

## MASCULINITIES AND MASCULINITY POLITICS IN WORLD SOCIETY

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### 1. Masculinity research

In the last twenty years, a noteworthy body of research has appeared on the social construction of masculinity, and on men's locations and practices in gender relations. Provoked by feminist debates and researches, studies on masculinity have now appeared in all the human sciences and in all regions of the world.

This research has been very diverse in subject-matter, but has generally had a "local" character. Its main focus has been the construction of masculinity in a particular milieu or moment – whether a professional sports career in the USA (Messner 1992), a group of colonial schools in South Africa (Morrell 2001a), drinking groups in Australian bars (Tomsen 1997), a working-class suburb in Brazil (Fonseca 2001) or the marriage plans of young middle-class men in urban Japan (Taga 2001). Its characteristic research style has been ethnographic, making use of participant observation, open-ended interviewing or discursive analysis of texts in popular culture. The primary research task has been to give close descriptions of processes and outcomes in the local site.

This "ethnographic moment" has been extremely important in changing older views of men and masculinity. (For detailed documentation of the following remarks see Connell 2000.) One of the major conclusions of the new research is the diversity of masculinities. There is not just one pattern of masculinity good in all times and places. Different cultures vary (some are much more peaceable than others), and patterns of masculinity change over time. Within a single society, even a single community or institutions, there will be different patterns of masculinity, different recognizable ways of "being a man". Just as we now recognize the diversity of family forms, so we now recognize that there are likely to be different constructions of masculinity in different social class settings, different ethnic communities, and different regions.

For instance, the collective identity of the young men of the Lebanese immigrant community in Sydney (Australia) is consciously distinct from that of the Anglo-Australian population in the same city (Poynting, Noble and Tabar 1998). Masculinities also vary with sexuality – there are gay masculinities, straight masculinities, and others - and may vary with generation. The construction of masculinity for men with physical disabilities may follow distinctive paths.

But different masculinities do not sit side by side as alternative lifestyles that men can freely choose. There are definite relationships between different masculinities. Most importantly, there are relationships of hierarchy and exclusion. In most communities there is a specific pattern of masculinity which is more respected than others. (In contemporary Australia, for instance, the most admired form of masculinity is authoritative, aggressive, heterosexual, able-bodied, hedonistic, anti-intellectual and physically brave.) The hegemonic pattern of masculinity

is associated with national identity, celebrated in popular films and sports, presented as an ideal to the young, and constantly used as a basis of advertising. Other patterns of masculinity exist, but do not attract the same respect, indeed some other forms of masculinity are actively stigmatised.

Not all men actually embody the hegemonic model, in fact, probably only a minority do. Yet the hierarchy around this version of masculinity is an important source of conflict and violence among men. Challenges to one's masculinity are common sources of brawls and injuries. Asserting dominance over homosexual or effeminate men may take violent forms, beatings or even murder. Dominance may also be symbolic; the challenges among young men that escalate to violence often involve such accusations. Racist violence is often mixed up with claims to superior manhood, and with perceived threats to masculine dignity arising from economic dislocation, unemployment, and growing social complexity.

"Masculinity" is at one level a pattern of personal life and conduct, but it is important that masculinities also exist at another level - impersonally, in communities, institutions and culture. Collective definitions of manhood are generated in community life, and are likely to be contested, and change, as the situation of a community changes. Organizations such as armies and corporations embed particular gender patterns in their organizational culture, may deliberately produce them in training programs. Mass media circulate particular icons of masculinity, celebrate particular patterns of conduct, and jeer at others.

There is now convincing evidence that masculinities change historically. Men's patterns of conduct, and beliefs about gender issues, do not change with dramatic speed - hence the difficulty of the social problems involving masculinities. But research has shown significant generational shifts, for instance in sexual behaviour, and in beliefs about men's and women's roles in society.

These broad conclusions of the recent international research on masculinities may be helpful in studying patterns of masculinity in a specific region, with due care not to "read off" results from one context into another. Gender patterns in peasant communities in developing countries are not the same as those in middle-class communities in rich industrial countries. Findings about communities whose cultural background is European Christianity cannot be assumed to apply in communities with an Islamic or Confucian background. There is need to examine local patterns in all parts of the world.

But we also need to go beyond local contexts. As I have argued in The Men and the Boys (Connell 2000), we need to consider the situation of local masculinities in a world context. Global history and contemporary globalization must be part of our understanding of masculinities. Individual lives are powerfully influenced by geopolitical struggles, imperialism and colonialism, global markets, multinational corporations, labour migration and transnational media. Not only ethnography, but post-colonial studies (Ouzgane and Coleman 1998) are important for understanding the cultural dynamics of contemporary masculinities.

## 2. Global society as context of men's lives

To understand masculinities on a world scale we must first consider the globalization of gender. This is difficult, because we are accustomed to thinking of gender as the attribute of an individual. As Smith (1998) argues in relation to international politics, the key is to shift our focus from individual-level gender differences to "the patterns of socially constructed gender relations". If we recognize that very large-scale institutions such as the state and corporations are gendered, and that international relations, international trade and global markets are inherently an arena of gender politics, then we can recognize the existence of a world gender order (Connell 2002).

The world gender order can be defined as the structure of relationships that interconnect the gender regimes of institutions, and the gender orders of local societies, on a world scale.

This gender order is an aspect of a larger reality: global society. The creation of global society is itself a complex field of debate, easily misunderstood. Current discussions of "globalization", especially in the media of the rich countries, picture a homogenizing process sweeping across the world, driven by new technologies, producing vast unfettered global markets, world music, global advertising and world news in which all participate on equal terms. In reality, however, the global economy is highly unequal, and the degree of economic and cultural homogenization is often exaggerated (Hirst and Thompson 1996, Bauman 1998). In the eastern Mediterranean region, cultural diversity is very marked, and may even have been increased by the impact of "Western" popular culture and technologies.

The historical processes that produced global society were, from the start, gendered. Colonial conquest and settlement were carried out by gender-segregated forces. In the stabilization of colonial societies, new gender divisions of labour were produced in plantation economies and colonial cities. The gender ideologies of French and British colonialism were linked with racial prejudices and religious antagonism in their interaction with the Islamic world. During the second half of the 20th century, the growth of a post-colonial world economy saw gender divisions of labour changing again, with the labour demands of the "global factory" (Fuentes and Ehrenreich 1983). This period saw the further spread of gendered violence alongside Western military technology (Breines, Gierycz and Reardon 1999).

The links that constitute a global gender order are of two basic types. Imperial conquest, neo-colonialism, and the current world systems of power, investment, trade and communication, have brought very diverse societies in contact with each other. The gender orders of those societies have consequently been brought into contact with each other. In the eastern Mediterranean region this kind of interaction is of course ancient, but over the last two centuries the military and economic power of the European empires, the United States, and international capital has resulted in particularly violent and disruptive interaction.

The gender patterns resulting from these interactions may be seen as the first level of a global gender order. They are local patterns, but carry the impress of the forces that make a global society. A striking example is provided by Morrell's (2001b) analysis of the situation of men in

contemporary South Africa. The transition from Apartheid – itself a violent but doomed attempt to perpetuate colonial race relations – has created an extraordinary social landscape. In a context of reintegration into the global polity and economy, rising unemployment, continuing violence, and a growing HIV/AIDS epidemic, there are attempts to re-constitute rival patriarchies in different ethnic groups. These attempts clash with agendas for the modernization of masculinity, with South African feminism and the new government's "human rights" discourse. Some of these ideas, in turn, are challenged by arguments for "African philosophy" and for policies based in indigenous communal traditions, which would de-emphasise gender divisions.

The movement of populations, and the interaction of cultures, under colonialism and post-colonial globalization have linked the making of masculinity with the construction of racial and ethnic hierarchies. It seems that ethnic and racial conflict has been growing in importance in recent years in many parts of the world. As Klein (2000) argues in the case of Israel, and Tillner (2000) in the case of Austria, this is a fruitful context for the production of masculinities oriented towards domination and/or violence. Poynting, Noble and Tabar (1998), interviewing male youth of the Lebanese immigrant community in Australia, find contradictory gender consciousness and a strategic use of stereotypes in the face of racism. Racist contempt from Anglo society is met by an assertion of dignity – but for Lebanese boys this is specifically a masculine dignity, in a context that implies the subordination of women.

The second type of link that constitutes a world gender order is the creation of new arenas beyond individual countries and regions. The most important of the new arenas seem to be:

- Transnational and multinational corporations. Corporations operating in global markets are now the largest business organizations on the planet. The biggest ones, in industries like oil, car manufacturing, computers and telecommunications, have resources amounting to hundreds of billions of dollars and employ hundreds of thousands of people. They typically have a strong gender division of labour, and a strongly masculinized management culture.
- The international state. The institutions of diplomacy and war, the principal means by which sovereign states have related to each other, are heavily masculinized. Zalewski and Parpart (1998) aptly call this "The 'Man' Question in International Relations". United Nations agencies, the European Union, and a range of other international agencies and agreements have been set up to transcend these old and dubious arrangements. They regulate gender issues globally, for instance, through development aid, education, human rights and labour conventions. They too are gendered, mainly run by men, though with more cultural complexity than multinational corporations (Gierycz 1999).
- International media. Multinational media corporations circulate film, video, music and news on a very large scale. There are also more decentralized media (post, telegraph, telephone, fax, the Internet, the Web) and their supporting industries. All contain gender arrangements and circulate gender meanings. Cunneen and Stubbs (2000), for instance, document the use

of Internet sites to commodify Filipina women in an international trade in wives and sexual partners for men in the USA and Australia.

- Global markets. It is important to distinguish markets themselves from the individual corporations that operate in them. International markets - capital, commodity, service and labour markets - have an increasing "reach" into local economies. They are often strongly gender-structured: for instance the international market in domestic labour (Chang and Ling 2000). International labour markets are now (with the political triumph of neo-liberalism) very weakly regulated, apart from border controls reinforced by political panics in first-world countries about "illegal migrants".

This is the broad context in which we must now think about the lives of men and the construction and enactment of masculinities. One of the important questions is what pattern or patterns of masculinity is dominant within these global arenas.

With the collapse of Soviet communism, the decline of post-colonial socialism, and the ascendancy of the new right in Europe and North America, world politics is now more and more organized around the needs of transnational capital and the creation of global markets. The neo-liberal agenda has little to say, explicitly, about gender. But the world in which neo-liberalism is ascendant is still a gendered world, and neo-liberalism has an implicit gender politics. De-regulation of the economy, in a corporate world, places strategic power in the hands of particular groups of men – managers and entrepreneurs. These are the bearers of the dominant form of masculinity in the contemporary global economy, which I call "transnational business masculinity".

Wajcman's (1999) study of multinational corporations based in Britain shows that even where women have entered management they do so on men's terms, conforming to the masculinized culture and practices of the managerial elite. In short, as Wajcman puts it, they have to "manage like a man". Research in the corporate world in the United States (Glass Ceiling Commission 1995) shows a similar picture.

Available research on business masculinities gives partly contradictory indications. Donaldson's (1998) study of "the masculinity of the hegemonic", based on biographical sources about the very rich, emphasises emotional isolation and a deliberate toughening of boys in the course of growing up; a sense of social distance, material abundance combined with a sense of entitlement and superiority. Hooper's (2000) study of the language and imagery of masculinity in The Economist in the 1990s, a British business journal closely aligned with neo-liberalism, shows a distinct break from old-style patriarchal business masculinity, though many remnants of colonialist attitudes to the developing world. The Economist associates with the global a technocratic, new-frontier imagery; and in the context of re-structuring emphasises a cooperative, teamwork-based style of management.

A study of management textbooks by Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) gives a rather more individualistic picture. The executive in "fast capitalism" is represented as a person with very limited loyalties, even to the corporation. His occupational world is characterized by a limited

technical rationality, sharply-graded hierarchies of rewards, and sudden career shifts or transfers between corporations. Wajcman's (1999) survey indicates a rather more stable managerial world, closer to traditional bourgeois masculinity, marked by long hours of work and both dependence on, and marginalization of, a domestic world run by wives. There are signs of an increasingly libertarian sexuality, with a tendency to commodify relations with women. Hotels catering for businessmen in most parts of the world now routinely offer pornographic videos, and in some parts of the world there is a well-developed prostitution industry catering for international businessmen.

### 3. The re-shaping of local masculinities under globalization

Under the pressure of global markets and media, but also as a result of active desire to participate in the global economy and global culture, pressures for change are set up in local gender orders. This may, and often does, lead to some reconstruction of masculinities.

Reconstruction is not the work of men alone. As Fonseca (2001) and others have emphasised, women too are active in the shaping of masculinities. Reconstruction is also likely to be uneven. Taga's (2001) case studies of young Japanese middle-class men show this very clearly. Under cultural pressure from women to move away from "traditional" Japanese patriarchal masculinity, men do not all produce the same response. Indeed, Taga identifies four contrasting patterns of response, ranging from rejection of change to transformation of identity.

An important reason for the unevenness of change is the internal complexity of gender relations. At least four sub-structures in gender relations can be identified (Connell 2002). I will examine change in masculinities in relation to each of these sub-structures.

The division of labour. It is characteristic of modernity that the world of "work" is culturally defined as men's realm. In most parts of the world men do have a significantly higher labour force participation rate than women. In Arab countries generally the difference between men's and women's participation rates is very marked. The significance of "work" for masculine identity is suggested in a Latin American study. Fuller (2001), interviewing Peruvian men in three cities, finds that work is the main basis of adult masculine standing and self-respect. A man who cannot hold a regular job is felt not to have arrived at full adult masculinity.

In fact women do as much work as men, as international "time budget" research shows. It is the type of work, and the setting in which it occurs, that matters for gender. As Holter (1997) argues, the structural distinction between unpaid housework and the waged economy is a basis of the modern gender system. Configurations of waged work are thus the economic bases of masculinities within the capitalist economy. The most famous example is the making of the "salaryman" in Japanese economic development in the early twentieth century (Kinmonth 1981). This was a pattern of middle-class masculinity adapted to a corporate power structure that demanded conformity and loyalty in exchange for security and high late-career rewards.

But if capitalist development changed masculinities by linking gender identity with waged work, this same process made the new masculinities vulnerable. The global economy is turbulent, marked by economic downturns as well as booms, regional decline as well as regional growth. Mass unemployment will undermine masculinities identified with "work". This situation is now very common - both as a result of the decline of former industrial areas such as northern England, and the rural-urban migration that has created huge under-employed workforces in cities like New Delhi, Sao Paulo and Mexico City. A movement of women into employment will also undermine "work"-based masculinities. Such a movement is now happening world-wide, as a result of women's emancipation, women's education, and the raw economic need of families which cannot survive on just one wage.

The resulting challenges to working-class masculinities have now been documented by researchers in several countries: Corman et al. (1993) in Canada, Gutmann (1996) in Mexico, O'Donnell and Sharpe (2000) in Britain. We can reasonably regard this as a major dynamic of change in contemporary masculinities. Even the "salaryman" is vulnerable. As the security provided by the Japanese corporate world declined in the 1990s, there has been more satire and anxiety around this pattern of masculinity. The new image of the "salaryman escaping" has appeared in Japanese media discussions (Dasgupta 2000).

Power relations. The colonial and postcolonial world has tended to break down purdah systems of patriarchy, based on the extreme subordination and isolation of women, in the name of modernization and women's rights (Kandiyoti 1994). With some exceptions, men have adjusted to this. Most men now accept women's presence in the public realm (the vote, the right to work, legal autonomy). A large-scale survey by Zulehner and Volz (1998) has shown that the rejection of patriarchal models of gender relations is particularly strong among the younger generation of German men, and this is probably true in other countries as well.

At the same time, the process of development has produced in most post-colonial societies a public realm occupied by large-scale organizations. Men continue to hold the majority of top positions (and usually the vast majority of top positions) in such organizations: governments, corporations, courts, armies, churches, political parties and professional associations (Connell 2002). State institutions have seen important challenges to this dominance, by women's movements demanding equal opportunity in employment, child care facilities, anti-discrimination laws, etc. But under neo-liberalism, state institutions tend to shrink, and power shifts to the market and the corporations. In this realm, the power of men remains largely undisturbed

Colonialism, de-colonization and globalization have created many situations where power is not firmly established, where conflict or disorder prevail. Colonial power was met, from the start, by resistance. There is, as yet, little discussion of the relationship between masculinities and resistance, though the issue was present from the start. Here, for instance, is Fanon's evocation of change in his classic The Wretched of the Earth:

Decolonization never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally. It transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged

actors, with the grandiose glare of history's floodlights upon them. It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men, and with it a new language and a new humanity. Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men. (Fanon 1968: 36 [1961])

It is clear from the rest of Fanon's text that the "men" here are gendered: for instance, they have wives (e.g. p. 92). Fanon's famous defence of violence as the crucible of post-colonial society is thus an agenda for constructing a particular kind of masculinity.

This can be seen concretely in cases where the struggle has functioned as an arena of gender formation, for instance the Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation on the West Bank (Peteeet 1994). Here the violence of the occupation and the resistance have changed the conditions in which masculinity is constructed. Older men lose authority over the process; rather, leadership moves into the hands of young men. Boys and youth establish their identities and claims to leadership within the collectivity of young men; beatings and imprisonment by the occupying forces become a rite of passage for Palestinian youth.

In South Africa, the armed struggle carried on by the "comrades" on behalf of the ANC produced a generation of young men accustomed to violence and independent action, and also lacking formal education and regular work experience (Xaba 2001). After the struggle, many young men were unable to integrate well into the post-Apartheid society. The personal trauma involved in anticolonial struggles – small-scale, intimate warfare with a racial or religious dimension, with one's "civilian" communities all around and in reach of the weapons – should not be under-estimated. For instance, the struggles around Apartheid in South Africa produced a militarized, and still heavily-armed, society in which gun ownership and gun violence are widely associated with masculinity (Cock 2001).

Emotional relations. Patterns of emotional attachment, though often felt to be the most intimate of all social relationships, are also subject to reconstruction by large-scale social forces. Under colonialism, Christian missionaries often intervened against indigenous sexual customs that contravened the missionary religion – especially indigenous homosexual and cross-gender practices, and pre-marital heterosexual relationships. For instance missionaries backed by the Spanish colonial authorities tried to stamp out the third-gender “berdache” tradition in North America (Williams 1986).

In the post-colonial world, the growth of individualism, and the disruption of communities by migration, has changed customary patterns of family formation. In cases like Greek immigrant communities in Australia, the extended family has lost control of the choice of marriage partners; this process now centres on individual choice in a kind of gender market (Bottomley 1992). Concepts of "romantic love" do not only influence young women, they also affect young men. It is change in this arena that seems to underlie the discontent with current masculinity among younger urban men in Chile, in a study by Valdés and Olavarría (1998). Their discontent does not involve a basic critique of the hegemonic model of masculinity, but takes the form of a sense of imprisonment in unchanging family roles.

Sexuality and emotional relationships may also be sites where larger social tensions are registered. Ghossoub (2000) points to such a process in Egypt, where rumours about impotence-causing chemicals, and a burst of popularity for medieval sex manuals, would seem to be signs of a larger cultural disturbance about masculinity. Ghossoub notes that the recent increase in women's status in Arab societies has posed dilemmas for men whose identities are still based in traditional conceptions of gender. However there is unlikely to be a radical break in the pattern of emotional relations as a result of the impact of metropolitan or urban gender models. Research among the Mazatec people of Mexico points to a kind of co-existence (Pearlman 1984). Young men who migrate to the city to work, and then return, bring with them urban models of masculine dominance that are at odds with the relatively egalitarian gender relations of the Mazatec community, where women pursue their own prestige and construct their own networks. The young men do not abandon either model; rather they develop a capacity to switch codes with different audiences – for instance when dealing with older women rather than other young men.

Complexity has also emerged in homosexual identities. Research in Brazil (Parker 1985) encountered multiple patterns of sexual practice and social identity. Over time, an understanding of identity which centered on sexual practice has been displaced by a medico-legal model focussed on the gender of one's partner; and this in turn has been challenged by a consciously egalitarian "gay" identity. A North American style of gay identity, as the main alternative to heterosexual masculinity, has now circulated globally. This process is often criticised as a form of cultural imperialism. But as Altman (2001) observes, on the basis of experience in South-East Asia, the "globalization of sexual identities" does not simply displace local models. Rather they interact in extremely complex ways, generating some entirely new identities, and with many opportunities for code-switching.

Symbolization. Mass media in most parts of the world follow North American and European models and gender imagery is an important part of what is circulated. In counterpoint, "exotic" gender imagery has been used in marketing products from non-metropolitan countries. For instance airline advertising by Singapore and Malaysia pictures flight attendants as exotic/submissive women. In the international sex trade, the same device of racialized gender stereotyping is used in marketing Asian women to North American and Australasian men (Cunneen and Stubbs 2000). Lest this be thought a harmless fantasy, note that the rate of death by homicide among Filipino women in Australia – usually at the hands of non-Filipino men they have married or cohabited with - is nearly six times higher than the "normal" rate of homicide in Australia.

It would be a mistake to contrast a changing "modernity" with a fixed "tradition"; both are constantly being re-shaped. This is clearly shown by research in the impoverished communities of Torres Strait Islands, in the far north of Australia (Davis 1997). Collapse of the local maritime industry in the 1960s had thrown the men back into the community. One result was a revival of boys' initiation rituals, which had lapsed years before. But where these ceremonies had previously been secluded, they were now made public - while girls' ceremonies were not. The revival of "tradition" thus constructed the "modern" pattern of masculinity located in the public realm, while femininity was identified with the private realm. At the same time, the celebration of local heroes from border clashes in the Torres Strait was linked to the Australian nationalist-masculine cult of

First World War soldiers. The meaning of "hero tales" shifted from teaching conflict resolution to emphasising national identity. In both respects, the symbolic dimension of masculinity was reconstructed in ways that linked it to the culture of the dominant Anglo Australian society.

#### 4. The politics of masculinity in global context

The world gender order broadly privileges men over women. Though there are many local exceptions, there is a "patriarchal dividend" for men collectively, arising from higher incomes, higher labour force participation, unequal property ownership, greater access to institutional power, as well as cultural and sexual privileging. This has been extensively documented by international research on the situation of women (e.g. Valdés and Gomáriz 1995), though its implications for men have mostly been ignored.

Men participate in this dividend in very unequal amounts. Some men gain a great deal of benefit, others little or nothing. The dynamics of modernization, industrialization and development constantly change the scale of gender benefits to men, the costs that men pay (for instance as targets of violence), and the gender groupings among men. Men are as much affected as women (though often in different ways) by the turbulence of the global gender order, sometimes indirectly. The inequalities of gender relations produce resistance. The main pressure for change in gender relations has come from an international feminist movement (Bulbeck 1998), which has now impacted men in every part of the world.

One response on the part of men is to reaffirm local gender hierarchy. A kind of masculine "fundamentalism" is a common pattern in gender politics (e.g. Swart 2001 [South Africa]). But this is not necessarily the majority response among men. There is survey evidence in a number of countries of widespread acceptance of some measure of gender change, a change of popular attitudes towards gender equality (e.g. Zulehner and Volz 1998, in Germany). This change is reflected in working-class men's growing acceptance of women in the workplace, and in young people's often-expressed endorsement of the idea of equal rights for women.

A change of attitudes, however, need not result in change of practice. Fuller remarks that despite changes of opinion among Peruvian men,

the realms in which masculine solidarity networks are constructed that guarantee access to networks of influence, alliances, and support are reproduced through a masculine culture of sports, alcohol consumption, visits to whorehouses, or stories about sexual conquests. These mechanisms assure a monopoly of, or, at least, differential access by men to the public sphere and are a key part of the system of power in which masculinity is forged. (Fuller 2001: 325)

Such a practical recuperation of gender change seems to be a more widespread response among men than masculine fundamentalism. The rise of neo-liberalism as the dominant political force in Western countries during the last two decades has reinforced this trend. By squeezing "welfare" institutions that make transfers of income to women, and by shifting income and power into the

market and corporations, neo-liberal economic policies restore the patriarchal dividend without an explicit masculinity politics. Neo-liberal development strategies, therefore, may signal a reactionary trend in gender relations, despite their apparent "modernity".

The major alternative to neo-liberal and fundamentalist gender politics among men is the movement for gender equality. The best known example is the "pro-feminist" men's movement in the United States, with the umbrella group NOMAS (National Organization of Men Against Sexism) which has existed since the early 1980s. The "White Ribbon" campaign, originating in Canada as a remarkably successful mobilization to oppose men's violence against women, now works internationally (Kaufman 1999). Such movements, groups or reform agendas exist in many countries, from Australia (Pease 1997) and Mexico (Zingoni 1998) to Russia (Sinelnikov 2000). The issues they address are well illustrated by the conference of the Japanese men's movement in Kyoto in 1996, which included sessions on youth, gay issues, work, child rearing, bodies, and communications with women – as well as the globalization of the men's movement (Nakamura 1997).

Most of these groups are small and some are short-lived. They have, however, been a presence in gender politics since the 1970s and have built up a body of experience and ideas. Recently some international agencies, including the Council of Europe and UNESCO (Breines et al. 2000), and FLACSO (Valdés and Olavarría 1998), have sponsored the first conferences to discuss the implications of new perspectives on masculinity for public policy. In the year 2001 the development gender equity agency UN-INSTRAW held the first Web-based seminar for international discussion of masculinity and violence.

What these men-and-gender-equity movements typically lack is connection to working-class and agricultural communities and movements. Part of the problem is that discussions of masculinity politics have overwhelmingly focussed on what differentiates men from women. Even such an intelligent commentator as White (2000), in a recent discussion of bringing men and masculinities into "gender and development" programs, is mainly concerned with the threat this poses to feminist gender-equity politics, and the danger of diverting energy from other struggles around capitalist development. The debate has therefore tended to ignore interests which the men and women of a given community share. The problem can only be resolved within a gender-relations approach (Connell 2002) which shows how women and men may participate differently (as a result of gender structures) in social processes which nevertheless give rise to common interests. These processes include reproduction and child care, social labour, the management of community life, and the interaction between communities and their environments.

We must also pay attention to developments within the state structures of major powers. The advent of the Bush government in the United States marks a re-polarization not only in diplomatic terms, but also in the public construction of gender. An emphasis on "toughness", a willingness to launch pre-emptive violence, the construction of institutions of a "hard" state, all signal a re-masculinization of the state and a reversion to conflict-oriented versions of masculinity. Whether there are limits to this process, whether the alternatives that exist in constructions of masculinity can be re-asserted in the public realm, is now a very important question.

Which of the different possible responses to change in the gender order becomes dominant among the men of a given community is dependent on many things. The cultural history of a region or country, the shape of politics and the role of the state, the energy of social movements, are all relevant. What we can be sure of is that there will be a continuing political process around the making of masculinities and the practices of men, in which global dynamics will be of growing importance.

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