

Men Doing and Undoing Gender at Work:

A Review and Research Agenda

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ABSTRACT

While research on gender in organizations has not only documented sustained gender inequality, it has also offered an understanding of how gender is enacted through doing and undoing gender. An underexplored aspect concerns how men can do and undo gender to support or hinder gender equality processes in organizations. Doing gender is then understood as creating gender difference while undoing gender would conversely mean to reduce gender difference. The former is supporting gender inequality while the latter means moving toward gender equality. This article therefore provides a systematic review of empirical articles that discuss how men are doing and undoing gender within an organizational context. It is shown that undoing gender practices of men in organizations are under researched and a research agenda of how men can undo gender at work is thus developed. This article makes a two-fold contribution: first it offers a refinement of doing and undoing gender approaches and second, it develops a research agenda for exploring how men can undo gender at work.

Keywords: Gender, Leadership, Managers, Performativity, Practice, Work

INTRODUCTION

While there has been a lot of focus on women in organizations, the role of men in organizational gender equality processes is less well understood. Men are often seen as hindering women's progress (Cockburn, 1991; McKinsey, 2012; Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009) yet a detailed and systematic account of how their practices are supporting or hindering gender equality is still missing. While research has analyzed how men enact masculinities (Kerfoot, 1992; McCabe & Knights, 2015; Mellström, 2004; Simpson, 2004), there is much less research that explores the concerted yet often subconscious actions that men engage in to exclude women (Martin, 2001). Such research sees gender as social practice or, in other words, a doing gender (Gherardi, 1994; Martin, 2003). There has been ample research to explore doing gender at work (for instance Eriksson-Zetterquist & Renemark, 2016; Leidner, 1991, 1993; Mavin, Grandy, & Williams, 2014; Tibbals, 2007) which has often drawn on different conceptualizations of doing and undoing gender (Kelan, 2010). Doing gender can for instance be understood as enacting gender in such a way that it is in line with gender normative expectations while undoing gender then means to enact gender in non-normative ways (Kelan, 2010). However these conceptualizations of doing and undoing gender do not necessarily make a statement about gender inequality, i.e. undoing gender does not *per se* mean that gender equality is established. Undoing gender then does not mean that power structures and hierarchies disappear (van den Brink & Benschop, 2012). Another useful conceptualization of undoing gender is employed by Deutsch (2007), who distinguishes between doing gender as creating gender difference and undoing gender as reducing gender difference. While the former leads to gender inequality the latter leads to gender equality. Such a lens on doing and undoing gender is well-suited to explore how

men's practices are supporting or challenging the existing gender system or, put differently, how they are doing and undoing gender.

In order to develop a more systematic and detailed account of men doing and undoing gender in organizations and what this means for gender equality, it is useful to provide an analysis of practices that have already been identified by prior literature. While there are various approaches to systematic literature reviews (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009; Briner & Denyer, 2012), they have rarely been employed to study practices like doing and undoing gender (Nentwich & Kelan, 2014). The reasons for this are two-fold: first the field is still fairly new and as such less mature than other fields; second, a doing and undoing gender angle means to explore gender practices (Bruni, Gherardi, & Poggio, 2004, 2005; Gherardi, 2009) that are less likely to be usefully reviewed in many standard systematic literature reviews. To analyze such research inspiration was drawn from processes associated with meta-ethnographies (Noblit & Hare, 1988) which allows for aggregating, comparing and compiling different studies to generate insight from a wider body of work. This approach appears well suited to explore the doing and undoing of gender.

The aim of the article is to develop more theoretical sophistication in understanding and researching doing and undoing gender by providing a compendium of practices of how men are doing and undoing gender in the work context to support or hinder gender equality. This will be done through reviewing the literature that explores how men act in concert to either support women or to keep them out. The article will start with a review of doing and undoing gender approaches and explain which approach is

used for this article. Second, the methodology and methods to collate the literature for this study are outlined. Following this, the findings from the literature review are outlined. The findings are then discussed to expand the conceptualization and operationalization of doing and undoing gender and to develop a research agenda for future research in that field. Finally, a conclusion is offered.

DOING GENDER, DOING GENDER INEQUALITY?

In order to understand gender relations in organizations, many scholars have turned to approaches of doing gender (e.g. Änggård, 2005; Korvajärvi, 1997; Leidner, 1991; Pilgeram, 2007; West & Zimmerman, 1991). Doing gender approaches on a general level emerge from ethnomethodological (West & Zimmerman, 1987) and poststructural (Butler, 1990, 1993) approaches to theorize, conceptualize and research gender interactions. Both approaches also indicate a different version of how gender can be undone: for Butler a key concern is how the gender binary can be subverted through unusual and unexpected connections whereas for West and Zimmerman the category of gender has to lose importance for gender to be undone (for a review see Kelan, 2010).

Deutsch (2007) has offered another conceptualization of undoing gender following the ethnomethodological approach. For Deutsch (2007) undoing gender relates to gender equality in the form of reproducing gender difference (doing gender) and reducing gender difference (undoing gender). Deutsch (2007) thereby aims to expand the doing gender approach which has often been used to show the persistence of

gender but not the potential for change in gender interactions. Deutsch (2007) suggests to explore situations where gender difference is reduced or even becomes irrelevant in social interaction. In that sense social interactions are not sites to reproduce gender but can also be used to reduce gender or potentially even eliminate gender difference. This is important for research, which aims to show not only continuity but also change in gender interactions. The logical consequence of Deutsch's (2007) approach to undoing gender is then that with the reduction in gender difference, gender equality is achieved. In this conceptualization doing gender is then understood as a way to continue gender inequality through invoking gender difference; undoing gender are those interactions where gender difference is reduced and gender equality is established. Like West and Zimmerman (1987), Deutsch (2007) presumes that gender is done in relation to sex category which in turn is related to sex. In West and Zimmerman's (1987) original conceptualization sex is understood as the biological classification that puts persons into two groups: males and females. Sex category is the application of sex criteria, which places the individual into one of these two groups. Gender is the process of 'managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category' (West & Zimmerman, 1987: 127). Doing gender then means enacting masculinity and femininity in light of the perceived sex category. However Deutsch (2007) questions in how far the stereotypes associated with a sex category are automatically activated. While Deutsch (2007) agrees that stereotypes are indeed often automatically activated, she also cited examples where gender is not omnirelevant and is actually in the background rather than in the foreground (Deutsch, 2007): when a Chinese woman is putting on make up gender is automatically accessed but if the Chinese woman is eating with chopsticks the Chinese identity is

accessed. This points to the fact that gender is not equally relevant in every situation but also shows the relevance of interpretation for making sense of doing and undoing gender.

The divergent definitions around doing and undoing gender have also permeated empirical studies. Doing gender has been applied in a variety of settings and contexts such as waitressing (Hall, 1993; Tibbals, 2007), education (Änggård, 2005; Mendick, 2005), flight attending (Tyler & Abbott, 1998), women elite leaders (Mavin & Grandy, 2016; Mavin et al., 2014), exotic dancers (Trautner, 2005) or information communication technology work (Kelan, 2008a). Nentwich and Kelan (2014) point out that much empirical research that explores gender in organizations could profit from more specificity of how doing gender is analyzed. The article details five different levels of how doing gender can be analyzed: structures, hierarchies, identities, flexible and context specific and gradually relevant and subverted. Researchers more interested in structures would for instance question how gendered structures are embedded in jobs and occupations and researchers exploring hierarchies would highlight how the doing of gender enforces gender hierarchies such as that the masculine is valued over the feminine (for a review see Nentwich & Kelan, 2014). While Deutsch's (2007) approach is much broader in scope, one potential interpretation of undoing gender is that reducing gender difference in hierarchies means that gender equality is achieved.

Such an approach has for instance been employed to study how gender is done and undone in nurseries (Nentwich, Poppen, Schälin, & Vogt, 2013; Tennhoff, Nentwich,

& Vogt, 2015). This research uses an understanding of undoing gender based on Deutsch (2007) to show how the subject position of a professional in nursery work appears to undo gender in the sense that it reduces gender difference and stresses gender sameness (Tennhoff et al., 2015). However the researchers show how men are constructed as a 'wanted other' due to their underrepresentation in the field (Tennhoff et al., 2015). This in turn leads to a construction where the apparently gender neutral professional comes through the construction of men as 'wanted other' strongly associated with giving preference to masculinity. It has been shown in prior research that the same dynamic is not at play for women in male-dominated professions (e.g. Kelan, 2008a). While gender appears undone through enacting gender similarity, it is also redone in a new formation where gender difference is enacted. The authors also highlight a range of discursive practices that those men engage in which goes beyond the traditional conceptualization of constructing hegemonic and alternative masculinities; instead the research shows how men mobilize a variety of discursive resources to construct their own subject positions (Nentwich et al., 2013).

Prior research has also often shown how gender is done and gender inequality perpetuated through men's actions. Martin (2001) has coined the term mobilizing masculinities to describe concerted actions of men in the workplace or in other words how men are doing gender hierarchy by privileging the masculine over the feminine. She asserts that many of those practices are liminal and as such unconscious (Martin, 2003). Martin (2006) distinguishes between gendering practices which are the routines that are embedded in organizational practices and practicing gender as the literal saying and doing which are unreflective. She defined mobilizing masculinities as 'practices that are represented or interpreted by either actor and/or observer as

masculine within a system of gender relations that give them meaning as gendered 'masculine'.' (Martin, 2001: 588). Van den Brink and Benschop (2014) extend Martin's (2001) definition by also including mobilizing femininities in their work which they define conversely as practices where women support or hinder other women (van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). Doing gender would then entail that gender hierarchy is enacted by preferring the masculine over the feminine while undoing gender would mean that gender difference is reduced by preferring neither the masculine nor the feminine. However the research also stressed that men can engage in mobilizing femininities where men support women (van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). Again this can entail undoing gender by not favouring the masculine over the feminine.

This raises the question in how far men as managers and leaders in organizations both enact the gender hierarchy through creating and reducing gender difference. This has so far not been explored in great detail. Most research appears to focus on how men enact identities and how doing and undoing gender can be expressed through this but there is much less research on how doing and undoing gender can be understood as doing and undoing gender hierarchies. In the following section it is outlined how doing gender can be used to conceptualize how men can potentially do and undo gender. The approach adopted in this article reviews how men are stressing and reducing gender difference and thereby create or challenge gender inequality. This approach is in line with Deutsch's (2007) conceptualization of doing and undoing gender. When taking this perspective, the focus shifts to exploring how gender equality can be established on an organizational level through doing and undoing gender hierarchy. While doing gender would be a practice that supports gender

difference and therefore inequality, undoing gender would conversely be to enact gender similarity, which is in Deutsch's (2007) conceptual framework equated with gender equality.

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

One key challenge of reviewing the literature on doing and undoing gender by men in organizations is that the field is less mature than other fields. While there are a range of studies that explore doing and undoing gender at work, few focus specifically on men. While systematic reviews offer the possibility of conducting a literature review in a rigorous fashion to create aggregated insight from a body of research (Briner & Denyer, 2012), there are a range of approaches that are used in the social sciences (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009) which include meta-ethnography, grounded theory, thematic synthesis, textual narrative synthesis and meta-study among others. While meta-ethnographies attempt to translate studies from one into the other (Noblit & Hare, 1988), the aim of this research is much less a translation but compiling different findings. In addition, not all studies are going to be ethnographies. However many of the practical steps of identifying and conducting such a research can borrow from how meta-ethnographies are conducted.

The seven step process of meta-ethnography entails: getting started, deciding what is relevant to the initial interest, reading the studies, determining how the studies are related, translating the studies into one another, synthesizing translations and expressing the synthesis (Lee, Hart, Watson, & Rapley, 2014; Noblit & Hare, 1988).

The first step of creating a meta-ethnography is to develop a field of interest. The question for this review is how men are doing and undoing gender in the workplace. After establishing the field of interest, one needs to decide what is relevant to this initial interest. In order to review the literature of how men are doing and undoing gender in organizations, it was first important to find relevant articles. For the purpose of this article, relevance was defined as first, qualitative research based on primary material and second, focus on practices of men and/or masculinity in work context (often in relation to women and/or femininity) and third, which studies provided the most opportunity to learn about differences and similarities between studies (Doyle, 2003). The aim was not to review the research on masculinities in organizations as such, which focuses more on identities, but rather to locate articles that show how men are doing and undoing gender to resist or create gender equality.

In order to source material for this meta-ethnography, I worked with an information scientist to locate appropriate research. ProQuest ABI/INFORM and EBSCO were searched on 1 and 2 October 2014, on 17 and 18 January 2016 and on 15 July 2016. I included keywords commonly used in existing literature to describe the practices of men in the workplace. The keywords used were (men or male or masculin* or gender) and (change or norm or culture or resist* or support or homosocial* or mobili*ing) and (organi*ation or work). The first set of keywords was expected to indicate any research that focuses on men or masculinities, the second set of keywords referred to terms commonly used in regards to men's behaviors at work. The final set of keywords should narrow the findings to any research in the work context. The results were narrowed further to academic articles and sorted based on relevance. As for this study qualitative research was sought but entering relevant search terms (ethno* or

interview or observation or shadowing) did not produce relevant results. In addition, I searched WorldCat to explore books and book chapters that might contain relevant material using the key terms (men resist* gender change work culture), (masc* resist* change work culture manager) or (men managers). As WorldCat is less sophisticated in terms of the searches allowed, I used the three sets of terms separately and went through the results lists. I also went through the reference lists of published studies and contacted researchers in the field for unpublished or forthcoming studies that had not been picked up by a keyword search. In addition, I searched the bibliographies of relevant studies to find similar studies that might be useful but that did not come up in the search. To augment the research results, I also explored through Google Scholar which works cited pieces that I had already included in my research, for instance who cited Martin's (2001) influential article. Such a reverse strategy allows identifying articles that might not have been captured through a keyword search.

The criteria for inclusion into the review were as follows: first, the material should be based on empirical research including autoethnographic observations; second, the material should employ an understanding of gender as a practice in its different interpretations; third, the material should discuss men and masculinities in relation to gender equality. The material research resulted in a long-list of articles, books or book chapters, all the material was read in full and evaluated based on the above criteria for inclusion. From the longlist a shortlist of 15 sources was created which looked at doing and undoing gender by men. Out of those sources, the sources included in the final list were narrowed down to ensure as much variation in the sample as possible whilst also selecting the richest studies from which the research could learn the most

(Doyle, 2003). This is in line with principles of theoretical sampling that are associated with grounded research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It was also considered what might be most relevant for the audience of the research (Noblit & Hare, 1988), which in this case are researchers in the field of doing and undoing gender at work. The resulting 15 sources are not meant to be an exhaustive review of the literature but instead are a purposeful sample because the purpose of meta-ethnography is to create interpretative explanation but not to predict an outcome (Campbell et al., 2003; Doyle, 2003).

Table 1: Description of Secondary Material

Citation	Publication type	Industry	Country	Method	Focus of study
Cockburn, 1991	Book	Retail, government, local authority, trade union	UK	Four comparative case studies, four months ethnographies (observation, documentary investigation, 200 in depth interviews [1/3 women, 2/3 men])	Men's resistance to women at work
Collinson & Hearn, 1994	Journal article	Academia, manufacturing and others	UK	Autoethnographic observations and review of secondary research	Naming men as men
Connell & Wood, 2005	Journal article	Business	Australia	Interviews 11 business men	Transnational business masculinity
Ely & Meyerson, 2010	Journal article	Oil platforms	USA	Observation and interviews	Men undoing gender in dangerous environments
Hawkins, 2013	Journal article	Recruitment agency	UK	Participant observation and interviews	Shows how gender is embedded in values and managerial style and the

					collaborative process of teamwork
Martin, 1996	Book chapter	Two universities and research and development lab	USA	In depth interviews (22, 12 women, ten men), six group interviews (groups of four-six), six training and meeting observations (participants ranging from 15-90) and archival material analysis	Gendering dynamics in evaluations
Martin, 2001	Journal article	Large organizations (chemical, banking, insurance, construction and computer manufacturing)	USA	Six interviews with women and observation	How do women experience concerted masculinities at work
Murgia & Poggio, 2009	Journal article	Public and private organizations	Italy	Three stories from larger set of material	Fathers stories at work
Panayiotou, 2010	Journal article	Popular films pertaining to organizations	various	Eight films	Competing forms of masculinities at work
Prichard, 1996	Book chapter	Senior administration in tertiary education	UK	35 interviews of which six were with women	Changes and continuities in higher education practices as intertwined with masculinities
Roper, 1996	Book chapter	Academia	Australia	Two informants	Homosocial desires as an expression of masculinity
van den Brink & Benschop, 2014	Journal article	Academia	Netherlands	64 interviews with men and women who have acted as scouts or appointment committee members	Gendering of the networking practice gatekeeping
de Vries, 2015	Journal article	Academia & police force	Australia	Four interviews with gender change agents (two men and two women who are CEOs) alongside participant	Women and men in executive roles who are gender change agents

				observation as a consultant	
Wahl, 2014	Journal article	Research & development unit, pharmaceutical industry	Sweden	Six interview with men who are senior managers	Men as executives challenging masculine norm
Wajcman, 1998	Book	High tech private sector organization	UK	20 interviews with men and women (plus wider survey)	Gender relations of management

As Martin's (2001) article had already dealt with specific doing gender practices performed by men, this was the first article analysed. While Martin refers to six practices she defined as mobilizing masculinities, it was decided to split up those practices into more granular elements that would facilitate recognizing them in a fieldwork setting. For instance 'marking territory' was added and 'expropriating others' labour' was split up into the two components. It was central to include not only individual practices but concerted practices where one or more actors were involved. Many of those practices were liminal to the actors themselves, meaning that they were not aware of what they were doing. Definitions provided by Martin were largely retained but shorted to the actual practice and partly rewritten and renamed. To reflect the analysis outcome, a table was created in which each practice was named and defined. In order to find a suitable form to present the practices different table formats were explored. Inspiration was drawn from meta-ethnographies (Noblit & Hare, 1988).

This was a good basis to note specific practices that other sources had identified which were added to the table. During the process I ensured that new practices were either added in a new row or that similar examples of practices were listed in the same

row. I tried to stick with the practice of finding a gerund form to illuminate the specific practice as Martin (2001) has done. In addition, I added a basic outline of what this practice entailed. A condensed version of the table is Table 2 and the examples are described in detail in the findings section.

It became clear that some of the practices overlapped and synergies between the different practices were used to combine them as much as possible under a category. It became obvious that most pieces of research focused on practices through which men were doing gender rather than undoing gender, leading to an imbalance of practices. The reason for this seems to lie in the fact that most studies focus on analyzing men's practices that hinder women in the workplace rather than those that support women at work.

MEN DOING AND UNDOING GENDER IN ORGANIZATIONS

Four themes emerged when exploring the practices that the literature described in relation to men doing and undoing gender in organizations. First men creating connection with other men, which means to exclude women. Second, men distancing themselves from women. Third, men impressing others and fourth, men displaying heroism. For each of those themes there are a range of practices that were discussed in the literature. Very often there was only one literature reference associated with one practice but in some cases there were two or more sources that talked about the same or at least sufficiently similar practices. To reiterate, the research used Deutsch's (2007) conceptualization of doing gender as creating gender difference and undoing

gender as reducing gender difference. The former is presumed to create gender inequality whereas the latter creates gender equality. As noted before the literature focused more on doing gender practices than undoing gender practices of men in the work context, which means that the undoing gender practices are not as numerous. In the following Table (Table 2) the four themes and the associated practices and examples are discussed.

Table 2: Compendium of Practices - Men Doing and Undoing Gender at Work

Themes	Doing gender	Undoing gender
Men creating connection with other men	Bonding through sexual objectification of women	
	Bonding through mocking and foul language with other men	
	Sucking up – connecting with another man to gain his support	
	Building informal workplace relationships	
	Identifying with the similar – men identifying with other men due to shared similarity	
	Supporting – men ensuring that other men gain benefits	
	Protecting – preventing other men from suffering negative consequences	
	Liking and disliking - men making decisions based on personal relations	
	Expressing fondness – men expressing fondness due to shared interests	
	Establishing connection to other men by excluding non-normative men	
	Reproducing proven success model – selecting people who look like the incumbent	
Men distancing themselves from women	Publicly criticising – men publicly criticise women	

	Ganging up on women – men act in concert to depreciate women	
	Excluding women - men socializing together	
	Displaying hostility to women – crowing over women’s humiliation	
	Looking sulky - when a woman exerts authority over a man	
	Seeing the wife – men associate female employees with their wives	
	Using others – men abusing women’s emotional work and support	
	Being absent or undermining women’s events	Visibility and presence at women’s events
Men impressing others	Dominating – men exercising domination over others	Displaying humility
		Using power to advance women
	Peacocking – men vying for attention and time	
	Occupying space – men occupy space such as a spacious office or have expansive gestures	Sharing space – men sharing space with others
	Self-promoting – men asserting talent as exceptional	
Men displaying heroism	Taking credit – men using other’s effort and taking credit for them	
	Being fully dedicated to work – men being free from caring responsibilities	Showing dedication to private life
	Being highly competitive	
	Deploying and facing power	
	Enacting a warrior ethic	
	Displaying financial success	
	Control over own body	
	Celebrating total commitment – applauding men’s extreme presenteeism	
	Responding enthusiastically – showing enthusiasm about a job offer	
	Going for the glory – exceeding expectations to acquire glory	Showing openness to failure – admitting mistakes
	Being rational - drawing on facts	Displaying emotional

	and figures	intelligence and sharing emotions
	Being task orientated	Being people orientated

Men Creating Connection with Other Men

Many of the practices identified related to men creating connections with other men. Doing gender means here to create gender difference by connecting with other men and excluding women. Undoing gender practices would entail reducing gender difference by not only connecting with men but by connecting with women and men. The first example refers to bonding through sexually objectifying women which was identified by Cockburn (1991) and Hawkins (2013). Other research has also shown how men bond with other men through mocking them and through foul language. Practising ‘piss-taking’ was singled out as a common in male-dominated workplaces where men have to be able to ‘give it and take it’ (Collinson & Hearn, 1994: 9). This indicates that the ability to tolerate mockery and reciprocate this behaviour is an important mechanism of men’s bonding. Similarly, it has been observed that using foul language is a way through which hegemonic masculinity is expressed and a connection to other men is created (Panayiotou, 2010). Another example is sucking up to other men to gain their support. Martin (2001) cites the example of men listening to a more powerful man with the intent to connect and secure his support. Martin (2001) also observed the next example of engaging other men for casual conversations on not-work related topics with the aim to connect to other men to secure opportunities that might arise. Much of the literature also talked about how men build informal relationships in and outside of the workplace. This can be achieved by discussing shared interests through which others are excluded and an in-group is created (Collinson & Hearn, 1994). Visiting which involves men talking to

other men about non-work topics with the strategic aim to build a relationship and move ahead is another example of such behavior (Martin, 2001).

It has also been documented how men profit from the power of an old boy network where meeting socially is a means to advance one's career (Wajcman, 1998). Men also identified with similar, in this case other men. This was observed in the context of academic appointments by van den Brink and Benschop (2014) who show that men use their own network and are more comfortable to promote men who are like them. Another basis for men's bonding through experienced similarity is 'fitting in' (Connell & Wood, 2005). This could for instance relate to the perception that someone looks right and has the right contacts to be successful within an organization. Another practice entails men supporting other men. Martin (2001) observed that men often help other men to get a higher salary by arguing that they are the breadwinner. Similarly, it has been observed that the need for men to advance within an organizational hierarchy is determined by the presumed requirement that men have to provide for a family (Collinson & Hearn, 1994). It was also observed that younger men request support from powerful and superior men (Martin, 1996). Wajcman (1998) showed that men often pass on advice from one to the other which often does not happen through formal mentoring relationships but informal conversations.

Men were also seen as protecting other men such as in instances when other men showed poor performance or incompetence (Martin, 2001). Older men are also often paternalist towards younger male colleagues where the older men's ability to protect ensures that the younger men conform to their power (Collinson & Hearn, 1994). The

next example concerns liking and disliking which entails that men make decisions based on personal relations and preferences (Martin, 2001). Men also often express fondness due to shared interests (Martin, 2001). Another practice relates to how men establish relationships with other men by excluding non-normative men. This can happen by, for instance, presuming that an interest in gender issues means that men must be gay (Collinson & Hearn, 1994). Heterosexuality is also performed through using heterosexist references to homosexuality such as calling men ‘faggots’ (often this also includes comparisons to women such as ‘cunts’) (Panayiotou, 2010). Those references function to discipline men into forms of hegemonic masculinity by comparing them to subjugated masculinities and femininities (Connell, 1995). A final example is reproducing the proven success model. For instance in recruitment decisions people are selected who are most like the incumbent (van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). An alternative would be to search affirmatively (van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). Searching affirmatively appears to reproduce gender difference in Deutsch’s (2007) sense. However one can also argue that gender is done by implicitly selecting other men, which stresses gender difference and reproduces gender inequality in the outcome. In this situation an undoing of gender means that gender is stressed in an interaction through searching affirmatively. However the outcome is that gender difference is reduced because women or men might be hired. The temporary heightening of gender difference thereby becomes a way to undo gender by ensuring that gender becomes less relevant for the outcome of the decision.

Men Distancing Themselves from Women

The second theme relates to men distancing themselves from women. This distancing enforces gender difference and is therefore a doing gender. An undoing gender minimizes the difference between men and women. The first example relates to men publicly criticising women in meetings, while men are criticised in private such as after the meeting (Martin, 1996). Second, men can gang up on women and thereby act in concert to depreciate women. An example is men not attending an interview of a woman for an important role signalling that she is not a viable candidate (Martin, 1996). Another example relates to excluding women. This can mean for instance that men socialise outside work such as drinking together or playing golf (Cockburn, 1991). Men might also associate women with their wives. Cockburn (1991) has for instance observed that a man stares at a woman because she reminds him of his wife. While the specific situation is not provided here one can speculate that the wife of the man might not be in a similar professional position and is therefore not his equal. Another example is men using women for emotional support. Martin (2001) observed how men talked to a woman about their private problems and expected her to listen to them. Another way of men doing gender towards women is undermining events that are designed to support and help women such as women-only events (Cockburn, 1991).

Research also found that male CEOs who were seen as gender champions were often absent from or not engaged in women-focused events which made their leadership support for gender equality unbelievable (de Vries, 2015). Those leaders who were more credible as change agents were visible and present at women's event and often showed that they personally cared for the issue by speaking off the cuff rather than their prepared remarks (de Vries, 2015). One could raise the question in how far that

is seen as an undoing gender where gender difference is reduced because the nature of the event seems to reiterate gender difference, i.e. holding an event for women. While a women's event could be seen as an occasion to create gender difference and therefore be an interaction of doing gender, if a CEO genuinely supports gender equality, this can be read as an undoing gender where gender difference is temporarily heightened to reduce and minimize gender difference and to create gender equality in the long run.

Men Impressing Others

There was a range of practices that men used to impress others. Doing gender happens here through constructing men and women as different through their actions such as impressing others. Undoing gender would conversely mean for instance men to stop trying to impress others. The first of these came out strongly in the literature and is the practice of men exercising domination over others. There was a wealth of practices described in the literature. Men would exercise domination over others by withholding information (Martin, 2001). Men dominate in meetings by talking a lot, being unwilling to allow others to talk and using patronizing humour or derogatory remarks (Prichard, 1996). The use of sexualized humour was also observed by Cockburn (1991), while Wahl (2014) identified being heard and getting what you want, for instance in team meetings, as a way to exercise domination. Wahl (2014) also pinpointed an example of undoing gender which can be described as displaying humility by for example not speaking up in meetings and allowing others to speak. Here doing gender is not enacted by men speaking up and women being silenced but instead gender is undone by reducing gender difference through allowing others to

speaking. Another undoing gender practice is for male leaders to use their power to advance women by putting pressure on decision makers and securing funding to support women (de Vries, 2015). It could appear as though this increased gender difference: women are specifically singled out and gender is done. However one can also understand this as undoing gender because the difference between women and men in terms of access to resources is reduced.

A second practice was described as peacocking where men are vying for attention and time. Again meetings were a central arena for this to be displayed and this manifests in securing attention, time and airtime in meetings often by talking about sports (Martin, 2001). The next practice relates to occupying space either in the form of having a spacious office or by making expansive gestures. Martin (2001) described this as making territory such as having offices with doors and windows as opposed to having a cubicle. Spacious rooms were noted as a symbolic expression of hierarchical position (Wahl, 2014). Similarly, it was observed that men occupy space when speaking publicly by walking the room, showing the body off and making expansive gestures (Roper, 1996). An undoing practice that was observed in relation to space was to share an open space office which was seen as communicating that one is equal in space (Wahl, 2014). Rather than creating gender difference through expansive body and space enactments, gender difference is here reduced and gender undone by sharing space. The next practice is men promoting themselves which Martin (2001) observed in men asserting their talent as exceptional and in men promoting themselves. Similarly, Wajcman (1998) observed that men often played the perception game by telling others about what a good job they are doing. The final

practice orientated towards men and women comes from Martin (2001) who observed that men use other's effort to claim credit.

Men Displaying Heroism

The final theme is men displaying heroism. This is a doing gender practice because it creates gender difference through constructing men as heroes who can be fully dedicated to work (Acker, 1990). The undoing gender counterpart would be for men to show vulnerability and to signal other responsibilities in life beyond work. The first of the practices relates to being fully dedicated to work. This manifests in being able to travel at any time and by having no caring responsibilities (Wahl, 2014). Murgia and Poggio (2009) show how men are marginalized at work for taking parental leave. The undoing practice corresponding to this would be to show a commitment to private life by for instance taking parental leave (Wahl, 2014). Another example would be to devote time and energy to care work (Murgia & Poggio, 2009). Here gender is undone because gender difference is minimized by showing that men and women have commitments outside of paid work.

Being highly competitive is also regularly singled out as a way to display heroism. This can entail displaying a hard-nosed, highly competitive approach to business (Collinson & Hearn, 1994). It also means to be fiercely competitive for promotion and career advancement (Connell & Wood, 2005). It is part of displaying heroism to deploy and face power. Connell and Wood (2005) show how the transnational business masculinity they talk about entails being able to use power but also being

able to face power displayed by others. Enacting a warrior ethic is another facet of displaying heroism and Wajcman (1998) shows that this is accomplished by drawing on notions of risk, danger and virility in the context of work. Displaying financial success is a practice that seems to support heroic masculinity. Panayiotou (2010) observes that financial prowess allows men in business to buy things and women. Heroism is not only enacted in relationship to others but also towards the own body, which is constructed as something that needs to be controlled.

Connell and Wood (2005) show in detail how successful men who are managers eat healthy food and stay fit in an attempt to control their bodies. Panayiotou (2010) shows that while much of the hegemonic masculinity she observes happens in relation to food, such as in restaurants, men are rarely seen as eating which can be read as another form to control the body through modulating the food intake. Another practice relates to celebrating total commitment which shows in appreciative comments about extreme presenteeism (Hawkins, 2013). It is useful to note here that men as well as women performed this. This is often in line with a form of protestant work ethic (Weber, 1934) where redemption is sought by working hard and where the home is invaded by work (Panayiotou, 2010). Another practice is to respond enthusiastically when one is offered a job which van den Brink and Benschop (2014) show in their research. Finally, going for the glory manifests in exceeding personal sales targets and going over and above the call of duty (Hawkins, 2013).

An undoing gender practice is openness to failure by admitting mistakes. Ely and Meyerson (2010) observe two examples to support this observation: admitting

mistakes or a lack of knowledge by asking others if one is uncertain and insisting on safety by alerting others to behaviours that are considered unsafe. If it is presumed that doing gender means creating gender difference, here through men enacting infallibility, then admitting mistakes can be read as reducing gender difference and thus undoing gender. Another doing gender practice is displaying rationality by drawing on fact and figures (Wahl, 2014) with the undoing gender practice being sharing emotions and displaying emotional intelligence. This can be practised by drawing on gut feeling and intuition (Wahl, 2014) and by sharing emotions and vulnerabilities through discussing family problems and fear (Ely & Meyerson, 2010). Doing gender would mean that men enact rationality; men enacting emotional intelligence would reduce gender difference. This is an undoing gender because it presumes that women and men experience emotions and thus gender difference is reduced. A final practice is to display task-orientation (Wahl, 2014) with the corresponding undoing practice means to be people orientated (Wahl, 2014). Similarly, to the previous example, undoing gender is achieved here in that men are connected with being people orientated which is more commonly associated with women and thereby gender difference is reduced.

DEVELOPING A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR MEN UNDOING GENDER

The aim of this article was to explore how men do and undo gender at work. Using the conception of Deutsch (2007) which equates doing gender with creating gender difference and gender hierarchy and undoing gender with reducing gender difference and gender inequality, the literature was analysed to highlight discernable practices of men doing and undoing gender in organizations. By organizing these practices under

the umbrella of a theme, it was possible to create a compendium of practices that men in organizations display through doing and undoing gender.

Through developing this compendium of practices, it is first possible to expand current understandings of doing and undoing gender. When looking at examples of doing and undoing gender it is clear that many of them require interpretation, which Deutsch (2007) has already alluded to. In other words, doing and undoing gender are not self-evident. From a research methodological perspective, this means that researchers need to interpret the situation and attempt to reconstruct how doing and undoing gender might happen in that situation. This would follow an etic understanding of reading a situation through the lens of a researcher who is normally outside of the immediate social group analysed. Another possibility is using an emic understanding arising from research participants themselves. It would for instance be possible to study how participants read certain interactions and if they are reducing or expanding gender difference. A challenge with this approach might be that study participants might not see situations as gendered in the first instance. This could then be understood as gender differences being minimized to such an extent that they no longer have a bearing on social interaction or are in the background (see Deutsch, 2007; Kelan, 2010). However it has to be questioned if gender difference is minimized or if research participants pretend to no longer see gender difference to avoid the possibility that gender inequality might still permeate the workplace and thereby create unfairness. Research has indicated that individuals are invested in pretending that their workplace is gender equal to avoid the suggestion that it is not (Kelan, 2009a; Scharff, 2012).

Another contribution to understanding doing and undoing gender relates to the fact that gender difference is not simply enhanced or reduced. As some of the empirical examples discussed in the compendium illustrate, in certain instances gender difference appears to be heightened and brought to people's attention in order to reduce gender difference in the long run. Such an understanding chimes with studies on stereotypes which have shown that if stereotypes are ignored this has negative performance effects for individuals affected by those stereotypes and if they are made visible individuals can start overcoming the negative performance effects that the stereotypes entail (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). Although emerging from a very different research tradition, a similar effect might be visible in relation to doing and undoing gender. By drawing attention to gender and thereby technically enacting gender difference, the effects of this doing gender mean that gender difference is reduced and gender is undone. This suggests that approaches to doing and undoing gender need to consider a temporal perspective: doing gender in the short term might mean that gender is undone in the long term.

The research has also shown that considering the sex category when analysing doing and undoing gender is important. West and Zimmerman's (1987) original conceptualization of doing gender, which Deutsch (2007) draws on, means that individuals are accountable to a sex category. While this has often been used to explain the continuity in gender inequality, the compendium of practices shows that a sex category might also be important for how gender is undone. Many of the interpretations of doing gender only make sense from the vantage point of who is

doing gender: gender difference is reduced by men enacting practices either associated with women or practices that reduce gender unequal outcomes. It is therefore important to consider sex category not only as accountability but also as a potential tool to undo gender by reducing gender difference. It is thus relevant to include sex category or, in other words, if individuals are perceived as men or women to fully understand how doing and undoing gender dynamics unfold and can be interpreted.

While there has been a sustained interest in practices of doing and undoing gender, not much of this research is focusing on men doing and undoing gender specifically. Without an explicit focus on men for doing and undoing gender it is difficult to ascertain the practices that create and recreate gender inequality. If men are discussed, then it is mainly in their roles in hindering women's progress in organizations. Research that looks at men's role in changing gender relations is often seen in the light of asking men to be heroes and rescue women (de Vries, 2015). The presumption might be that men are not interested in changing gender relations because they profit from the current arrangement (Connell, 1995). Furthermore most studies have not engaged with undoing gender in a sufficient way. There is a clear emphasis in research on practices of doing gender but undoing gender practices are neglected. Exploring undoing gender practices is important theoretically because it facilitates a better understanding of the dynamics of gender. It is also important for creating gender equality in organizations where undoing gender practices, particularly those of men, might be highly relevant and important.

As the review of the literature has shown, practices of undoing gender by men are rarely discussed in the literature. In the following, I will therefore try to develop a research agenda on how an undoing gender might look. A first point of concern would be the hierarchical position of men. This refers to the organizational rather than the gender hierarchy. Men can undo gender as senior leaders, as middle managers and as front line staff. In all of those situations a different set of practices is required. For instance, for senior leaders such as the CEO setting an example and walking the talk would be central but they also need to inspire others to follow them (Kelan & Wratil, 2017). Middle managers who are central in translating the tone from the top into everyday practices can directly influence their subordinates through how they manage them. Finally, men in front line staff positions could undo gender in how they relate to others such as colleagues and customers. It can be expected that the different levels of the hierarchy will require very different kinds of undoing gender making it essential for studies on men undoing gender to consider the hierarchical position. In addition, the industry context can potentially play an important role because the undoing gender practices might be different in a professional services firm to a manufacturing plant. This means that context has to be considered.

Second, Martin (2001) has argued that many of the doing gender practices are liminal and thus subconscious. It might reasonably be presumed that undoing gender practices are equally subconscious. In other words, many men might be undoing gender but they would not be aware or recognize that. This makes a research design more challenging because a survey or an interview with a man on how he is undoing gender would not necessarily yield much insight into undoing gender practices. There are two ways in which that can be overcome. First, skilled researchers might be able

to engage in ethnographic observations through observing men as they go about their job noting down potential instances of undoing gender. This is particularly relevant as many undoing gender practices will be influenced by the gendered subtext (Bendl, 2008; Benschop & Doorewaard, 1998a, 1998b; Kelan, 2008b) in organizations and are therefore context specific. Second, it would be important to ensure that the perspectives of others on how men undoing gender are perceived. This can be achieved through interviews with co-workers. Thirdly, it is clear from the literature that doing gender practices outnumber undoing gender ones. This makes it important to find men who are undoing gender and to select them for the research. This follows the idea to not look at how gender inequality is established but rather how gender change is enabled (Stainback, Kleiner, & Skaggs, 2016).

It can also be presumed that men who are undoing gender might not be acutely aware that they are doing this in a specific situation, but they must have a general awareness for how gender inequality is perpetuated and how it can be challenged. Identifying those men for research purposes is going to be challenging but would allow researchers to generate knowledge of how undoing gender by men could look. While gender equality might be a result of those practices, further research needs to carefully explore in how far undoing gender by men in fact contributes to gender equality and to explore which other dynamics might play a role here. If research does this, it would break new ground to develop and understand undoing gender in an organizational context.

CONCLUSION

This article contributed to the literature on doing and undoing gender by discussing men's potential to create gender equality through doing and undoing gender. Doing gender is understood as enacting gender difference, whereas undoing gender is reducing gender difference (Deutsch, 2007). The former means creating gender inequality while the latter is creating gender equality. Through a review of the literature four themes with associated practices and examples were identified. The emerging compendium provides a categorization of different practices that could be read as doing and undoing gender by men. The article thereby contributes to the understanding of doing and undoing gender that firstly, it needs to be considered if the interpretations of doing and undoing gender are emic or etic; second, it has to be explored in how far temporarily heightening gender difference through doing gender can lead to an undoing gender in terms of reducing gender difference in the long run; third, the article argued that the sex category not only creates accountability but can also be of major importance to understand the undoing of gender.

The article has also outlined how this compendium can be used to guide further research to refine practices of men doing and undoing gender and it was articulated by what future research might look like. The compendium is of use for researchers trying to understand how doing and undoing gender is practised by men in organizations. The practices that were highlighted in this article could be a good starting point for investigating doing and undoing gender further. Researching these practices means to consider hierarchical level and context and also that those practices are often subconscious. While the compendium might be a useful starting point for researchers in the field, it is anticipated that further practices will be added through the richness of empirical data that could further sharpen our understanding of how doing and undoing

gender can be used in organizational change processes. Furthermore research could also explore how women can undo gender in the work context and if the dynamics are different to those displayed by men. For instance might a woman in a middle management position have different practices at her disposal for undoing gender? Whereas for a man supporting a gender equality programme would be seen as unusual and worthy of praise, for a woman doing the same it might construct her as a complainer about being disadvantaged. Such dynamics have been explored in other contexts (Fletcher, 1999; Kelan, 2009b; Phillips & Taylor, 1980) and further research should consider that. Such research would create increased sophistication for the field of doing and undoing gender at work.

The research shows that the literature has suggested ample examples of what doing gender by men looks like but we have less research evidence what undoing gender by men might look like. In other words, we have a better idea of how men contribute to gender inequality than how men contribute to gender equality. The compendium of practices can be used theoretically to define potential undoing gender practices. It can help researchers to conceptualize how undoing gender might look like if it is presumed to be the opposite of doing gender. One way of conceptualizing undoing gender would be to find practices that counteract the doing gender practices documented in the literature. That would mean to find instances where gender is undone that correspond to the doing gender practices and potentially inverse them. It might then be possible to find and add to those examples empirically. However undoing gender can potentially go beyond inversion and explore new ways of how gender might be undone. This would mean that there is substantial leeway to expand the undoing gender practices.

However a key concern that remains is if all undoing gender practices necessarily create gender equality. For the purpose of this research, which was based on Deutsch's (2007) conceptualization, it was presumed that undoing gender means reducing gender difference. Reducing gender difference was equated with creating gender equality. However this precludes other interpretations of undoing gender such as that of Butler (2004). It would also be important to explore the contextual meaning that is attached to undoing gender and which effects it has. It might well be that participants not only do not understand those activities as undoing gender but that they also interpret them differently. These questions clearly show that exploring men doing and undoing gender deserves would be a fruitful field of further exploration.

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