

Overall Marxist approaches to male sexuality are broadly compatible with widely accepted social constructionist approaches but tend to reject queer theory's view of sexuality as performance and instead to stress material, social, ideological and psychological factors that contribute to shaping sexuality. Unfortunately the relative eclipse of Marxism since the 1980s has held back a potentially fruitful dialogue between Marxist feminists and queer theorists.

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See also: class, work and masculinity; unions/organised labour movements

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MASCULINITY/MASCULINITIES

The concept of masculinity is well established; the concept of masculinities is much more recent, dating from the late 1970s. The word 'masculinity' derives from the Middle English *masculin*, from Middle French and from Latin *masculus* ('male, of masculine gender', 'male person, male') and *masculus* (male). Recorded uses of 'masculine' date from the late fourteenth century, as 'belonging to' or 'of the male sex'. The grammatical use of 'masculine' is from the same period. More specific meanings of having 'appropriate' qualities of the male sex, such as 'powerfulness', 'manliness' and 'virility', date from the early seventeenth century. These have been elaborated to refer to characteristics traditionally thought to be suitable for men; traits of behaving in ways considered typical for men; or properties characteristic of the male sex. The concept links closely with concepts of manhood and manliness (Mangan and Walvin 1987).

The first steps towards the modern analysis of masculinity are found in the pioneering psychologies of Freud and Adler. These demonstrated that adult character was not biologically predetermined but constructed through emotional attachments to others in a turbulent growth process (Connell 1994). Anthropologists such as Malinowski and Mead went on to emphasise cultural differences in such processes, structures and norms. By the mid-twentieth century, these ideas had crystallised into the associated concepts of masculinity and the male sex role. The concept of masculinity has also been used in analysing literary and other texts.

In the 1960s and 1970s masculinity was understood mainly as an internalised role, identity or (social) psychological disposition, reflecting a particular (often US or Western) cluster of cultural norms or values acquired by learning from socialisation agents. This was represented in various formulations of masculinity in learning and socialisation theories. In masculinity–femininity (m–f) scales, certain items were scored as ‘masculine’ (such as ‘aggressive’, ‘ambitious’, analytical’, assertive’ and ‘athletic’) compared with other items scored as ‘feminine’ (such as ‘affectionate’, ‘cheerful’, ‘childlike’, ‘compassionate’ and ‘flatterable’). The best known are various formulations of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). Such notions of masculinity were subject to substantive and conceptual criticism in the 1970s and 1980s. Such m–f scales were criticised for obscuring differences between cultural ideals and practices, ignoring which gender assesses which, showing bias in using them on students to construct scales, lacking a power perspective and being ethnocentric, especially US-centric (Eichler 1980). Since then, masculinity scales have been refined, in terms of gender orientation and gender ideology (Thompson and Pleck 1995; Luyt 2005).

At the same time as sex role theory and m–f scales were being critiqued, in theories of patriarchy men were analysed societally, structurally and collectively. Different theories of patriarchy have emphasised men’s structural social relations to women, in terms of biology, reproduction, politics and culture, family, state, sexuality, economy and combinations thereof. By the late 1970s, however, a number of feminist and profeminist critics were suggesting that the concept of ‘patriarchy’ was too monolithic, ahistorical, biologically determined and dismissive of women’s resistance and agency.

These twin debates and critiques around masculinity/male sex role and patriarchy in many ways laid the conceptual and political foundations for a more differentiated approach to masculinities. Building on both social psy-

chological and social structural accounts, social constructionist perspectives of various kinds highlighting complexities of men’s social power have emerged. Increasingly, different masculinities are interrogated in the plural, not the singular, in discussions of hegemonic, complicit, subordinated, marginalised and resistant masculinities. Masculinities, hegemonic or not, can be understood as signs and practices obscuring contradictions. The concept of masculinities has been extremely important in widening the social analysis of men and gender relations (Brod 1987; Carrigan *et al.* 1985; Brod and Kaufman 1993; Connell 1995). Key features include: critique and supplanting of sex role theory; understanding masculinities as power-laden, in unequal relations between women and men and between men and men; highlighting the implications of gay liberation/scholarship and sexual hierarchies; acknowledgement of socio-historical transformation, contradictions, resistance and interrelations of institutional/social, interpersonal and intra-psychic dimensions.

The construction of masculinities has been explored in many different arenas, including: global, regional, institutional, interactional and individual men’s gendered performance and identity constructions. Masculinities do not exist in socio-cultural vacuums but are constructed within specific institutional settings (Kimmel *et al.* 2005). They vary and change across time (history) and space (culture), within societies and through life courses and biographies.

The first substantial discussion of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ was in the paper ‘Men’s bodies’, written by R. Connell in 1979 and published in *Which Way Is Up?* in 1983. Its background was debates on patriarchy; the Gramscian hegemony at issue in relation to masculinities was hegemony in the patriarchal system of gender relations. The social construction of the body in boys’ and men’s practices is analysed. In discussing ‘the physical sense of maleness’, Connell (1983: 18) notes the importance of sport as ‘the central experience of the school years for many

boys', emphasising taking and occupying space, holding the body tense, skill, size, power, force, strength, physical development and sexuality. Regarding men's bodies, she highlights physicality within work, sexuality and fatherhood. Connell stresses

the embedding of masculinity in the body is very much a social process, full of tensions and contradiction; that even physical masculinity is historical, rather than a biological fact ... constantly in process, constantly being constituted in actions and relations, constantly implicated in historical change.

(Connell 1983: 30)

The notion of hegemonic masculinity was reformulated in the early 1980s, in the light of gay activism, thus articulating analyses of oppression from both feminism and gay liberation. Accordingly, it is not men in general who are oppressed in patriarchal sexual relations, but particular groups, such as homosexual men, whose situations are related differentially to the 'logic' of women's subordination to men (Carrigan *et al.* 1985: 586).

In *Masculinities*, Connell (1995) discusses hegemonic masculinity in more depth. She reaffirms the link with Gramscian analysis of economic class relations through the operation of cultural dynamics. Hegemonic masculinity is now defined as: 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (p. 77).

Though rather stable, hegemonic masculinity is contested and subject to struggle and change. Connell notes that the most powerful bearers of the cultural ideal of hegemonic masculinity are not necessarily the most powerful individuals. Indeed, the individual holders of power may be very different from those who represent hegemonic masculinity as a cultural ideal. Even so, there is some correspondence between the cultural ideal and institutional power, as in state and corporate

power. There are also complex interplays of hegemonic, subordinated, complicit and marginalised forms of masculinity, for example when some black men or gay men adopt or accept aspects of hegemonic masculinity but remain marginalised.

In identifying forms of domination by men, both of women and of other men, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been notably successful. The reformulation of masculinity to masculinities is not, however, without problems. The term 'masculinities' has been applied in very different, sometimes confusing ways; this can be a conceptual and empirical difficulty (Clatterbaugh 1998). There is growing debate and critique on the very concepts of masculinities and hegemonic masculinity from various methodological positions, including historical, materialist and poststructuralist (Whitehead 2002; Howson 2006).

Several other unresolved issues remain. First, are we talking about cultural representations, everyday practices or institutional structures? Second, how exactly do the various dominant and dominating ways that men are – tough/aggressive/violent; respectable/corporate; controlling of resources; controlling of images; and so on – connect with each other? Third, the concept of hegemonic masculinity may carry contradictions and, arguably, has failed to demonstrate the autonomy of the gender system from class and other social systems. Mike Donaldson (1993) has pointed out that the concept of hegemonic masculinity is unclear, may carry contradictions and fails to demonstrate the autonomy of the gender system. For example, does men's greater involvement in fathering indicate an intensification of hegemonic masculinity or not? For him, in foregrounding (hegemonic) masculinity, economic class remains crucially important, politically and analytically. Fourth, why is it necessary to hang on to the concept of masculinity, rather than being more specific by referring to, say, men's practices or men's identities (Hearn 1996)?

Detailed discursive and ethnographic researches have provided close-grained descriptions

of multiple, internally complex masculinities. Margaret Wetherell and Nigel Edley (1999) have identified three specific 'imaginary positions and psycho-discursive practices' in negotiating hegemonic masculinity and identification with the masculine positions: heroic, 'ordinary' and rebellious. The first in fact conforms more closely with the notion of complicit masculinity: 'it could be read as an attempt to actually *instantiate* hegemonic masculinity since, here, men align themselves strongly with conventional ideals' (emphasis in original) (p. 340). The second seeks distance from certain conventional or ideal notions of the masculine; instead, 'ordinariness of the self; the self as normal, moderate or average' (p. 343) is emphasised. The third is characterised by its unconventionality, with the imaginary position involving flouting social expectations (p. 347). With all these self-positionings, especially the last two, ambiguity and subtlety, even contradiction, are present in self-constructions of masculinity, hegemonic or not. Indeed, one feature of the hegemonic may be its elusiveness: the difficulty of reducing it to a set of fixed positions and practices.

More generally, Stephen Whitehead (1999) argues that:

the concept of hegemonic masculinity goes little way towards revealing the complex patterns of inculcation and resistance which constitute everyday social interaction ... it is unable to explain the variant meanings attached to the concept of masculinity at this particular moment in the social history of Euro/American/Australasian countries.

(Stephen Whitehead 1999: 58)

While this may be a harsh verdict, it points to possible empirical limitations, as well as the need to subject concepts to scrutiny in changing historical contexts.

Recent work has emphasised multiple masculinities in terms of ways of being men and forms of men's structural, collective and individual practices, their interrelations, and

complex interweavings of masculinities, powers, other social statuses and, indeed, violences. There has been strong emphasis on the interconnections of gender with other social divisions, such as age, class, disability, ethnicity, nationality, occupation, racialisation, religion and sexuality. For example, relations of gender and class can demonstrate how different class-based masculinities may both challenge and reproduce gender relations among men and between women and men. Masculinities are placed in cooperative and conflictual relations with each other: – in organisational, occupational and class relations – and in terms defined more explicitly in relation to gender, such as family, kinship and sexuality. Such relations are complicated by contradictions, ambiguities and paradoxes that persist intra-personally, inter-personally, collectively and structurally. Such intersectional perspectives link with current research on global, (neo-) imperialist and (post)colonial relations.

The range of conceptual and empirical debates points to more fundamental problematics. Both masculinity and masculinities have been used in a wide variety of ways, often rather imprecisely and serving as short-hands for various social phenomena. Sometimes their use may reinforce a psychological model of gender relations located in the individual, or represent masculinity/ies as a primary or underlying cause of other social effects. The concepts can lead to an anti-materialism that may not reflect historical, cultural, (post)colonial and transnational differences. They can reproduce heterosexual dichotomies. There is also increasing scholarship on the separation of masculinity/ies from men, as in female masculinity (Halberstam 1998), within queer studies. Such various critiques provide the ground for the deconstruction of the social taken-for-grantedness of the category of 'men' and its own hegemony. Critique of the hegemony of men can bring together feminist materialist theory and cultural queer theory, as well as modernist theories of hegemony and poststructuralist discourse theory (Hearn 2004).

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See also: complicit masculinity; hegemonic masculinity; hypermasculinity; male; men; marginalised masculinity; protest masculinity; subordinate masculinity

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MASCULINITY POLITICS

Since the inception of the modern women's movement in the 1960s there have been a great many social/political responses that address the place of men and masculinity with respect to this movement. Of course, the women's movement itself was extremely diverse; for example, some sought gender equality – that is, opportunities for women to pursue traditionally male roles and occupations – whereas others took it upon themselves to transform society and the gender roles that it embodied. This essay attempts to trace in outline form the social/political perspectives or masculinity politics that achieved enough momentum to become movements. In fact, there have been only four major social movements that focus on men and masculinity, namely profeminist, men's rights, mythopoetic and the Promise Keepers. But each of these is a complex mix of sometimes incompatible views that hang together more because of an ideological commitment to what they oppose than what they defend.

Before turning to the complexities of each of these four points of view it is worth saying what components are required to make a social/political point of view into a social movement. First, each perspective must have an account of the social/political reality that it confronts. Thus, for example, the women's movement stressed the kind of systemic inequality that women face in work, law and almost every area of society. Second, a movement must offer an analysis of that reality,