplinarian responsibilities during phone and email contact. Maintaining consistent phone and internet contact is the primary strategy workers and family members use to cope with the transient lifestyle and extended absences.

**Residence**

Research on household relationships documents that when women (or other factors) threaten a man’s sense of domestic masculinity, men may refuse to participate in housework or childcare (Brines 1994; Schrock and Schwalbe 2009). This refusal guards a man’s masculine identity by not blurring their domestic role—they are breadwinners, not caregivers and housekeepers (Sherman 2009). That’s women’s work. Magna-Drill employees from out-of-state express feeling similar tensions. Each family’s structure and expectations affect the ways men do masculinity at home:

> My wife is on me ‘You need to see the grandkids.’ I’m not thinking about the grandkids; I’m thinking I want to go fishing. I don’t want to bait hooks—I did my tour of duty with my kids, I had 5 kids and had to do that. Now it’s my time. It’s not my time. Like I was saying, it’s not my life. It’s somebody else’s. If you have to try to make it, if not your relationship with your family is gonna go downhill. You have to try to mix and give. You’re entitled some time off but they miss daddy and husband. You have to spend time with them.

While the organizational structure shapes how men do masculinity within the domestic sphere, their families also enable and constrain their behavior during days off. Many men expressed a desire to go fishing, hunting, or ‘just get away from it all’ and have some time alone after working 170-180 hours over 14 days, and spending their first day off
traveling home and their last day off traveling back to work. So work-family pressures even occur when workers are home, because they feel family and work limit ‘their’ free time. This may occur because Magna-Drill employees must comply with strict policies and procedures at work.

**Pennsylvania Transfers/ Residents**

Not all participants seek freedom on their days/time off. Organizational structure affects managers and fieldworkers differently—managers work a 5/2 schedule, have moved to Pennsylvania, and experience more freedom from the rigorous schedule and work procedures. This freedom may contribute to their desire and/or ability to contribute at home. One Superintendent states:

I see a lot of guys that I work with here have families, and for them, the job is more important than anything going on at home. And I, that was something that me and my wife had to talk about, you know, pretty seriously when I took on this superintendent role, because I knew the hours were going to go through the roof, and you know, just how busy I would be, and we made a commitment that no matter what was going on at the office, the latest I would leave the office is 5:30. I haven’t been able to honor that as much as I’d like to, but, you know, most days, I get to a point where I can drop everything and get in the truck and leave at 5:30.

Because managers have relocated to the Marcellus Shale region, they live a short drive from Magna-Drill’s regional office. This enables them to leave work and spend time at home with their families. The Superintendent above describes how he and his wife needed to weigh the decision to take on Superintendent responsibilities. Although the work hours are often rigorous, this manager still, on most days, leaves the office by 5:30pm. Rig crewmembers working in the Marcellus Shale region do not have this
option, because they are mostly transient, out-of-state employees.

Among Magna-Drill’s newly hired Pennsylvania residents, employees and family members must adapt to the oilfield lifestyle. These men face challenges adapting from traditional Monday-Friday, 9-5 jobs to a 14/7 schedule—note the 14/7 schedule, because most Mechanics and Electricians are Pennsylvania residents. During my fieldwork, Magna-Drill, other service companies, and operators reported high turnover rates among local workers. At Magna-Drill, workers adapted to the organizational structure (work schedule, policies, and procedures), and the occupational community’s formal and informal membership rules. These affected each worker’s domestic life.

Preliminary accounts suggest men dropout of the oilfield because the long hours, grueling work conditions and long absences from home, create work-family conflicts, thereby reducing retention. However, some Pennsylvania residents benefit from the development’s close proximity to their homes; they return home after work when they are ‘on call.’ This quote from a Mechanic supports the importance men place on balancing work and family obligations: “If I couldn’t be home, I probably wouldn’t be doing it.” Pennsylvania men in this study knew friends, relatives and acquaintances that dropped out because they couldn’t take the industry’s or Magna-Drill’s demands. I am not suggesting Pennsylvania men are more mindful of their family’s needs. Rather, evidence suggests some Pennsylvanians (depending upon their job responsibilities and work pattern) are able to finagle Magna-Drill’s ‘total institution,’ while men from out-of-state (predominantly rig crewmembers) continue to work away from home under the confines of the formal policies, procedures and work patterns that comprise the total institution (Goffman 1961).
Work-Family Conflict

Although Magna-Drill’s employees fulfill their breadwinning roles, their separation from home contributes to work-family conflicts. Therefore, the company’s structure (i.e., policies, procedures, work pattern) affects the domestic sphere and each worker’s family life. The demanding work patterns constrain ‘family time,’ while work patterns and company policies affect the role Magna-Drill employees fulfill at home. Similar to previous offshore oilfield workers, Magna-Drill employees see themselves as family breadwinners (Mauther et al. 2000; Parkes et al. 2005). This traditional masculine role pressures these men to fulfill their combined work/family duties. While these workers are satisfied with their paychecks—significantly higher than what other occupational fields pay—they spend as much time at work (more for maintenance crews) as they do at home.

So let’s just say it averages out you know, I work 7 on and 7 off, say I work, let’s say I work so many hours and I get paid so much per hour and I make 85,000 dollars per year. Now if you change me automatically to the 2 week on and 1 week off, the 14 and 7 schedule, I’m already making 115, 120,000 dollars a year because instead of working half of the year, you’re working 2/3 of the year. And to me, and that’s like what is started a long time ago is balancing work with family. Now your paycheck, your wallet, you bank account is going to love switching from 7-to-7 to 14-to-7 or 14-to-14 but your family’s gonna hate it. They’re used to seeing you so much and now they’re going to miss you so much.

Despite financial security, these extended absences from home wreak havoc on every participant, and his family life. Oilfield families weigh financial gain, caregiving responsibilities, and the development of children against the troubles caused by intermittent husband syndrome (Clark et al. 1985; Gramling 1989; Sheilds 2003). Mainly,
fathers miss much of their children’s lives, and are removed from household affairs such as bills, and household maintenance. While these men prioritize their families as breadwinners, the breadwinning and caregiving roles contradict each other, and this contradiction has implications on workers and their family members.

You very much seem like you have an obligation to do your best and work your ass off, and that’s directly opposite to doing your best and working your ass off for your family, because when you’re doing your best for Magna-Drill, you’re out there doing it, and when you’re doing it for your family, you’re staying at home and doing that. They do come to compete with each other. –Field Mechanic

It’s tough. I mean, when a problem arises [at home], you know, a lot of us out here we try to keep that off our minds. But you know? It’s the whole reason why you’re working out here in the first place is for your family. So it’s, it’s tough to not…think about it while you’re out here, you know? And it’s hard on the kids. You miss birthdays, you miss holidays. And like me—Christmas for the last—man, I ain’t had a Christmas off in the last three years, or any holidays. I, I been—I’ve been ended up catching ‘em all whether it’s New Years, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas. You know, things like that play a big, big factor when you get married and you can’t be there as a family. –Driller

The rigorous hitch scheduling challenges oilfield workers and their families. In a Pilot interview, a participant quoted a coworker who told him “You better enjoy your marriage now, because it won’t last.” Frequently, families break-up. In fact, divorce is regarded as the norm in the oilfield. Several study participants are divorced; some are divorced more than once. And even when oilfield workers are awarded custody of their children, the hegemonic, breadwinning masculine norm complicates keeping their kids because oilfield work requires long absences—this contributes to work-family conflict and leads to divorce (Hook and Chalasani 2008). Most rig crewmembers do not know how long
they will work in certain regions, so they do not consider relocating themselves or their families to the Marcellus region.

When middle managers relocate, the company tries to ease the burden for their family by absorbing some financial debt: paying for a moving service, paying off mortgages, and helping employees purchase a house near the regional office. When employees reach middle management positions, the job entails moving to new locations. New “hot spots” emerge and other formations “play out.” The Operations Manager for Magna-Drill has relocated over twelve times in his thirty-year career. Other managers are on a similar path, trying to balance career aspirations and their family’s happiness. A Drilling Superintendent comments:

You always want to do what’s best for your family and you always wanna do what’s best for the company, too. For your part in the company and your family is probably 95% of the time they gonna be right there with you, but it’s a lot of stress for them. You know? They make a lot of – just like my wife says, you make a lot of friends in Fort Worth and we had to move out of there and come up here and we’re startin’ all over again.

The transient lifestyle is difficult for employees and their family members, because men’s jobs demand extensive time and energy, and domesticity limits job opportunities for their spouses that would help the family maintain their ideal lifestyle. Instead, spouses are often relegated to the domestic sphere. As men relinquish their power within the household, they describe the emergence of matriarchies, because male workers are “living two lives” (Parkes et al. 2005). One of Magna-Drill’s HSE Representatives described this phenomenon.

It’s actually because when you go home, especially my age, the man was the dominate in the house, he made all the decisions. Now, when you gone for two weeks, what does that do to your wife? It makes her the dominant
Oilfield men have two interconnected lives, work and home. Conflicts between the breadwinning and caregiving roles create work-family conflict not only because workers are intermittently home, but also because this work pattern may provide opportunities for women to ‘undo’ traditional gender relations within the domestic sphere. Spouses must renegotiate their domestic roles to ensure the family/household runs smoothly. Building on previous work, spouses of Magna-Drill employees may experience more independence and a heightened status within the family, and this may emerge from a shift in gender relationships within the household (Parkes et al. 2005; Taylor and Simmonds 2009).

Although participants use phone and internet contact as coping strategies, they struggle to maintain consistent contact because remote drilling sites have poor phone and internet service. During a worker’s absence, family life continues. Oilfield workers miss birthdays, holidays, deaths, and everyday life (Collinson 1998; Mauther et al. 2000; Parkes et al. 2005). Despite the extended periods of time off, relationships with children are difficult.

My kids are 6 and 3, and it’s like you miss out on so much. So it’s, it’s hard on the kids—my kids are always—I talk to them a lot on the phone, almost every day after work. And ah every—every time—everyday, ‘Daddy when you comin’ to pick me up?’ – Rig Manager

Oilfield fathers have difficulty fulfilling their caregiving and breadwinning responsibilities. The day-to-day lives of children become missed events, and the pressure to earn a decent income creates tension among workers and their partners (Collinson...
1998; Clark and Taylor 1988; Forsyth and Gauthier 1991). The oilfield’s demanding work schedule creates tension for workers because they need emotional support and assurance that family members appreciate their efforts, and assurance they are contributing to the family. Spouses need assurance that their spouses (the workers) are committed to them and the family. The ‘roughneck’ reputation of partying and nefarious behavior can disintegrate trust among spouses. In some cases, the oilfield’s “dirty” image may spill over into a worker’s family life.

Hitchin’s very—I guess women…they start feeling that they’re being cheated on since you ain’t home. Some of these other guys you might talk to they’ve gone through the same thing. My wife ended up—she was—I found out she was cheating on me while I was at work. [. . .] I guess they think when we come to work it’s all…playin’ and fun and we doin’ whatever we want but it’s all, it’s all business. —Rig Manager

Managers also experience these work-family tensions—the excessive time commitments, constant phone calls, late-night phone calls, and sudden field visits amount to unexpected time away from home. Similar to drilling crews and maintenance crews, managers miss a substantial amount of the year away from home. Physical proximity and poor communication contribute to this—workers state their family members express feeling ‘insignificant in their lives.’ Many participants state their family members often express feeling unimportant and they report hearing: “I married you, not the oilfield.”

Community

Magna-Drill’s organizational structure shapes the behaviors of workers in local Marcellus Shale communities. In fact, the structure provides little flexibility for rig crewmembers. The ten o’clock curfew, zero-tolerance drug policy, and work schedule/
demands restrict free time available to workers, which deters them from travelling to
Marcellus communities. One HSE Rep comments on how the organizational structure
prohibits drilling rig crewmembers from leaving the work site:

Well that goes with what I said earlier about the drug test, and uh these
guys live on location and they don’t leave location very often, because
when you work twelve hours like them guys work, there ain’t much that
you wanna do after that except get back, go to bed and eat, know what I’m
saying? Because they put in twelve hours a work and it ain’t, it ain’t easy
work. They’re on their feet twelve hours a day and then I mean, a young
kid may be able to do it, but an older guy, he’s gotta get in bed and get his
rest if he’s gonna last fourteen days of doing that. But as far as them going
out and stuff, I don’t see that. I’m sure they might go out and get a bite to
eat or something but other than that, I’m pretty sure it don’t happen on a
regular basis.

Ugh I worked for the Magna-Drill for 2 years and I’ve taken, I think it’s
13 of ‘em now. Just random drug testin’. I mean they’re always
watchin’. If there’s any speculation that they have on employees it’s—
even—ugh that they even suspect, they’ll go test everybody. Ya know
what I mean. They really—there’s no tolerance. –Field Electrician

I asked rig crewmembers what they did after their tower, and participants stated they used
the time to rest for the next day’s work. [Interviewer] “So can you give me some
examples of, what does an evening look like or a day look like when you’re done on the
rig—what does your time off look like?”

Basically, after we get off, we’ll change out of our dirty work clothes, and
my crew house only has two bathrooms and it’s a five man crew so we’ll
have to take turns showering and that. Everybody showers. After you get a
shower, you just get somethin’ to eat and sit down and watch TV for a
little while, and then you just go to bed. I mean, I like to sleep, so I don’t
do a whole lotta goofin’ off, I mean. Every now and then, we’ll have to
run to town and, you know, get some groceries or somethin’ like that.
–Floorhand

Rig crewmembers I interviewed, stated they didn’t like going to town often or staying up
late, because work was tiring enough. This information contradicted the anecdotal
information from previous Marcellus Shale fieldwork focusing on development’s community impacts, and social disruption research—i.e., respondents stated workers drank in local Marcellus Shale communities and contribute to social disruption (Brasier et al. 2010). During pilot interviews for my dissertation, I met a Well Site Geologist who has worked on Magna-Drill sites. I interviewed him to check the accuracy of the statements made by participants from Magna-Drill. He states:

You know, a lot of the guys, the workers, don’t leave the rig. They work here and then they go home and so and they may not be out on the town but you definitely, I definitely know this from being around this area, you know, the bars are full. The restaurants are packed. The hotels are full, and are they necessarily loud? Mmhmm there are certain bars that are known for, I guess you call it a seedier crowd and uh there are other nicer bars, but they’re both full of just different people just tryin’ to grab the taste.

[Interviewer] Let’s see. So in terms of that I mean, if the drillers—the people working on the rig—are kind of staying on site, I mean what part of the industry is downtown. I mean, what field of work would be?

Well so um there’s the rig crew but then there’s third party people like the welders, the truck drivers, and uhh a lot of independent contractors that are staying in the hotels. And then some of the rig workers they take the company truck and try to go off and have dinner in town. So, they’re not all, you know, confined to the rig. Some of them are because they had incidences where you know they go out and then they come back to work too late and so then they lose their truck privileges and so now they’re kind of stuck on the rig. They tend to lose their truck privileges when they either drive drunk and they crash the truck, or they all get too drunk and then whoever was driving brings them back too late and then some people don’t wake up in time for work. Let’s see, yeah, there are incidences where, you know, drinking gets involved, but I don’t think there’s, I don’t know if there’s been any other drunken incidences. I think I heard of one person smoking pot, then they had a pee test and that one guy got busted, but I, that’s kind of hearsay so I don’t really know which rig it was.

This demonstrates that while some rig crewmembers leave the worksite, others do not.

Members may remain on site because they do not want to leave, their organization’s structure prevents them from leaving, or they have had their truck privileges revoked for
previous violations. I asked a Floor Hand about the guys that go out and get drunk: “So, I mean, who are the guys that go out?” The Floor Hand replied: “Well, most of those guys are the younger, single ones that don’t have kids. You know, that are just there to make money to party.” Unfortunately, I was not able to interview Magna-Drill employees from this demographic. During a trip to a drilling site with the Operations Manager, he informed me that Magna-Drill prefers to hire older, married men because they fit into Magna-Drill’s organizational structure.

In early June, 2012, I sent the well site geologist an email to verify his experience on well sites in Pennsylvania. I shared the quotes above and asked if these quotes represented his experience with rig workers. Because he had worked for Magna-Drill and other contract drilling companies, I acknowledge his reply encompasses all of his experiences. He replied:

The rig hands: They work a fixed schedule, work hard, and usually don't leave the rig. I have had very few experiences of them leaving the rigs and getting drunk or into trouble. However, even though they may not leave the rig DURING their hitch, I have known at least one person to arrive a day early, or stay later than their hitch, and in this case, to spend time with a woman. [...] Third party hands: These could be the directional drilling crews, the logging crews, welders, electricians, company reps, truck drivers, etc. These guys work hard too, but not on a fixed schedule. Some are only called out as needed. They are less regulated. Some work MANY hours in a row, but avoid working too many hours on any one rig so they can keep working. I think a large percentage of accidents/incidents on the rigs involve a third-party hand. Or in the reps’ case, they will go out after all their meetings. But when they aren't working they either live, or have a hotel room locally. When they are off-the-clock they are free to do what they want. I have met some heavy drinking third-party people in the bars.

This Well Site Geologist suggests that a company’s organizational structure controls the flexibility of work schedules, which determines when and the amount of time workers have to spend in the community. So unless the operator or contractor suspects third party
hands are intoxicated, and they perform a random drug screening, the limited time these workers spend on worksites reduces the likelihood they will encounter a drug test. Further, as independent contractors their attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors are shaped by the conventional “roughneck” masculinity; therefore, these men may lose the ability to work for that one operator and/or contractor, but they could continue this behavior and fulfill contracts for other contractors and operators within the Marcellus Shale region.

Maintenance and HSE

Similar to the ‘third party hands’ that the Well Site Geologist references above, Magna-Drill’s maintenance crews (electricians and mechanics) and HSE Reps live in motels and spend more free time in Marcellus communities. Therefore, they are allotted more structured freedom. Whereas drilling crewmembers may only leave the drilling site once or twice a hitch, maintenance and HSE Reps come and go from drilling sites and communities as they service rigs throughout the region.

[Interviewer] So what do you do outside work? You work your shift; you do your tower, and then what does down time look like?

There is no downtime. […] I mean if you and me sat down every day this would get old. I attend the meetings at 5:30pm, usually leave the rig at about 6:30 get to the motel 7:30 a quarter to 8. Normally pick something up at Subway or Arby’s or pizza or something and eat it in the motel while I watch the news. I finish eating, take a shower, get into bed, call momma, “Oh man, it’s 10 o’clock already.” That’s my day and that’s if nothing happens like if we have to take somebody to the clinic or the emergency room or wherever. So it’s—you sleep, eat, work. That’s it. There is no down time; there is no go to the show or whatever. —HSE Rep
I mean like if you wanted to, like last year, I went to a big Woolrich store when I was in Woolrich and did some Christmas shopping and stuff. I mean, you’re not going out and getting boozed up and stuff like that but if you wanted to go watch a movie or whatever you wanted to do. –Field Electrician

Magna-Drill employees do enter Marcellus Shale communities during their hitch. However, participants in this study did not describe behaviors beyond shopping for groceries or shopping for products at local retailers, and once they were done, they returned to the drilling site or their hotel rooms to rest for the following day’s work. Magna-Drill’s organizational structure shapes the behaviors among its employees. Workers did not construct frontier masculinities (Connell 1993), described by previous researchers as drug use, crime, and sexual deviance (See Carrington et al. 2010; Goldenberg 2010; Goldenberg et al. 2008a,b,c; Parkins and Angell 2010; Ruddell 2011), or conventional “roughneck” masculinities (Collinson 1999; Hirschhorn and Young 1993; Miller 2004; Wicks 2002). Magna-Drill’s organizational structure not only enabled employees to undo conventional oilfield masculinities when they entered the public sphere, but it also constrained them to these behaviors. In fact, formal policies (termination) and informal policies (being run off by coworkers) shaped the behaviors of Magna-Drill employees.
Interpretation

Social Disruption

The social disruption hypothesis specifies that individual and community alterations represent a period of generalized crisis and loss of traditional routines and attitudes within the community’s organizations and local culture (England and Albrecht 1984). Community residents largely blame transient energy workers for the social disruption that occurs in boomtowns, and several social transgressions: increasing mental health problems, resident families breaking up, rising substance abuse levels, escalating crime rates and fear of crime, STD epidemics, drunk driving, noise, litter, reckless driving, sexual assault, property damage and theft (e.g. Carrington et al. 2010; Freudenburg 1981; Goldenberg 2010; Goldberg et al. 2010; Goldenberg 2008 a,b,c; Hunter et al. 2002; Krannich et al. 1989; Nikiforuk 2009; Parkins and Angell 2010; Lockie et al. 2009; Smith et al. 2001).

In the previous sections, I demonstrate how Magna-Drill’s structure enables and constrains the masculine attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors among employees. Workers reinforce this structure through the occupational community, and this culture shapes their behavior at work, at home and in Marcellus Shale communities. However, the flexibility among workers at Magna-Drill contributes to their community exposure, which may affect social disruption. Magna-Drill’s organizational structure restricts employees from exercising uninhibited frontier masculinities (Connell 1993), or what I dub the oilfield’s ‘roughneck’ masculinity in energy boomtowns. But the flexibility of a worker’s schedule determines their exposure to Marcellus Shale communities. HSE
Representatives and maintenance crews spend more time in Marcellus Shale communities—eating, boarding, and travelling through—than do rig crewmembers. The time these workers spend in communities, even if they refrain from long binges at the bar or doing drugs, may create community transgressions—e.g. inflation, lodging shortages, traffic. Among rig crewmembers, the company’s zero-tolerance drug policy, and ten-o’clock (am/pm) truck curfew may have prevented nefarious behavior documented by previous researchers, but their mere presence in the community to purchase supplies may contribute to similar social transgressions potentially created by workers with more flexible schedules.8 (See Carrington et al. 2010; Parkins and Angell 2010; Goldenberg 2010; Goldenberg et al. 2008a,b,c).

Organizational structures and occupational cultures may vary among companies within the energy industry; therefore, this may explain why workers from different demographics (Ruddell 2011) and different companies perpetrate social transgressions differentially within boomtowns. My work reinforces Wilkinson et al.’s (1982) recommendation: researchers must account for the complexities affecting social life within boomtowns. Another complexity stems from the pervasiveness of contracting and subcontracting in the energy industry. Oilfield workers are a diverse group of not only companies, but also independent contractors (individuals) contracted by a multitude of companies, and their client’s organizational structure may not affect their behavior when they enter Marcellus Shale communities. Therefore, some oilfield workers may perform uninhibited ‘roughneck’ masculinities, because they subscribe to a different culture

---

8 Shifts end at 6:00 am and 6:00 pm, so the curfew applies equally to both day and night shifts.
within the oil and gas industry. This solidifies this study’s emphasis on organizational structure within the industry sector, because in the oilfield, companies and workers subscribe to different constructions of masculinity, and these masculinities may affect Marcellus Shale communities differently.

For over forty years, contemporary social disruption scholars have argued over which variables to study, how to study them, and where to study them. After completing this project, I believe social disruption scholars who want to mitigate community transgressions (drinking, drug use, crime etc.) must understand the complexity of this industry’s structure and culture, and how it affects the behaviors of energy workers, and the structure of the companies that employ them. Researchers who examine residents’ community satisfaction levels, the industry’s development patterns, and the community’s history of development will certainly document changes, but including energy workers and companies accounts for the breadth of perspectives within energy boomtowns. Researchers who hold “industry” constant may miss variations among organizational structures of operators and contractors, and the occupational cultures among men—all of which may influence how residents and communities experience and perceive rapid energy development. Therefore, in some cases, researchers may find different results when they vary operators and contractors at the community level to flesh out the nuance among communities and the companies operating within them.


Chapter 6

Conclusion

Natural resource-based occupations such as farming, mining, logging, and fishing are masculinized occupations. However, structural shifts have changed ‘what it means to be a man’ employed in natural resource-based occupations (Brandth 1995; Brandth and Haugen 2000; Coldwell 2007; Peter et al. 2000). Rural men’s masculine identities were once (and in some cases still are) tied to independence, pride in skill, pride in facing danger, and a sense of being in a unique occupational category (Carroll et al. 2005; Lee et al. 2001), but men also embrace alternative masculine identities tied to safety, collectivist goals, and professionalism (Ely and Meyerson 2010). Structural changes to men’s masculine work identities demonstrate that even among high-risk, male dominated workers, when structural opportunities exist for undoing conventional masculinity, men embrace alternative, collectivist masculinities (Ely and Meyerson 2010). Structural shifts in how men relate to their jobs, how masculinity is defined across occupations, and the ways men use work to construct their masculine identity has implications for rural masculinities but also men’s health (Alston and Kent 2008; Ni Laoire 2001). Additional research is needed, however, on other masculine occupations and industries to explore the breadth of these structural changes.

The purpose of this case study was to explore masculinity among oilfield workers at Magna-Drill—a contract drilling company. I sought to answer this central research question: How does organizational structure shape masculinity among oilfield men at work, home and in Marcellus Shale communities? This study verifies previous research
that argues the oilfield is gendered (Martin and Collinson 2002), or rather masculinized (Britton 1997). Masculinity, dominates legitimate social action in the oilfield and at Magna-Drill (Collinson 1999; Miller 2004; Ely and Meyerson 2010). Social actions, or the ways men “do gender” within the oilfield (West and Zimmerman 1987), are gendered performances that become a part of each man’s identity (Goffman 1959). But men in this study do not perform masculinities however they wish; they are accountable to domesticity, Magna-Drill’s organizational structure and how other in-group members construct and reinforce legitimate gender characteristics (West and Zimmerman 1987). Oilfield workers structure masculinity through “. . . the reproduced conduct of situated actors” (Giddens 1976: 127). Therefore, the gendered (masculine) norms structured by Magna-Drill’s policies, rules, and work patterns, shape masculine attitudes, beliefs, values, and performances at the interpersonal level.

**Work Life**

At work, Magna-Drill’s organizational structure (policies, rules, work pattern) reinforces the masculine structure of domesticity within the broader economic system. This enables (but also constrains) men to construct their sense of manhood around breadwinning. The company’s structure, which prioritizes collectivist goals and cooperation, contradicts ‘gender as usual’ within the oil and gas industry, because men in this industry typically value independence, bravado, and operate with little regard for their safety (Collinson 1998). Therefore, Magna-Drill’s structure corroborates the structural shifts documented within other masculinized natural resource-based
occupations (See Brandth 1995; Brandth and Haugen 2000; Coldwell 2007; Peter et al. 2000). The conventionally masculine oilfield behaviors of competing with and dominating coworkers (see Collinson 1999) are discouraged by Magna-Drill’s policies and “policed” by managers and coworkers (Kimmel 2004). To ‘fit in’ and perform legitimate masculinities, men must subscribe to the collective work identity: the occupational community. Participants describe this work environment as friendlier, and less competitive than the ‘old’ oilfield, but still masculinized work. Because the identities of men in this study originate from their job (Connell 2001), Magna-Drill’s organizational structure affects legitimate forms of masculinity at work.

The masculinized occupational community forms around four analytically separate elements that are connected empirically. First, Magna-Drill’s employees define themselves as in-group members, while distinguishing themselves from out-groups. To be a member of the occupational community, Magna-Drill employees must comply with the organization’s formal policies, such as wearing the required safety equipment and following safety policies. But becoming an occupational community member also requires following informal rules: buying-in emotionally to the work identity and nature of employment. ‘Real men’ at Magna-Drill do gender by respecting coworkers, looking out for everyone’s safety, and by being a “brother.” Being a “brother” means fulfilling one’s work responsibilities, while helping others. The ways men perform masculinities, and how masculinity is tied to one’s identity differs by one’s job responsibilities. Managers take it upon themselves to ensure the safety of their workers, and demonstrate masculinity through knowledge, acting as a father figure and trying to ‘fit in’ with the boys. Rig hands and mechanics get physically dirty and demonstrate a mental and
physical toughness while enduring physically demanding work conditions and harsh “hitch” work schedules. Men on Magna-Drill’s work sites still reinforce some informal elements of conventional masculinity—the sleeping arrangements and showering sequence are deeply embedded into the daily lives of these men. This reveals conventional hegemonic masculinities still persist, even under structural conditions that promote unconventional masculinities.

Second, occupational community members develop valued identities or self-images from their occupational roles. Men get tattoos of their rig number, or other symbols of the ‘oilfield’ to display their identity. Some men wear the label ‘oilfield trash’ as a badge of honor (Drew et al. 2007). But Magna-Drill’s organizational structure promotes undoing conventional ‘roughneck’ stereotypes: they even prohibit the use of the word ‘roughneck’—managers refer to coworkers by their names or their position title, not by stereotypes. This structure permits men to “undo” (Butler 2004) conventionally masculine oilfield discourse. While some men wear the term oilfield trash as a badge of honor, other men entered the industry for the high paying jobs, and dislike the label. They instead ascribe their identities to professionalism, the work they complete, and keeping their brothers safe.

Third, public hostility toward Magna-Drill workers solidifies the cohesiveness of bonds among occupational members. Oilfield workers get physically, socially, and morally dirty, rendering them analogous to ‘dirty workers’ (Hughes 1957, 1962). The label ‘oilfield trash’ exemplifies this attribute. These labels solidify bonds among employees, but Magna-Drill workers differentiate themselves from other companies. Therefore, they may be ‘oilfield trash,’ but they don’t see themselves as destructive, or
they are ‘not as bad as other companies.’ Therefore, Magna-Drill may pose risks, but participants feel the risks they pose are less severe/probable than those of other companies. This finding demonstrates that Magna-Drill’s masculine structure promotes undoing the oil & gas industry’s roughneck masculine structure, while other companies reinforce it.

Fourth, the high level of transience and confinement to worksites for long hitches blur the lines between work and leisure. Social relationships at work are constrained by physical proximity confining employees to the immediate social network. Further, social relationships are often relegated to family members, because the oilfield permeates multiple aspects of each employee’s life. For example, Magna-Drill recruits relatives of current employees, and the wives of workers create their own social support network. Workers create ‘home away from home’ by grocery shopping, and decorating the crew’s living quarters during holidays.

Men’s identities are tied to work, and this study connects theories on masculinity with organizational structure and occupational culture, two important factors for masculine identity. Occupational communities have never been discussed as gendered or masculinized occupational communities, although occupational communities often form in masculine, natural resource-based occupations (e.g. Carroll et al. 2005; Horobin 1957; Lawrence 1998; Lee et al. 2001; Lupo and Bailey’s 2011; MacKenzie et al. 2006; Marschall 2002; McClain 2000; Nadal’s 1984; Salaman 1974; Strangleman’s 2001; van Ginkel 2001). By connecting occupational communities with theories on masculinity, this study emphasizes the necessity to discuss how membership rules within occupational communities are gendered. Formal organizational structures enable and constrain
structured masculine actions within these communities (Giddens 1976). Future research should examine the gendered boundaries within occupational communities.

**Family Life**

The ways men “do” masculinity at work also has implications for the ways men perform masculinity at home. Domesticity shapes the lives of these men: breadwinning contributes to the work and family identities among participants. Even single men in this study value their abilities to ‘make it’ in the oilfield and earn a higher wage than men in other fields, which emphasizes the importance of a man’s job for his masculine identity. While workers fulfill their breadwinning roles for their families, they miss opportunities to fulfill caregiving responsibilities. The “hitch” work pattern, dangerous working conditions, and limited contact with family confine these men to fulltime breadwinning roles. These *ideal workers* (Williams 2000) look out for their family’s well-being, because their spouses often lack job opportunities. The lengthy absences affect traditional gender relations at home: men are no longer ‘head of the household.’ Women control household decisions, because male workers are away, or as some researchers describe it, “living two lives” (Parkes et al. 2005). This work pattern may provide opportunities for women to ‘undo’ traditional (patriarchal) gender relations within the domestic sphere, which may also create conflicts within the relationship.

Oilfield workers and their families differentially experience energy development. Some out-of-state workers suggest their domestic roles as breadwinners should excuse them from caregiving or childrearing responsibilities—they already fulfilled their
domestic duties by providing for the family. But their spouse’s ‘make them’ participate. Therefore, work-family conflicts do not just occur when workers are away; they occur while workers are home and negotiating gendered action within the domestic sphere. This pattern may emerge among Pennsylvania workers and their families in the future, but at the present time, Pennsylvanians are adapting to the oilfield lifestyle. The high turnover rates anecdotally reported among Pennsylvania men in the oilfield may result because they are unwilling to relinquish power at home, or they are unable to balance their work and family obligations. Participants who work in close proximity to their homes expressed satisfaction with the job, because working in Pennsylvania allowed them to spend time at home, while earning high oilfield wages. Out-of-state oilfield workers did not have this option; their options were constrained by external factors: energy booms are short-lived and employees could be transferred to other domestic, offshore or international formations. Overall, the reasons for retention and dropout warrant further investigation—work-family conflict (in some capacity) may play a role.

The organization’s structure, coupled with the long time spent away from home (Parkes et al. 2005), and the stigma associated with dirty work (Hughes 1951) also contribute to the emergence and cohesion among occupational community members (Van Maanen and Barley 1984). Men cope with work-family conflict, and fulfill caregiving responsibilities amongst each other, especially when someone experiences ‘tough times at home.’ The occupational community provides workers support when they are away from home, but it also reinforces the company’s collective goals, safety policies and professional expectations when men leave home, venture to work and enter rural energy boomtowns.
**Boomtown (Community) Life**

Residents in rural, natural resource-based communities experience changes before, during and after the onset of energy development (Brown et al. 2005). These changes sometimes manifest as social disruption. Population growth, scale of development, community factors, and the predominantly male, migratory workforce are blamed for these changes. Until this study, researchers have used a social disruption lens to examine residents’ experiences and perceptions with development, while overlooking those of transient energy workers. Energy workers are consistently blamed for creating disruption; however, no study (until now) has sought to uncover the structures that enable and constrain ‘roughneck’ masculinity that may manifest as social transgressions—e.g. drinking, drugs, crime.

The social transgressions that residents report may derive from a hyper-masculine culture within the energy industry. The following conventional masculine characteristics may contribute to social disruption: individualism, toughness, bravado, dominance. However, the way Magna-Drill formally structures attitudes, beliefs and values among workers (through work pattern, procedures and policies) filters down into occupational cultures, which informally enable and constrain masculine attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors. Magna-Drill’s organizational structure and occupational community are recursively implicated in undoing the oil & gas industry’s conventional roughneck masculinity (Giddens 1986). Therefore, researchers who study social disruption mischaracterize all companies and all workers as the same. Structurally, company policies enable and constrain masculinities among energy workers, and researchers must
account for variations at the organizational and individual levels to understand the antecedents of community transgressions, and potential social transgressions. This research verifies Wilkinson et al.’s (1982) recommendation: *researchers must account for the social complexities affecting social life within boomtowns.*

Magna-Drill employees did not describe performing frontier masculinities (Connell 1993) or what I call “roughneck” masculinities in communities after their shifts—behaviors such as drinking, drug use, fighting and crime—behaviors that previous researchers document as part of the oil & gas industry’s masculine culture (Collinson 1999). Roughneck masculinities contradict Magna-Drill’s collectivist goals and the company’s emphasis on safety. Formally, management officials terminated employees who engaged in this behavior and informally, in-group members “ran them off” because they didn’t subscribe to the occupational community and Magna-Drill’s values. Therefore, Magna-Drill’s structure enables and constrains ‘what it means to be a man,’ especially what it means and how to behave as ‘oilfield men’ in Marcellus communities, but the occupational community reinforces this structure.

**Future Research**

The case study approach limits this study’s external generalizability to additional companies, within or outside the Marcellus Shale region. The proposed research provides information on how masculinity is structured and constructed within Magna-Drill. The organizational structures and occupational community were strong determinants shaping masculinity among Magna-Drill’s workers; therefore, while this study’s findings cannot
be generalized across all companies these findings may have “face generalizability” (Maxwell 2005). This means there is no reason to believe these findings do not apply to other companies or workers with a similar organizational structure and occupational culture. When generalizing these results, researchers must also keep in mind the period of analysis—this study examines the boom phase of development, meaning other phases of development may alter masculinities among oilfield workers. For instance, because Magna-Drill often hires workers with oilfield experience, they are unlikely to employ men from Pennsylvania to work on a drilling rig—until they are properly trained. And residency is one factor likely to affect masculinity among oilfield workers. Further, this study’s data collection methods are unable to capture how informal rules differ company-wide, because this would require documenting the distinct nuances among these rules—informal rules may differ among crews and shifts. Ethnographic field methods where the researcher ‘goes native’ are more appropriate for capturing these nuanced details.

This study has implications for future research on social disruption. I would like to propose the following hypothesis for future research: workers from companies with organizational structures that allow men to undo conventional masculinities will perform masculine behaviors that result in fewer social transgressions (drinking, drugs, crime, etc.), than workers from companies that endorse conventional masculine norms. The relationship between the gendered (masculine) organizational structures in the oilfield are largely conducted offshore; when placed in the onshore Marcellus context, we are able to see the connection between community disruption and the ways these organizations enable and constrain the behaviors of their workers. Therefore, future research must answer this question: What types of company policies/ organizational structures
encourage community disruption? Instead of holding industry constant, researchers should compare communities within the Marcellus Shale region, or across unconventional energy formations with similar extractive histories, levels of development, and community conditions. Varying production and service companies with a regional headquarters in communities may yield important information for understanding how (and what) organizational structures affect social disruption.

Further, within the Marcellus Shale region, workers are blamed for breaking up marriages, and ‘stealing the women.’ Some work within the social disruption literature confirms that when energy development enters rural communities, the divorce rates rise (Freudenburg et al. 1982; Freudenburg 1981). However, in the Marcellus Shale region many local workers are entering the industry. This industry has a very demanding “hitch” work pattern that poses problems for workers and family members participating in this study, and previous research (see Collinson 1998; Clark et al. 1985; Clark and Taylor 1988; Gramling 1989; Forsyth and Gauthier 1999; Mauther et al. 2000; Parkes et al. 2005; Sheilds 2003; Solheim 1988; Taylor and Simmonds 2009). One unanswered question is: are increasing divorce rates attributable to the influx of male workers (stealing women), or are local workers and their families facing heightened work-family conflicts when local workers are oriented into the oil and gas industry?

This study has implications for future research that documents alterations to the local gender structure (Risman 2009). Researchers should consider how extra-local masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) affect the community’s gender structure—does the introduction of extra-local masculinities promote a gender structure
open to alternative femininities? What effect do extra-local masculinities have on local masculinities?

Finally, recent social disruption research on community change (Anderson and Theodori 2009; Brasier et al. 2010, Theodori 2009) does a fine job chronicling change across communities, over time, but comparable studies will do little to understand the antecedents of social transgressions, unless they include energy workers in their sample. Specifically, research should examine the industry’s structure and culture, organizational structures and cultures, and occupational cultures to understand the structured (masculine) actions among energy workers. Studies that truly see the differential experience of development for all populations, not just community residents, are better suited to mitigate social disruption and create change in communities, and among energy workers and energy companies potentially responsible for social disruption.
Appendix A

Gaining Access: Four Approaches

Approach One: consisted of contacting a list of companies made from previous field work, and a list of companies currently operating in the area. I utilized Maxfield and Babbie’s ‘formal request of approval’ to contact companies operating in central Pennsylvania’s Marcellus Shale region. The ‘formal request of approval’ method is touted as an effective means for obtaining access to businesses and organizations. I adapted the approach to meet the financial and time limitations of this study; therefore, instead of beginning by sending letters to corporate offices I made phone calls to specific representatives within the company. Typically representatives worked in government relations, and human resource departments. Upon placing the phone call I followed three procedures.

My first procedure was to call the identified representative(s). If the call was answered I would introduce myself, explain my study’s objectives, and my reason for calling—obtaining access to interview his/her company’s workers. However, if the call was not answered, I followed procedure two: I left a message explaining who I was, my study’s objectives, and how they could help, along with my contact information. Upon leaving this message I waited 24 hours, and if I had not heard back from the representative procedure three was to send a follow up email. The email included the following subject line, “Marcellus Workers: Follow Up.” The email greeted the company representative, and explained the study. The body also indicated that the participating companies would benefit from knowing more about their workers, and their participation
was an integral component to completing this research. Further, I stressed my research would be conducted under strict rules of confidentiality and all data would be reported anonymously. Representatives were then thanked for their assistance and prompted to contact me at the listed phone number, mailing address, or email. I formally requested approval using these three procedures from 34 companies with a presence in central Pennsylvania.

Although many representatives answered their phones, returned calls, or responded over email, all declined to participate when I used the adapted formal request of approval method. Some expressed interest in the study over the phone and via email, but declined to participate. Representatives interested in the study commented their interest stemmed from the study’s utility for benefiting management and field workers; however, when they sought clearance from higher levels of management, their requests were denied. Explanations varied, but generally companies feared participation would expose company secrets to competitors, reduce the productivity of workers, and most importantly for the representatives I spoke with was the possibility of information leaking to a biased media.

Approach Two followed these failed attempts, and utilized contacts made during previous research, including government officials and Penn State Extension Educators. These informants work closely with industry representatives in central Pennsylvania. I followed approach one’s procedures, but tailored it to enlist the help of these informants for identifying and contacting industry representatives. These field contacts provided me lists of companies where they worked in central Pennsylvania and the corresponding contact information for the appropriate representatives. These individuals were also
helpful for identifying other field contacts in central Pennsylvania who worked with industry representatives. Using these contacts I again employed the ‘formal request of approval’ method and corresponding three procedures for obtaining company consent. All the nine contacts provided by government officials and Penn State Extension declined to participate in this study.

Approach Three departed from the formal request of approval, because I stumbled upon (almost by accident) an old contact I made via a personal relationship. Early in the design of this study’s research prospectus I established a rapport with a man I’ll identify as Skip, an upper management representative for a prominent natural gas company with holdings throughout the Marcellus Shale region. In early August, 2011, I contacted Skip and after a brief phone conversation where I reminded him of my interests and study objectives, he agreed to meet face-to-face and discuss my project. Skip served a dual role, gatekeeper and project advocate. Skip was to contact management within other companies operating within the Marcellus Shale, and provided me with a list of names.

Approach Four was the final method used for accessing gas workers. This approach was less formal than the previous methods. I approached colleagues asking if they knew gas workers in central Pennsylvania. Further, I also used an approach resembling Maxwell’s (2005) approach dubbed ‘hanging out.’ Occasionally while spending time in central Pennsylvania I encountered gas workers in public and private venues. Here I approached them, explained my research and asked if they would participate in my research. In one instance I walked up to a house with a company vehicle in the driveway, and explained my research to the house’s residents. This method
provided me access to a field supervisor within Suppa-Frac (pseudonym), although my request for further access was denied.
Appendix B

Interview Guide

1) **Introduction:** could you just give me an introduction, tell me a little bit about yourself.

   - Where are you from?
   - How old are you? [Marital status, Children]
   - How did you wind up in Pennsylvania?
   - How did you get started working in the gas industry?

2) **Organizational/Occupational Culture**

   a. What is your job title?

      - On a daily basis: what does your job consists of?

      - [For Fieldworkers] Do you get dirty?

   b. How long have you worked for [Company]?

      - Have you worked for any other companies?

      - How does this company compare to other companies?

3) **Family:** What's it like [moving your family all over the country/world; working away from your family]?

   b. Do you ever feel tension between work and family needs?

      - What is that like?

   c. What's a family man in this industry look like?
4) **Public Perception:** The first impression most people have of this industry: cowboys, a real rough-and-tumble, play-hard-drill-hard kind of place. To what extent is that an accurate image of the industry?

a. If, “not accurate”:
   
i. That’s counter to the stereotype most people have about what it’s like to work on an oil rig—how do you explain that?
   
ii. Has it always been this way, or have things changed? Is this different from the way it is on other rigs?
   
iii. (If changed/different) Which way is better? Why?
   
iv. (If changed/different) Why do you think it’s changed/different?

b. If “accurate”:
   
i. Can you give me some examples of that kind of behavior?
   
ii. Is that a good thing, a bad thing, or does it not really matter?

4. (cont.) From your experience around here, how does the public perceive oil field workers?

   - How much respect do people have for what you do?
   
   - Outcasts, looked down upon?

5) **Relationships:** What kinds of people are most respected in this industry?

a. What kind of behavior or attitudes earns other people’s respect?

   b. Think about the kinds of relationships you have with the guys you work with here. How do they compare with the kinds of relationships you have with guys outside work?
6) **Local/ Extra-Local Culture**

a. Do you see any differences between people from out-of-state and Pennsylvanians?
   
   - How do the men from Pennsylvania compare to men from out-of state?
   
   - What are men from Pennsylvania like? [Out-of-state men?]

b. What’s it like working in this area?

   - What do you do outside work? [Who are you with? Where do you go?]

7) **Masculine Occupation**: What jobs are the most manly?

a. What makes these jobs more masculine than others?

   - Are these the physically toughest jobs?

b. What does being a man mean to you?

8) **Closing**: Is there anything else we did not discuss that you feel is important to my study?
Appendix C

Employment by Gender in Extraction Related industries

http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-
qr_name=ACS_2009_5YR_G00_S2403&-ds_name=ACS_2009_5YR_G00_&-
redoLog=false

Appendix C: Men are predominantly employed within energy extraction (quarrying, oil and gas extraction) and its three supporting industries: construction, transportation/warehousing, and utilities. These industries rely on men for completing labor—91% of construction workers are men, and 9% are women. Extractive industries rely on men second most with 87% of those employed are men, and 13% women. Utilities employ the third highest percentage of men at 78%, while 22% are women. Of Transportation and Warehousing employees, 75% are men, and 25% are women.
References

Comparison of Pennsylvania and New York Case Studies.” *Journal of Rural Social Sciences.*


Dunkley, Cheryl M. “Gender, the ‘Great Outdoors’, and Youth Outmigration from Rural Communities”. Madison, WI, 2009.
Fahys-Smith, V. E. “Migration of Boom-town Construction Workers: Wanderlust or Adaptation” (1982).


———. “‘Said and Done’ Versus ‘Saying and Doing’. ’” Gender & Society 17, no. 3 (June 1, 2003): 342–366.


Risman, B. J. “From Doing to Undoing: Gender as We Know It.” Gender & Society 23, no. 1 (2009): 81.


Risman, Barbara J. “From the SWS President: Valuing All Flavors of Feminist Sociology.” Gender and Society 17, no. 5 (October 1, 2003): 659–663.


Wolcott, Harry F. Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis, and Interpretation. SAGE, 1994.
VITA

Matthew R. Filteau

Education
Pennsylvania State University  Rural Sociology  PhD  2012
University of Massachusetts Boston  Applied Sociology  MA  2008
University of Southern Maine  Sociology  BA  2006

Publications


Seminars & Guest Lectures


Awards & Recognition
2012  Olaf Larson Graduate Student Paper Award, Rural Sociological Association
2011  College of Agricultural Sciences Doctoral Research Award
2012  Gamma Sigma Delta, Honor Society of Agriculture
2008  Dr. Robert W. Spayne Thesis Research Grant

Current Professional Memberships
Rural Sociological Society
Eastern Sociological Society
Gamma Sigma Delta (Honor Society of Agriculture)