Sociology of Masculinity

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Sociology of masculinity emerged in the 1980s as a component of the feminist critique of sex roles (Vaccaro 2011:65). The field was established as a way to study the relationship of physical sex to social life for men, and the role of manhood in social institutions. Studying masculinity and manhood separately from the acts performed by male bodies allows for more attention to be given to the influence held by the category of "man" on society, rather than giving attention to males that may or may not act within the space of masculinity (Vaccaro 2011:65-66). Sociological study of masculinity provides an opportunity to examine the structures within society that sustain masculinity and give men social power.

Masculinity is one half of the gender duality which exists at the foundation of Western culture. The gender duality is a structured creation of society. In Western society, anatomical males are primarily associated with masculinity and females with femininity. The genders are not biologically attached to each biological sex, but instead they are socially taught and conferred to each individual through social learning. Michael Kimmel and Michael Messner articulate the process by stating "men are not born, growing from infants through boyhood to manhood, to follow a predetermined biological imperative encoded in their physical organization" (2007:xxi). Men are socially constructed. As a young male grows, he is socialized into masculinity by elder men. Masculinity is culturally relative. What is considered masculinity in the United States differs from what is considered masculinity in other countries, or even in the United States at different points in time. It is through sociological mechanisms that the institution of masculinity is formed, maintained and receives its power (Kimmel and Messner 2007:xxi) .

In American culture males are socialized toward a hegemonic form of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is an essential component of Western society; it functions as the standard upon which all male social experiences are compared and determines the social power available to each individual. Hegemonic masculinity cannot be proven to exist, and it is possible that no living male embodies fully the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. As such, hegemonic masculinity exists as a cultural guide for what would be a perfect masculinity, and men are gauged based on how well they approximate the hegemonic ideal (Connell 2005:1811-1812). Other masculinities, such as black, gothic, homosexual and consumer masculinities also exist and are socialized, but in opposition to the dominant hegemonic standard (Kimmel and Messner 2007:xxi).

The most common factors that are used in the construction of masculinity are socio-economic status, race (Fine et al. 1997), physical characteristics, competitiveness, aggression, pain tolerance (Hinojosa 2010:179), emotional detachment (Bird 1996:122; Hinojosa 2010:179), subjugation of an Other and homophobia or heterosexism (Pascoe 2005). Masculinity demands that men define themselves by how well they perform these traits and allow their worth as men to be determined based on that performance. All of these traits are seen in their most extreme forms in absolute hegemonic masculinity, but can be less important or inverted for other forms of masculinity. These traits can be found throughout masculine identities, and are believed by some to be natural and innate characteristics that are biological components linked to being male, as is popularized by the phrase "boys will be boys" (Connell 2005:1811). To understand masculinity requires an understanding of the hierarchical structures in society that support the existence and dominance of hegemonic masculinity. The hegemonic male is an ideal form that exists at the top of the hierarchy, superior to femininity and other subordinated forms of masculinity (Hinojosa

2010:179). The male's presenting social self is judged by his peers. The performance of the ideals of masculinity determines how a male is treated by his peers and by society.

Boys are socialized into the institution of masculinity from a young age. This process occurs through social influences involved in the process of learning personal and gender identity. The process of socializing boys into masculinity may begin with their fathers emphasizing the importance of exhibiting the traits of masculinity. Boys emulate their fathers or other male role models around them to begin forming their gender identity (Vaccaro 2011:72). Further training in what it is to be a man occurs through homosocial interactions. Boys interact with their peers and older males and are informed on what is acceptable behavior and what is not acceptable behavior. Through homosocial interaction corrective mechanisms are used to ensure compliance with masculine roles for boys as they mature into men. As boys mature, this interaction will influence their development of a sense of self as they integrate themselves into the institution of masculinity.

An early way of introducing boys to masculinity is through engagement in sport. Sport can function as an important way for boys to transition from childhood identity to an adolescent identity. In participating in sports young boys are introduced to physical activity which will allow them to develop the type of physical bodies demanded by masculinity as well as have social interactions which will convey specific traits of masculinity to them (Hauge and Haavind 2011:2). Sport encourages interactions with peers, an appreciation for competition and the appropriate handling of pain.

Participating in a sport is not adequate for the construction of a masculine identity; it must be a sport that is accepted as a masculine sport. Boys that participate in sports that are

regarded as feminine, such as rhythm gymnastics must find other ways to construct their masculine identity (Chimot and Louveau 2010:436). Some boys who compete in sports that are considered feminine take on other sports that are considered masculine, such as football. Others construct their own conception of masculinity, ignoring the opinion of their peers and directly rejecting a hegemonic form of masculinity, instead focusing on their own desires and goals. Boys that play a masculine sport are often feminized by their peers. Peers will use taunting language, threats to persuade a boy in a feminine sport to cease playing the sport. In some instances violence is used toward boys that do not play a masculine sport to attempt to force them to comply with the ideals of masculinity (Chimot and Louveau 2010:453). Boys may follow their own desires, but they cannot escape the influence of the social construct of masculinity.

Team sport participation encourages homosociality, which is an essential part of the way in which boys are socialized into manhood (Hauge and Haavind 2011:6). Homosociality is a preference for non-sexual interpersonal relationships between members of the same sex. These relationships can form through sport, through school involvement or through almost any other interaction in any other social setting where other males are present. It is this homosocial behavior which holds the most influence in promoting hegemonic ideals of masculinity and is responsible for initiating a male into the institution of manhood (Bird 1996:120). Homosociality encourages shared meaning among men and is responsible for maintaining that meaning in competitiveness, emotional detachment and sexual objectification of women (Bird 1996:122).

Competition, one of the themes of masculinity, is conveyed primarily through sport (Hauge and Haavind 2011). Competition between men is a way for men to define their position in the hierarchy of masculinity, and to gauge their own masculinity (Hinojosa 2010:191). The homosocial structure supports ideals of separation and distinction in the formation of the identity.

The competitive nature of relationships between men develops a hierarchical structure in those relationships, and ultimately in masculine social institutions as well (Bird 1996:127). If a man wishes to be involved in the hierarchy, and thus not become a subordinated masculinity, he must compete for his position in the hierarchy. The social atmosphere which exists for men encourages them to seek out other men with whom they can display that they are not feminine, and as such reaffirm their membership in the category "man". Men who compete in sport take the task seriously, playing with intensity and a resolve to win, regardless of the risk. The level of physical and emotional intensity placed into competition is often observed by females to be threatening, which supports a system of male domination. The requirement of competition for status occurs only in homosocial settings, and a male may create his personal identity with a different value placed on competition, but while engaged in a homosocial group, he must compete or risk losing his status (Bird 1996:128). Competition allows a man to integrate his position relative to other men in his identity.

Aggression is another trait that can be learned through sport. The trait is better conveyed through some sports than others. Football and hockey are two sports that are considered to be very aggressive sports. Athletic aggression tends to be directed at rival teams or other athletes who are in direct competition. The aggression is not limited to being within an athletic arena however; hostilities often remain outside of sanctioned sporting activity, sometimes resulting in violence between opponents in public places. These hostile attitudes and violence behaviors are reinforced by the praise of teammates, peers, coaches and spectators. If a hockey player does not engage in "rough" behavior, he will likely be labeled with feminized traits, such as "chicken". Players will often initiate such behaviors for the purpose of avoiding such labels and perceptions of weakness. Backing away from a fight in the context of an athletic competition, or with an

athletic opponent is believed to be representative of a weak masculinity. In hockey there is an expectation by the spectators that there be some type of physical contact between players, even though the rules of the game do not require such an interaction for a successful contest. Hockey players are often a prime example for sports related aggression because the nature and culture of the sport creates a permissive atmosphere for such behavior. In a display of the type of power that society ascribes to men upholding masculine ideals courts and other systems of formal social control ignore the violence of athletes, or imposes lesser sanctions than those applied to other members of society who deviate from prescribed standards of behavior. (Pappas, McKenry, and Catlett 2004:293)

Displaying emotion reveals weakness and vulnerability, which are not desirable traits in masculinity. In hegemonic masculinity emotions are devalued, and even the mentioning of the word "feelings" is discouraged (Bird 1996:125). In the realm of hegemonic masculinity, emotions are classified as feminine. The detachment of men from emotions prevents them from engaging in the areas of arts or aesthetics. Such an engagement may be viewed as feminine, which would negatively affect the masculine image. Men are instead restricted to the area of more concrete activity, such as physical labor and aggressive sports (Chimot and Louveau 2010:446). A detachment from emotions allows men to be more self-reliant and less dependent on others. A man crying in public loses the respect of his peers and is determined to have disgraced himself. The norms of the man's homosocial group do not change to accommodate and support him, but instead is more likely to exclude him from the group (Bird 1996:125-126). Emotional control is essential to masculinity, as it allows the man to keep control of his most intimate reactions, and hold control of a social situation.

Beyond the constructing of homosocial relationships, sport also plays a part in the construction of the masculine body. After a male reaches puberty, his body becomes an important trait of his masculinity. The male body goes through growth spurts, the voice typically deepens and hair begins to grown on the face and body. Boys who have these events occur earlier than their peers are often at an advantage and find themselves at a higher position in the masculine hierarchy (Vaccaro 2011:70). A masculine body must take a certain form, a mesomorphic form. The mesomorphic body is one that is well proportion and muscular. In recent times the aspirations toward this type of body has increased as women have entered the workforce and men have sought additional methods to assert their masculinity and dominance (Vaccaro 2011:66-67).

The physical body is involved in additional attributes of masculinity, such as risk-taking and consuming masculinized foods. Risk taking behavior in men that is associated with masculinity range from aggressive contact sports to occupations where physical danger is a constant, such as firefighting. Men consume more food than women, and typically consume foods associated with masculinity. Men aspiring to a hegemonic masculine status tend to focus their diets on meats and starches, avoiding fruits, vegetables and any food that can be considered feminine. The consumption of meat is linked to the development of muscle mass, which is seen as being a masculine attribute. Men are more likely to consume large amounts of alcohol than women. The consumption of alcohol is often linked to other risk-taking behaviors of men, and the consumption itself is linked to the strength of the man. The relationship between man and alcohol can be best described as a competition. Men that can maintain bodily and emotional control after consuming significant amounts of alcohol are given higher status than men who lose control or show signs of weakness after consuming. Men who have difficulty handling large

amounts of alcohol or who refuse to drink large quantities of alcohol (essentially declining to compete) will often be ostracized by their peers, and receive diminutive names such as "two beer queer" (Vaccaro 2011:71-72). Men actively engage their bodies in daily acts of masculinity, even though things as commonplace as their choice of food and beverage.

As important as the physical body is to masculinity is the discourse surrounding it. In hegemonic masculinity the male body is often compared to machinery. Machine-like terms are used to refer to functions of the body, especially when discussing sexual functions, or bodily structure. When discussing sexual activity men use terms comparable to those used to describe physical work utilizing tools. Some of the more metaphorical terms used are "drill" and "plow" to describe intercourse with a female. The words describe aggressive and physical activities, and are used with such connotations when referring to sexual intercourse. Men use this language in conversations with their peers, primarily other men, to emphasize their accomplishment in fulfilling the heterosexuality requirement of masculinity (Vaccaro 2011:67). Men also describe their bodies with different terms than they do women's bodies. Men focus on the strength and athletic ability of their bodies, including describing its defensive capabilities. For female bodies, men are more likely to make an aesthetic judgment (Hauge and Haavind 2011:14). Male conversational styles regarding their bodies are a distinctive trait of masculinity, which reinforces the perception of the unemotional, aggressive, heterosexual man.

What does not get said about the male body is nearly as important as what is. Discussion of pain, physical exhaustion or any bodily weakness is discouraged. To discuss pain or exhaustion is to expose a vulnerability, which would negatively affect the outward perception of the body. Discourse involving less than ideal condition of the male body is avoided, often at the cost of placing the body into risky and dangerous situations (Hauge and Haavind 2011:11). As a

result of not being willing to admit pain, or appear weak, men will neglect their bodies. Men have a shorter life expectancy than women, partially due to a masculine avoidance of consulting a physician when there is pain or other bodily abnormality (Connell 2005:1813). The masculine identity limits what can be said about the body. The appearance of strength must be maintained, and no doubts may be raised about the readiness of a man's body.

Personal control through the perception of emotional detachment, sexual objectification and bodily fortitude allows men to maintain a level of power in social situations. Personal control is important to masculinity. A man must be able to keep control in social situations by maintaining his physical composure as well as his emotional restraint. Having the most personal control in a situation places a man at a higher position in the hierarchy than his counterparts. The key to the functioning of masculinity is in the interactions with other people, especially other men.

One of the ways masculinity is controlled is through homophobic discourse. This discourse may take the form of actual homophobia, fag discourse or heterosexist attitudes. Homophobia for men involves an active aversion of homosexuals and a strong disliking for homosexual conduct. Fag discourse involves the use of labels such as "fag" or "gay" directed at anything that is male, but is not masculine. The labels are not applied as any form of sexual discrimination, or even an implication that the man at which the label has been directed is a homosexual, or has any form of homosexual desire. Often the labels are used as a sanction against men who violate masculine gender norms. The labels are most often temporary and do not become a permanent component of the man's identity, but that does not prevent it from being an effective mechanism for enforcing masculine behavior. Men attempt to remain within the confines of their gender role to prevent a permanent assignment of "fag" (Pascoe 2005:330-333).

The sexual objectification of women occurs as a matter of tradition for most men. Men treat their gendered counterpart as unequal and present for their sexual gratification and reproduction. Hinojosa describes this as "overt heterosexuality" (2010:179). One of the clearest defining characteristics of the hegemonic masculinity is the trait of heterosexuality. This trait is required to achieve power in the patriarchal system and to be seen as "fully" masculine. To maintain the heterosexual form of masculinity, there are controls of homophobia and heterosexism present in the masculine role. Homosexuality represents a penetrated masculinity, which has been abdicated of its social power (Pascoe 2005:329). One factor that shapes a male's sexual behaviors and attitude is a masculine attitude of heterosexism. Not only does this reaffirm the requirement of heterosexuality, but it also alters the man's perception of other bodies. Men who are exposed to photographs of nude women have strong emotional and analytical responses to the photographs and prefer more suggestive poses, whereas women who are shown the same style of photographs of men focus on only analytical components, and tend to favor less suggestive poses. When shown same-sex photographs, men frequently reported having no comments at all on the photographs, women were willing to express analytical criticism or commentary on the photographs. In essence, men have been raised to be averse to the image of other naked men and showing any interest, no matter how asexual of a critique, would weaken the man's masculinity and potentially result in social sanctions from his peers (Eck 2003:706).

Men display masculine strength with their bodies, but they also show it with their emotions, or lack thereof. Masculinity does not allow for men to show emotional weakness, as doing so would be a loss of social control. Emotional detachment is seen in male avoidance of arts and activities of aesthetic expression, emphasizing instead expressions of a more concrete

construction and with defined parameters. Emotional detachment is further identified in men

being less present in the process of raising children (Chimot and Louveau 2010).

Socio-economic status is a component of the overall masculine identity. Socio-economic

status is less of a factor than race because it is not always visible or a static component of a

man's self-identity. Part of forming a masculine identity is being able to support one's self or

family financially. There is also a strong correlation between economic status and social power.

During economic difficulties, such as The Great Depression or major recessions, men become

dejected in their masculine power when there is a lack of certainty in their ability to earn a stable

income. The importance of economic status to the masculine identity is related to the economic

class of the man. The relationship is correlated inversely; men with more economic power are

less concerned about their economic position in relation to their concept of masculinity, whereas

working class men are more likely to use their economic status as a major factor in how they

build their identity as men. Socio-economic status is a marker of success, which is essential to

masculinity. Success is a component of what builds self-esteem in men. Without a measure of

success in their lives, men do not have a position in the hierarchy and do not have a mechanism

through which to utilize their power. Through this reliance on success, men put themselves in

competition with other men (and women) who are also working toward a measure of success.

Working class men do not have large quantities of financial success for themselves, but they

associate themselves with the "collective of manhood", and as such advocate for the

improvement of opportunities for success for men (Fine et al. 1997:52-56).

Race is one of the factors that can restrict hegemonic masculinity. White males in

Western culture will often regard their counterparts of other races or ethnicities to be of a lower

class than themselves, often referencing moral capacity of the race as the reason for

discriminating. Working-class men who have a hegemonic masculinity often feel that it is their privilege to work. If they perceive themselves as being displaced by a minority worker, they will make judgments on the motives of the racial minority based on their displacement (Fine et al. 1997:57). Black masculinities are typically in competition with white hegemonic masculinities in the United States. There are significant differences in the goals and values of black and white men. In the course of performing research on fag discourse C.J. Pascoe noticed several instances of the distinction between value systems, including an interaction between a black student and a white student, in which the black student mocked the white student for the fact that his shoes were dirty. Such an issue is not a problem in the scope of white masculinity, but in black masculinity, it is a symbol of status to maintain cleanliness of one's footwear (Pascoe 2005:341). There are differences of varying magnitudes which require distinction between white hegemonic masculinity and racialized minority masculinities.

Some men join institutional forms of masculinity, such as joining a fraternity or entering military service. Hinojosa states "Military service offers men unique resources for the construction of a masculine identity defined by emotional control, overt heterosexual desire, physical fitness, self-discipline, self-reliance, the willingness to use aggression and physical violence, and risk-taking" (2010:179). Military service offers men all of the tools needed to create and maintain a masculine identity, all within a tight homosocial environment utilizing a formal hierarchy. A man who enters military service learns a structured masculinity that is more potent than forms of masculinity that could be learned and assimilated in other homosocial settings. Civilian forms of masculinity do not encourage physical fitness or self-discipline, beyond what is needed for competing with other men. While physical violence and aggression are part of hegemonic masculinity, they are not actively pursued in civilian identity construction,

they instead form as mechanisms for protection of the masculine identity, whether through competition, or in response to an offense against the identity. In military institutions, physical violence and aggression are taught as part of job training and encouraged for the purpose of defense in battle (Hinojosa 2010:180-181). Fraternities often provide young men with access to a persistent homosocial environment that is less structured than military service, but provides opportunities for men to rehearse masculine identities and compete with other men (Yeung, Stombler, and Wharton 2006:8). Both types of institutional masculinity involve traditions of brotherhood and shared risk taking. Military is a highly structured masculinity, emphasizing uniformity in the masculine experience (Hinojosa 2010:182). Fraternity masculinity is less structured and is often more focused on social interaction and developing informal homosocial relationships (Yeung, Stombler, and Wharton 2006:6). The benefit of institutional masculinity is that masculinity is in itself conveyed by the process of becoming affiliated with the institution. While the association alone does not convey masculinity, the rituals and requirements of the institutions create masculinity in concept and in response to social expectations of masculinity (Hinojosa 2010:189).

Once the masculine identity is formed it is solidified into the personal identity of the man, which results in a virtually impenetrable barrier between the masculine identity and any idea that may violate the ideals of that masculine identity. The identity defends itself against anything that is not masculine through the values contained in the gender identity. Social interactions resulting from homosocial patterns inherent in hegemonic masculinity place the man in constant interaction with peers that share similar values and who will be likely to reinforce those values.

Not all masculinities form as hegemonic masculinities. There are subordinated forms of masculinity that result when the standards for hegemonic masculinity are not met. In many cases,

deviations from the hegemonic norms will result in a man's expulsion from homosocial interactions. Other men may select to not interact with a subordinated male, or the male may find himself constantly criticized for not being adequately masculine. Subordinated males often find themselves expelled from hegemonic masculinity and must seek their own form of masculinity and develop social relationships based on that particular masculine identity. Most alternative masculinities have similarities to hegemonic masculinity.

A more modern form of masculinity is that of consumer masculinity. It holds some traits of hegemonic masculinity such as showing strength and success, but embraces some traits that were traditionally perceived to be more feminine, such as vanity. This modern masculinity is not very different from hegemonic masculinity overall, as it emphasizes a measure of success, primarily in the socio-economic achievement of the man. In some ways it allows the male to assert more control in his life by designing his own form of masculinity, and taking charge of his own purchase decisions. As discussed earlier, men will gauge themselves based on what they "consume". This is true both of food items and of material items that the man purchases for his own use. The difference between consumer masculinity and morphing of hegemonic masculinity is in the focus on the self in terms of appearance. Grooming and maintaining a conscious appearance are not traits of hegemonic masculinity, but are essential to consumer masculinity. In consumer masculinity these traits are at the core of self-esteem and self-worth (Conseur, Hathcote, and Kim 2008:549-550). Men who utilize this form of masculinity have a wide variety of options for expressing their own identity and interests. Whereas hegemonic masculinities are constructed from peer groups and socialization in homosocial settings, consumer masculinities are constructed through culture and media images, such as fashion magazines, music videos and items seen in movies. In the presentation of these images targeted at men, there are numerous

conflicting images from which men can select what to wear or how to "accessorize" their life. This conflict is inconsistent with hegemonic masculinity, as it encourages self-expression, which in itself is related to emotional expression (Conseur, Hathcote, and Kim 2008:554). Consumer masculinity exists alongside hegemonic masculinity and other than some issues of expression they exist with each other without conflict in society.

Racial distinction and a history of racism have also given rise to options for new masculinities. A form of black masculinity, sometimes referred to as hip-hop masculinity, is a form of consumer masculinity in which racially differentiated others (African-American men) have formed a culture of their own, based on hip-hop and rap music. The hip-hop form of masculinity is first known to have originated in South Bronx, New York in the 1970s as a result of gang violence and failed urban renewal projects. The hip-hop masculine identity developed as a hyper-masculine identity based on stereotypes of black men and an inclusion of a hegemonic ideal of success. Hip-hop masculinity is similar in structure to consumer masculinity because it is based on personal property acquisition and outward appearance. In hip-hop masculinity jewelry, cars and expensive shoes are markers of success. The identity is also clearly identified by the inclusion of heavy objectification of women, especially in cultural references, such as music. The objectification includes prostitutes and relationships where the purpose of the woman is the sexual gratification of the man. In milder forms of the identity, success is indicated by having women being dependent on the man, and the man supplying symbols of his success for the women to poses. Hip-hop masculinity imitates hegemonic masculinity, and includes elements of violence designed to emphasize a "hardness" of the black male that is not present in the white male (Hunter 2011:29-32). Hip-hop masculinity is designed to compete with hegemonic

masculinity and to subvert some of its control on society by reinforcing aspects of hyper-sexualization and objectification of women that have been allowed to mellow over time.

Homosexual men are not included in hegemonic masculinity and as such often have to seek their own form of masculinity. In some instances this results in a redefining of masculinity, through developing new social institutions, such as fraternities, or through rejecting and protesting the hegemonic standard. Another option that may be utilized by a man with a homosexual masculine identity is hypermasculine expression, in which the male embraces strong external characteristics of masculinity, such as a masculine career, attempting a mesomorphic body style and risk taking behavior. In some cases, hegemonic masculine symbols and appearance become fetishized by homosexual men (Scott 2011:152-155). For young men a variety of options exist for maintaining their masculine identity while also maintaining a homosexual identity. One such method for men in college is a gay fraternity. Such an organization encourages homosocial behavior between gay men, but also allows the men to express their homosexual identity as well. The protocol for gay fraternities is similar to their normative counterparts in most respects, including passing of traditions, forming a brotherhood and functioning as a service oriented organization within a campus community. Different standards are maintained for sexual behavior. Gay fraternities do not exercise discrimination based on sexual orientation, as gay fraternities also allow straight allies to join as well. In such fraternities sexual objectification is prohibited. Within the fraternities there is a social hierarchy based on competition and the ability to exhibit hegemonic traits of masculinity, however there are some exceptions. Gay fraternities embrace emotional expression and include it as a practice in their weekly meetings. Another difference is that the performance of femininity in gay fraternities is discouraged, as it reinforces a negative stereotype of homosexual men. In

heterosexual fraternities, feminine expression is often used as a form of mockery or humiliation (Yeung, Stombler, and Wharton 2006:12-14). Homosexual men are not included in the traditional definition of masculinity, but within their own social groups they are able to maintain their own form of masculinity which closely approximates hegemonic masculinity.

Masculinity is contained primarily in the sphere of gender roles, but men also develop a separate gender identity, which is a more personal version of their gender roles, which do not necessarily conform to the same standards as their gender role (Bird 1996:125-126). Homosexual identity integrates into this concept almost seamlessly. A homosexual male may "pass" in heteronormative society as a heterosexual male by presenting that gender role externally. While in his personal like his masculinity may also include a homosexual identity, a man can structure his presenting role to be consistent with the expectations of society, or his homosocial peer group. It is not only subordinated masculinities that have a personal alternative identity. Men may hold strong emotional control within his peer group, but express deep emotion when in more intimate social settings, such as with a romantic partner or close family member (Bird 1996:122).

The hegemonic standard of masculinity continues to reinforce itself, but its success of replication has been reduced in recent times. Homosexual, consumer, racialized and emotive masculinities have slowly been gaining validity and acceptance by the hegemonic institution. For the hegemony this acceptance and change means an end to an exclusive control of systems of power. For all other men, women and gender-queer persons this change represents more equality in access to social power. The changing definition of masculinity is not something that is easily accepted by all men. Most men are resistant to gender equality, and even more resistant to equality with their homosexual peers. Older men are more resistant to the change than younger

men. Younger men are more likely to enter into marriages with women with the intention of forming "fair families", in which the male and female partners share equally in earning an income and in domestic responsibilities. The reasons for the change in attitude are numerous. Some of the more commonly noted reasons for the change in attitude are relationships with women, health concerns and social harmony. Men are surrounded by women in their lives now more than in the past, and as such develop different types of relationships with them. These relationships allow men to see the impact of gender hierarchy on women and develop different opinions about existence of such a system. Men are more likely to have more mental and physical health problems than women. This is due to masculine requirements of emotional control and not allowing their bodies to be perceived as weak. In reducing the amount of information that men are required to conceal to be considered "men", men are more likely to access medical care that is needed. Also, in moving away from hegemonic standards of homosociality the amount of risk taking is decreased. Some men are looking outside of the impact that masculine power has on themselves and are looking at the impact it has on their community. In doing so, men are seeing that their communities would be benefited by more equal treatment of people. While many men have eagerly accepted a more modern masculinity, some hold firm to traditional gender role interpretations (Connell 2005). The definition of masculinity has changed constantly throughout the history of the binary gender system, but there has always been a constant of the subordination of women included in that definition. A contemporary definition of masculinity may challenge that constant and fundamentally change the structure of the gender system.

Masculinity is the result of the complex interactions between many social traits. Masculinity is formed inside of a hierarchical structure of homosocial interactions, which is self-

replicating. There are controls within masculinity that reinforce its existence and power. Masculinity does not exist in a single man, or in a social vacuum, it is an institution that exists within society and between men. The definition and norms of masculinity are as fluid as the self-concepts of the men who compose the institution of masculinity.

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