

Contextualizing Gender
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Lecture - 41

“Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept” by R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt I

Good morning, dear friends and welcome to this module. In the last week, we had looked at how several social movements have brought the issues of sexual harassment and gender discrimination to the forefront. The rise of movements like MeToo and Time's Up with the support of online platforms also saw a rise of misogyny in the form of trolling and death threats to feminists on social media.

This is in strong contrast to a large number of men who immensely supported, valued and encouraged the female survivors in speaking out through the MeToo movement. This shows the necessity of a multi-methodological approach which acknowledges the concept of “multiple masculinities” that there are multiple definitions and dynamics of masculinity.

Such diversity amongst men from unassertive heterosexuals to toxic or dominant or aggressive masculinity, highlights the point that understanding how men enact manhood in different ways is central to deciphering gender politics and gender relations. During this week, we shall take up the concept of masculinity in detail by looking at the embedded and embodied plurality of the masculine subject and masculinities as a discourse.

We shall begin this discussion by reviewing the 2005 paper of R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt. The paper is titled as “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept”. In this essay, Connell and Messerschmidt explore the idea of multiple masculinities and the concept of hegemony that has influenced the area of men's and masculinities studies since its inception.


The authors have traced the origin of the concept in a convergence of ideas in the early 1980's and mapped the ways in which it was applied when research on men and masculinities expanded. They also suggest reformulations to provide a more

contemporary understanding of being a man and becoming one. They also recognize social struggles and present “multiple masculinities”.

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“Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept”
-- R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt*

- In this essay, Connell and Messerschmidt introduce the concept of “hegemonic masculinity” as it has influenced gender studies across many academic fields.
- However, the concept has also attracted some serious criticism.
- The authors “defend” and define the primary and underlying concept of masculinity. However, the criticism of trait models of gender and rigid typologies is essential for the deeper understanding of the discourse.
 - According to Connell and Messerschmidt, “.....The concept of hegemonic masculinity does not equate to a model of social reproduction; we need to recognize social struggles in which subordinated masculinities influence dominant forms.” (829)



* Gender and Society, Dec 2005, Vol. 19, No. 6 (Dec 2005), pp. 829-859 Published by: Sage Publications, Inc.

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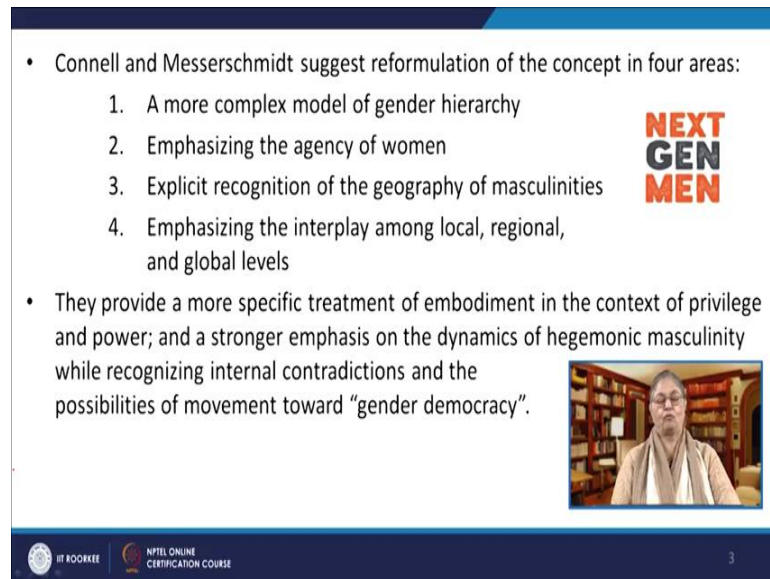
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Connell and Messerschmidt introduce this essay by accepting the influence which gender studies has inculcated from the concept of “hegemonic masculinities”. They are also aware of the fact that the concept of hegemonic masculinity has also attracted some serious criticism. They defend and define the primary and underlying concept of masculinity. However, the criticism of trade models of gender and rigid typologies is essential for the deeper understanding of the discourse.

Connell and Messerschmidt say that “the concept of hegemonic masculinity does not equate to a model of social reproduction, and they suggest that there is a need to recognize social struggles in which subordinated masculinities influence dominant forms. Gender is one of the social categories that children learn in today’s societies”.

Adolescents also begin constructing their self-concepts in line with the gender stereotypes they have internalised. Gender identity typologies are related to gender typing, friendships and social and emotional adjustments. There are multiple masculinities and we need to discard one-dimensional treatment of hierarchy and trade conceptions of gender.

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• Connell and Messerschmidt suggest reformulation of the concept in four areas:

1. A more complex model of gender hierarchy
2. Emphasizing the agency of women
3. Explicit recognition of the geography of masculinities
4. Emphasizing the interplay among local, regional, and global levels

• They provide a more specific treatment of embodiment in the context of privilege and power; and a stronger emphasis on the dynamics of hegemonic masculinity while recognizing internal contradictions and the possibilities of movement toward “gender democracy”.

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Connell and Messerschmidt suggest reformulation of the concept accordingly in four major areas. They list these four areas as (1) a more complex model of gender hierarchy. (2) they emphasize on the agency of women instead of segregating them. Thirdly, they explicitly recognize the significance and role of the geography of masculinities and lastly, they emphasize the interplay among local, regional and global levels.

They provide a more specific treatment of embodiment in the context of privilege and power and a stronger emphasis on the dynamics of hegemonic masculinity while recognizing internal contradictions and the possibilities of movement towards “gender democracy”.

They aim to re-examine the concept of hegemonic masculinity and its consequences as it has impacted recent thinking about men, gender, social hierarchy and popular anxieties about men and boys. The issues they have discussed in this essay are crucial in contemporary struggles about power and political leadership. Public and private violence and changes in our understandings of families and sexuality.

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- Hegemonic masculinity as a concept was first proposed in reports from a field study of social inequality in Australian high schools (Kessler et al. 1982); in a related conceptual discussion of the making of masculinities and the experience of men's bodies (Connell 1983).
- The project presented evidence pertaining to multiple hierarchies - in gender as well as in class terms, gender construction and masculinities. (Connell et al. 1982).
- Further systematized in an article, "Towards a New Sociology of Masculinity" (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985), which proposed a model of multiple masculinities and power relations.
- In turn, this model was integrated into a systematic sociological theory of gender.



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It was in the reports from a field study of social inequality conducted in Australian high schools that the concept of hegemonic masculinity was first proposed. Connell had commented that the project presented evidence pertaining to multiple hierarchies in gender as well as in terms of class, gender construction and masculinities.

This idea and the findings of these reports were further systematized in an article by Carrigan, Connell and Lee in 1985 and they proposed a model of multiple masculinities and power relations. In turn, this model was integrated into a systematic sociological theory of gender. If we look at the resources for masculinities theories, then we have to admit that fundamentally it were the feminist theories on patriarchy and black feminism .

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- Feminist theories on patriarchy and the related debates over the role of men in transforming patriarchy acted as sources for research (Goode 1982; Snodgrass 1977).
- Moreover, women of colour - such as Maxine Baca Zinn (1982), Angela Davis (1983), and Bell Hooks (1984) - criticized the race bias that occurs when power is solely conceptualized in terms of sex difference, thus laying the groundwork for questioning any universalizing claims about the “category of men”.
- The Gramscian term *hegemony* was used to understand the stabilization of class relations and control (Connell 1977).
- Employment of hegemony deconstructs the issue of control and power, while contextualizing the role of men and masculinities in the discourse of gender and sexualities studies.




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Feminist theories on patriarchy and the related debates over the role of men in transforming patriarchy had acted as primary resources for this research. At the same time, women of colour for example, Maxine Baca Zinn, Angela Davis and Bell hooks particularly had criticized the race bias that occurs when power is solely conceptualized in terms of sexual differences. Thus, laying the groundwork for questioning any universalizing claims about the “category of men”.

The Gramscian term “hegemony” was also used to understand the stabilization of class relations and control. Employment of the idea of hegemony deconstructs the issue of control and power, while contextualizing the role of men in masculinities in the discourse of gender and sexualities studies. Gramsci’s writings focus on the dynamics of structural inconsistencies, hierarchies and issues of historical change.

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- The idea of hegemony is more than a simple model of cultural control.
- How do we define the role of a male in the society?
- “Even before the women's liberation movement, a literature in social psychology and sociology about the "male sex role" had recognized the social nature of masculinity and the possibilities of change in men's conduct” (Hacker 1957).
- During the 1970s, there was an explosion of writing about "the male role," sharply criticizing role norms as the source of oppressive behaviour by men (Brannon 1976).
- Critical role theory provided the main conceptual basis for the blurring of behaviour, norm and role of men in society. However, the sex role theory was still limiting in its conceptual basis.



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Connell and Messerschmidt thus note that the idea of hegemony is more than a simple model of cultural control. They review the critical sex role theory and its limiting conceptual basis which had not included the experiences of homosexual men. So, the question we face is how to define the role of a male in the society. Researchers prove that “even before the women’s liberation movement, a literature in social psychology and sociology about the male sex role had recognized the social nature of masculinity and the possibilities of change in men’s conduct”.

During the 1970s, there was an explosion of writing about “the male role”, sharply criticizing role norms as the source of oppressive behaviour by men. Critical role theory provided the main conceptual basis for the blurring of behaviour, norm, and role of men in society. However, the sex role theory was still limiting in its conceptual basis.

Connell and Messerschmidt observe and also prove that gender development is a deep complex process, it is influenced by a plurality of discourses and continues to do so, the category of men is not a homogeneous one.

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- The homogenizing effect of the role concept, and its difficulties in accounting for power did not include the homosexual men's experiences.
- The concept was also deeply influenced by psychoanalysis and pop psychology.
 - Sigmund Freud produced the first analytic biographies of men; *The Wolfman*, written at the end of 1914, but not published until 1918. It was based on the interpretation of dreams of one of his patient Sergei Pankejeff;
- Thus, gender development is a deep complex theorization. It is influenced by a plurality of discourses and continues to do so.
- For instance: The psychoanalyst Robert Stoller (1968) popularized the concept of "gender identity" and mapped its variations in boys' development, most famously those leading to transsexualism. (*Sex and Gender: On the development of masculinity and femininity*, 1968).



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Along with these influences and also the fact that the role concept had not included the homosexual men's experiences. The concept was also deeply influenced by psychoanalysis and pop psychology. We can refer to Sigmund Freud who had produced the first analytic biographies of men, 'The Wolfman' which was written by him at the end of 1914 but could not be published until 1918. 'The Wolfman' was based on the interpretation of dreams of one of his patient, Sergei Pankejeff.

Thus, gender development is a deep complex theorization. It is influenced by a plurality of discourse and also continues to do so. For example, the psychoanalyst Robert Stoller whom we have referred to earlier also popularized the concept of "gender identity" and mapped its variations in boy's development, most famously those leading to transsexualism.

It is a normative practice and it allows men's dominance over women sometimes supported by violence both ideologically and physically. According to Connell and Messerschmidt, it was in the late 1980s in early 1990s that the concept of hegemonic masculinity was formulated and consolidated as an academic field.

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- Hegemonic masculinity is understood as the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue. The description of the concept is not static.
- Hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense; only a minority of men might enact it. But it was certainly normative:
 - It embodied the currently most honoured way of being a man.
 - it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it.
- The concept, in theory and in practice, ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men.
- “Men who received the benefits of patriarchy without enacting a strong version of masculine dominance could be regarded as showing a complicit masculinity (Connell, 833).




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Hegemonic masculinity is understood as a pattern of practice; that means, things done not just a set of role expectations, or an identity and it allowed men’s dominance over women to continue. The description of the concept, however, is not static. Hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense; only a minority of men might enact it, but it was certainly normative. For example, it embodied the currently most honoured way of being a man and it also required all other men to position themselves in relation to it.

In theory and practice, the concept ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men and “men who received the benefits of patriarchy without enacting a strong version of masculine dominance could be regarded as showing a complicit masculinity”. It was in relation to this group and to show compliance among heterosexual women that the concept of hegemony was most powerful.

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- Hegemony did not mean violence. It could be supported by force. However, it meant ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion.
- The concept is descriptive, defined in terms of the logic of a patriarchal gender system.
- Men assumed that gender relations were historical, so gender hierarchies were subject to change; but only in accordance with the male desire and fantasies.
- Hegemonic masculinities therefore came into existence in specific circumstances and were open to historical change.



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Hegemony did not mean violence, but it could be supported by force. However, it definitely meant an ascendancy which had been achieved through culture, institutions and persuasion. The concept is also descriptive, it is defined in terms of the logic of a patriarchal gender system.

Men assumed that gender relations were historical so, gender hierarchies were subject to change as we have discussed in the context of feminist theories also, but these gender relations according to masculinities studies changed only in accordance with the male desire and fantasies. Hegemonic masculinities, therefore, came into existence in specific circumstances and were open to historical change.

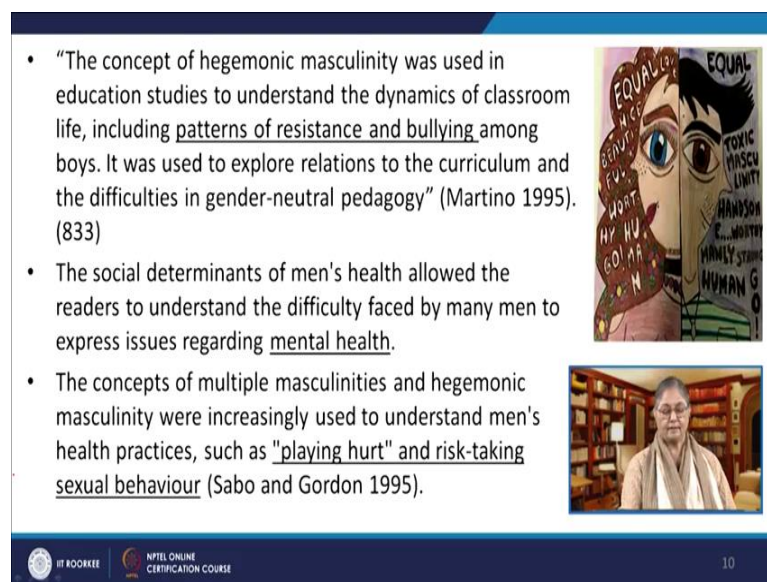
Connell and Messerschmidt suggest that the concept of hegemonic masculinity formulated in the mentioned terms found prompt use. It was used firstly, to develop gender neutral pedagogy, secondly, to understand the socio-cultural process of being or becoming a man and thirdly to respond to the heterosexual image of the ideal man which has been popularized by the mainstream culture.

It is also provided adequate and dynamic practical approaches to the issues faced by men in contemporary times. For example, explicit risk-taking behaviour in men or participation of men in childcare or violence against the elderly, women, children and other men. The concepts of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities helped in

understanding not only men's exposure to risk, but also men's difficulties in responding to disability and injury, show emotions, react and accept.

Yet other mechanisms of hegemony operate by invisibility for example, removing a dominant form of masculinity from the possibility of censure and criticism. From the mid-1980s to the early 2000s, the concept of hegemonic masculinity thus passed from a conceptual model with narrow empirical base to a widely used framework for research and debate. The concept was applied in cultural as well as in practical contexts.

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- “The concept of hegemonic masculinity was used in education studies to understand the dynamics of classroom life, including patterns of resistance and bullying among boys. It was used to explore relations to the curriculum and the difficulties in gender-neutral pedagogy” (Martino 1995). (833)
- The social determinants of men's health allowed the readers to understand the difficulty faced by many men to express issues regarding mental health.
- The concepts of multiple masculinities and hegemonic masculinity were increasingly used to understand men's health practices, such as "playing hurt" and risk-taking sexual behaviour (Sabo and Gordon 1995).

Critics like Martino, Sabo and Gordon have referred to the fact that “the concept of hegemonic masculinity was used in education studies to understand the dynamics of classroom life, including patterns of resistance and bullying among boys. It was also used to explore relations to the curriculum and the difficulties in gender neutral pedagogy”.

At the same time, the social determinants of men's health allowed the readers to understand the difficulty faced by several men to express issues regarding mental health. The concepts of multiple masculinities and hegemonic masculinity were increasingly used to understand the health practices among men such as playing hurt and risk-taking sexual behaviour.

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- The concepts of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities helped in understanding not only men's exposure to risk but also men's difficulties in responding (show emotions, react and accept) to disability and injury (Gerschick and Miller 1994).
- From the mid-1980s to the early 2000s, the concept of hegemonic masculinity became a pedagogical, empirical framework to understand, theorize, research and debate about men and masculinities.
- The concept was applied in diverse cultural contexts and to a considerable range of practical issues.
- Example:
 - Participation of men in childcare.
 - Engaging in Self harm and violence against women.




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These concepts also helped us in understanding men's difficulties in responding to emotions, to disability and injury etcetera. So, this concept of hegemonic masculinity has become a pedagogical and empirical framework to understand, theorize, research and debate about men and masculinities from the mid-1980s to the early 2000s. The concept has been applied in diverse cultural context and to a considerable range of practical issues.

A hierarchy of masculinities constructed within gender relations cannot logically be continuous with the patriarchal subordination of women. It is also argued that hegemonic masculinity constructs masculine power from the direct experience of women rather than from the structural basis of women's subordination.

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- The concept of the discursive power/ toxicity in the context of hegemonic masculinity, has been argued from different points of view. For instance:
- Oystein Gullvag Holter (1997, 2003), argues that the concept constructs masculine power from the “direct experience of women”(839).
- Holter believes that “we must distinguish between "patriarchy" (the long-term structure of the subordination of women) and "gender" (a specific system of exchange that arose in the context of modern capitalism).
- We must factor in: the institutionalization of gender inequalities, the role of cultural constructions, and the interplay of gender dynamics with race, class, and region (*Gender, patriarchy and capitalism: A social forms analysis*,1997 and *Can Men do it? Men and gender equality*, 2003).



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This argument has been put forward by Oystein Holter. He believes that we must distinguish between patriarchy and gender. Patriarchy, that is the long-term structure of the subordination of women and gender which is a specific system of exchange that arose in the context of modern capitalism. We must also factor in the institutionalisation of gender inequalities, the role of cultural constructions and the interplay of gender dynamics with race, class and region.

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- According to Connell and Messerschmidt, research on men and masculinity studies shows that the concept of hegemonic masculinity is not trapped in reification. As a concept it remains abstract, not a monolithic or concrete entity.
- Other researches, especially studies of school classrooms (Martino 1995; Warren 1997), show the production and negotiation of masculinities (and femininities) as configurations of practice and performance.

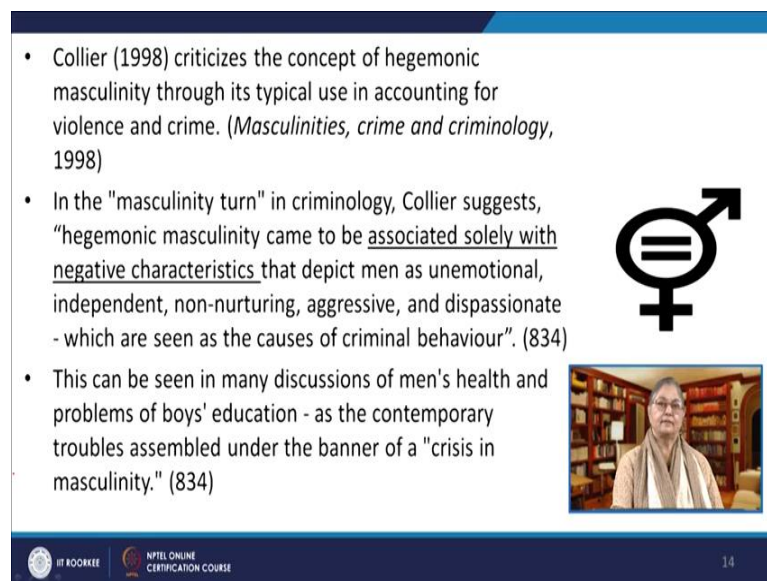


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So, research on men and masculinities according to Connell and Messerschmidt shows that the concept of hegemonic masculinity is not trapped in reification. As a concept it remains abstract, not a monolithic or concrete entity. Other researches, especially studies of school classrooms show the production and negotiation of masculinities and also femininities as configurations of practice and performance.

Connell and Messerschmidt also refer to Collier's definition of hegemonic masculinity associated with criminology in order to depict the plurality of crisis within the discourse of masculinities and men's studies.

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- Collier (1998) criticizes the concept of hegemonic masculinity through its typical use in accounting for violence and crime. (*Masculinities, crime and criminology*, 1998)
- In the "masculinity turn" in criminology, Collier suggests, "hegemonic masculinity came to be associated solely with negative characteristics that depict men as unemotional, independent, non-nurturing, aggressive, and dispassionate - which are seen as the causes of criminal behaviour". (834)
- This can be seen in many discussions of men's health and problems of boys' education - as the contemporary troubles assembled under the banner of a "crisis in masculinity." (834)

Collier has criticized the concept of hegemonic masculinity through its typical use in accounting for violence and crime. The "masculinity turn" in criminology, Colliers suggest that "hegemonic masculinity came to be associated solely with negative characteristics that depict men as unemotional, independent, non-nurturing, aggressive and dispassionate which are seen as the causes of criminal behaviour".

This can be seen in many discussions of men's health and problems of boy's education as the contemporary troubles assembled under the banner of a crisis in masculinity. However, the "crisis in masculinities" is not just restricted to aggressive behaviour and violence portrayed by men. We need to redefine the alpha centric definition of the man and should not limit the discourse to heteronormative subjectivities only.

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- In pop psychology, the invention of new character types such as (the alpha male, the sensitive new-age guy, the hairy man, the new lad, the "rat boy," etc.) suggest that hegemonic masculinity is not a singularity.
- Thus, hegemonic masculinity can become a scientific-sounding synonym for a type of rigid, domineering, sexist 'macho-man' (Mosher and Tomkins, *Scripting the Macho Man*; 1988.)
- Hegemonic masculinity, sometimes refers to men's engaging in toxic practices - including physical violence - that stabilize gender dominance in a particular setting.
- However, violence and other noxious practices are not always the defining characteristics, since hegemony has numerous configurations.



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In pop psychology, the invention of new character types such as the alpha male, the sensitive new-age guy, the hairy man, the new lad, the “rat boy” etcetera suggest that hegemonic masculinity is not a singularity. So, hegemonic masculinity can become a scientific sounding synonym for a type of rigid, domineering, sexist macho-men.

Hegemonic masculinity sometimes refers to men’s engaging in toxic practices including physical violence that stabilises gender dominance in a particular setting. However, violence and other noxious practices are not always the defining characteristics, since hegemony has numerous configurations.

Subjects such as health, education, fashion, social media footprints and many more are included in understanding the range of popular ideologies which constitute the image of the ideal desired man. The authors note that being a man is a process in becoming and not a static conceptualization.

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- According to Connell, the concept of hegemony would be (not be) relevant if the only characteristics of the dominant group (men) were violence, aggression, and self-centeredness.
- Collier (1998, 21) observes that what actually is being discussed in many accounts of hegemonic masculinity and crime -- and, we may add, health and education -- is "a range of popular ideologies of what constitute ideal or actual characteristics of 'being a man.'" (*Masculinities, Crime and Criminology*, 1998).
- The concept of hegemonic masculinity is not a catchall, nor a prime cause; it is a means of grasping a certain dynamic within the social process.



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Connell points out that the concept of hegemony would be or not be relevant if the only characteristics of the dominant group that is (men) were violence, aggression, and self-centeredness. Collier observes that what actually is being discussed in many accounts of hegemonic masculinity, crime, health and education, also is “a range of popular ideologies of what constitute ideal or actual characteristics of “being a man””.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is not a catchall, nor a prime cause, it is a means of grasping a certain dynamic within the social process. While presenting the various approaches taken up by Halter and Collier, Connell and Messerschmidt establish the multiple accounts of the concept of hegemonic masculinity. In considering such diverse theorizations, they suggest five principal criticisms for the underlying concept of hegemonic masculinity.



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Critiquing the Concept of Masculinity

- Connell and Messerschmidt offer five principal criticisms that have advanced since the early 1990s.
 - They review the criticism, “hoping to discover what is worth retaining from the original conception of hegemonic masculinity and what now needs reformulating”. (836)

The Underlying Concept of Masculinity:

- The underlying concept of masculinity is abstract.
- It is flawed and is framed within the heteronormative conception of gender.
- Sex vs gender dichotomy marginalizes body.
- Masculinity is a dynamic entity.
- Marginalization of homosexual men.



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Connell and Messerschmidt feel that these five principal criticisms have advanced since the early 1990s and they review this criticism to discover what is worth retaining from the original concept of hegemonic masculinity and what now needs reformulating. The underlying concept of masculinity is abstract. It is flawed and is framed within the heteronormative conception of gender. Sex versus gender dichotomy marginalizes body. Masculinity is a dynamic entity, and it has marginalized the homosexual men.


The underlying concept of masculinity is flawed from the point of view of realist and also poststructuralist criticism. The concept of masculinity is blurred, is uncertain in its meaning and tends to deemphasize issues of power and domination. Secondly, it is fraught because it essentializes the character of men or imposes a false unity on a fluid and contradictory reality.

The concept of masculinity is criticised for being framed within a heteronormative conception of gender that essentializes male, female difference and ignores difference and exclusion within the gender categories. There is a tendency in the men’s studies field to presume separate spheres, to proceed as if women were not a relevant part of the analysis and therefore, to analyse masculinities by looking only at men and relations among men is inherently faulty. The cure lies in taking a consistently relational approach to gender.

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Constructing the “Masculine Subject”

- To Petersen (1998, 2003), Collier (1998), and Mac Innes (1998), the concept of masculinity is flawed because it essentializes the character of men or imposes a false unity on a fluid and contradictory reality.
- The concept of masculinity is said to rest logically on a dichotomization of sex (biological) versus gender (cultural) and thus marginalizes or naturalizes the body.
- The notion that the concept of masculinity essentializes or homogenizes is quite difficult to reconcile with the tremendous multiplicity of social constructions that ethnographers and historians have documented with the aid of this concept (Connell 2003).




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In one of his earlier articles, Connell had also commented that the notion that the concept of masculinity essentializes or homogenises is quite difficult to reconcile with the tremendous multiplicity of social constructions that ethnographers and historians have documented with the aid of this concept.

Connell and Messerschmidt suggest that the masculine subject, masculinity and the masculine are embedded in the socio-normative understanding of these terms. However, their genealogy is relevant to understand the changed nature and understanding of the masculine in the men’s and masculinities studies. Therefore, the concept of hegemonic masculinity requires new formulations within a multi-dimensional understanding of gender.

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- Masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals.
- Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting.
- In the development of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, divisions among men- especially the exclusion and subordination of homosexual men- were quite central issues (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985).



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As they have suggested, masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals. Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting. In the development of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, divisions among men especially the exclusion and subordination of homosexual men were quite central issues.

Hegemonic masculinity cannot be understood as the settled character structure of any group of men. Men can dodge among multiple meanings according to their interactional needs. They can adopt hegemonic masculinity when it is desirable, but the same men can distance themselves strategically from hegemonic masculinity at other moments.

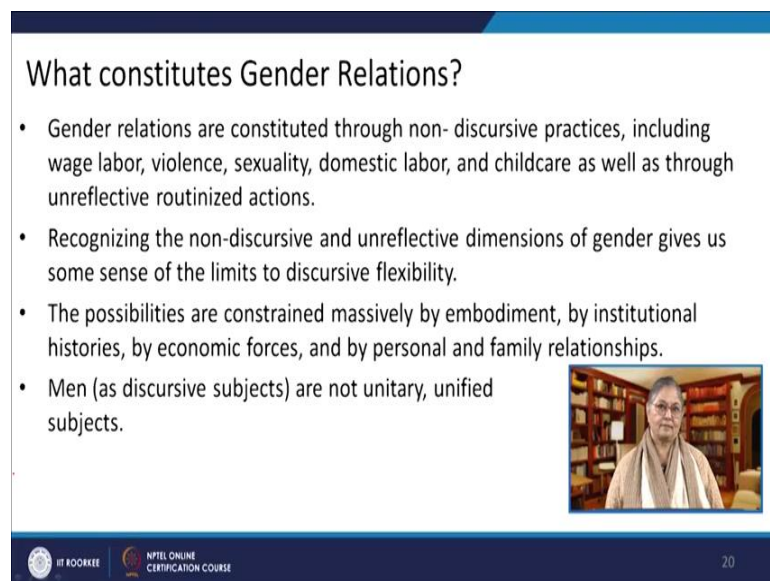
Consequently, masculinity represents not a certain type of man, but rather a way that men position themselves through discursive practices. According to this view, the model of hegemonic masculinity presumes a unitary subject, but depth psychology reveals a multi-layered or divided subject.

Depth psychology is a science of the unconscious covering both psychoanalysis and psychology. It explores the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious as well as the patterns and dynamics of motivation and the mind. So, depth psychology has revealed a multi-layered subject. Jefferson criticizes the over socialized view of the male

subject in studies of masculinity which has resulted in a lack of attention to how men actually relate psychologically to hegemonic masculinity.

The next question that is central to Connell's and Messerschmidt's understanding of hegemonic masculinity is what constitutes gender relations. Since men as discursive subjects are quite similar to women with their individual subjectivities and the situatedness, gender relations are constituted or produced through non-discursive practices and unreflective routinised actions such as sexual orientation, participation in childcare and household chores.

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The slide is titled "What constitutes Gender Relations?". It contains four bullet points:

- Gender relations are constituted through non-discursive practices, including wage labor, violence, sexuality, domestic labor, and childcare as well as through unreflective routinized actions.
- Recognizing the non-discursive and unreflective dimensions of gender gives us some sense of the limits to discursive flexibility.
- The possibilities are constrained massively by embodiment, by institutional histories, by economic forces, and by personal and family relationships.
- Men (as discursive subjects) are not unitary, unified subjects.

There is a small video inset on the right side of the slide showing a woman speaking. At the bottom of the slide, there are logos for IIT ROORKEE and NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE, and the number 20.


Recognizing the non-discursive and unreflective dimensions of gender gives us some sense of the limits to discursive flexibility. The possibilities are constrained massively by embodiment, by institutional histories, by economic forces and by personal and family relationships. Men as discursive subjects are not unitary, unified subjects.

An individual's approach towards masculinity can be better understood by their respective life choices, life history and routinized narratives formulated through gender formation.

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- According to Connell and Messerschmidt, approaches such as Sartre's existential psychoanalysis, are helpful for understanding masculinities as projects and a masculine identity as always being a provisional accomplishment within a life course.
- Connell comments:

Masculinity is defined as a configuration of practice organized in relation to the structure of gender relations. Human social practice creates gender relations in history. The concept of hegemonic masculinity embeds a historically dynamic view of gender in which it is impossible to erase the subject. This is why life-history studies have become a characteristic genre of work on hegemonic masculinity. (Connell 1995)



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So, Connell and Messerschmidt suggest that approaches such as Sartre's existential psychoanalysis are helpful for understanding masculinities as projects and a masculine identity as always being a provisional accomplishment within a life course. Connell comments, "masculinity is defined as a configuration of practice organized in relation to the structure of gender relations. Human social practice creates gender relations in history. The concept of hegemonic masculinity is embedded in a historically dynamic view of gender and therefore, the subject itself cannot be erased and our study of the life histories has become significant for us.

According to the authors, gender relations, systematic subordination of women and various exclusion practices conducted to marginalize the other are crucial in understanding the patterns of surveillance, control and dominance.

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Patterns of Gender Relations

- In social theories of gender, gender relations are considered as self-contained, self-reproducing systems and explaining every element in terms of its function in reproducing the whole.
- In considering gender relations, the dominance of men and the subordination of women constitute a historical process, not a self-reproducing system.
- To sustain a given pattern of hegemony requires the policing of men as well as the exclusion or discrediting of women.
- Thus, producing patterns of control.



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Connell and Messerschmidt also refer to Demetrious. Demetrious has proposed two formats of masculinity, 'internal masculinity', and 'external masculinity'. It suggests that there is a plurality of discourses within the discourse of masculinity and men's studies.

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- According to Demetriou's, a careful critique of the concept of hegemonic masculinity presents two forms of hegemony, "internal" and "external".
- "External hegemony" refers to the institutionalization of men's dominance over women.
- "Internal hegemony" refers to the social ascendancy of one group of men over all other men.
- This conceptualization presents an exchange between the two types as a historical process which is changing rapidly in our contemporary times where many masculine practices are submerged into other masculinities, in turn creating cultural hybrids. (E.g.: Cisgender men wearing makeup).




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‘External hegemony’ in his opinion refers to the institutionalisation of men’s dominance over women. ‘Internal hegemony’ on the other hand refers to the social ascendancy of one group of men over all other men. This conceptualization presents an exchange between the two types as a historical process which is changing rapidly in our contemporary times where many masculine practices are submerged into other masculinities, in turn creating cultural hybrids. For example, Cisgender men wearing makeup.

Demetriou argues that the relationship between the two forms is unclear in the original formulation of the concept and unspecified in current usage. Moreover, subordinate and marginalised masculinities have no impact on the construction of hegemonic masculinity. Non-hegemonic masculinities exist in tension with, but never penetrate or impact the hegemonic masculinity. There is then a dualistic representation of masculinities.

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- It misses the "dialectical pragmatism" of internal hegemony, by which hegemonic masculinity appropriates from other masculinities whatever appears to be pragmatically useful for continued domination.
- The result of this dialectic is not a unitary pattern of hegemonic masculinity but a "historic bloc" involving a weaving together of multiple patterns, whose hybridity is the best possible strategy for external hegemony.
- A constant process of negotiation, translation, and reconfiguration occurs.
- This conceptualization leads to a different view of historical change in masculinities.



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The result of this dialectic is not a unitary pattern of hegemonic masculinity, but a historic block involving a weaving together of multiple patterns, whose hybridity is the best possible strategy for external hegemony. A constant process of negotiation, translation and reconfiguration occurs. This conceptualization leads to a different view of historical change in masculinities.

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• Hegemonic masculinity is not always singular.

• Rather, the hegemonic masculine bloc is a hybridization whose appropriation of diverse elements makes it "capable of reconfiguring itself and adapting to the specificities of new historical conjunctures" (Demetriou 2001, 355).

• According to Meuser and Behnke, there are "a thousand and one" variations of masculinities. (1998)




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Hegemonic masculinity is not always singular. Rather, the hegemonic masculinity block is a hybridization whose appropriation of diverse elements makes it capable of reconfiguring itself and adapting to the specificities of new historical conjunctures. As some critics have suggested, "there are a thousand and one variations of masculinities".

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What are Masculinities ?

• A brief overview by Professor Raewyn Connell to sum up the crises in masculinities.




Source: Engagingmen.<<https://youtu.be/OYboMmQS0tU>>

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At this moment, we would refer to a brief talk by Professor Connell who sums up the crisis in masculinities.

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- A brief overview by Professor Raewyn Connell to sum up the crises in masculinities.

Source: Engagingmen.< <https://youtu.be/OYboMmQ50tU>>

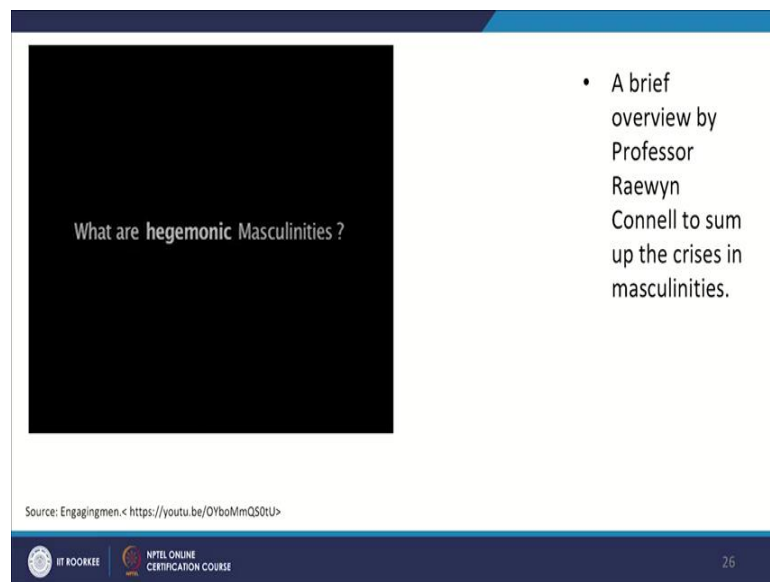
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“Well, for me masculinity is a pattern of practice so, it is not an attitude, it is not what is in people’s heads, it is not the state of their hormones, it is what they actually do in the world and that is something that has a relationship to your body, to your biology, but not a fixed relationship.

So, women can behave in a masculine way though usually its men who do and also there are different patterns of masculinity so, different groups of men will conduct themselves in different ways and those patterns also can change over time and that of course, is what we hope to achieve in anti-violence work because some patterns of masculinity do include willingness to use violence an openness to use violence whereas, other patterns of masculinity are in comparison peaceable and part of the problem of reducing violence in the world is to shift from the first to the second kind of masculinity”.

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What are **hegemonic** Masculinities ?

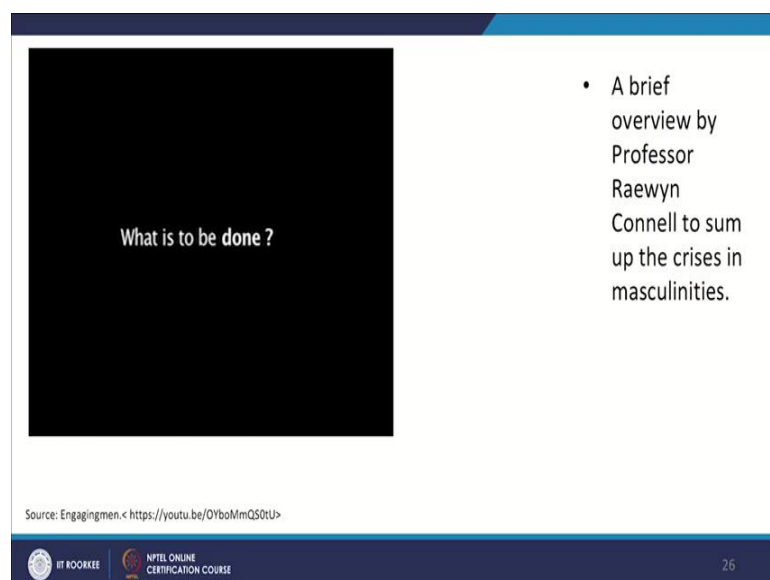
- A brief overview by Professor Raewyn Connell to sum up the crises in masculinities.

Source: Engagingmen.< <https://youtu.be/OYboMmQS0tU>>

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“Masculinities do I mean centrally concern relations between men as a group and women as a group and of course, individual relationships between particular men and particular women, but they also concern relationships among men so, that one of the things research has repeatedly shown in different parts of the world is a kind of hierarchy among masculinities where in a given community or given organization, one kind of masculinity is the honoured one is the top dog so to speak the hegemonic pattern of masculinity and other forms of masculinity by contrast are less honoured, more marginalised perhaps even excluded from respect altogether”.

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What is to be done ?

- A brief overview by Professor Raewyn Connell to sum up the crises in masculinities.

Source: Engagingmen.< <https://youtu.be/OYboMmQS0tU>>

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“There are really quite a range of things that can be done among different groups of men and boys of course, because boys many of them in school, many of them in learning situations of one kind or another are actually in the process of forming their patterns of masculinity”.

“So, interventions towards more peaceable forms of masculinity should I think definitely include boys as well as adult men, these interventions can take the form of some personalised situations where you create a safe space for boys or men to talk about gender relations, talk about their experiences with women, talk about their experiences with other men and think through what it would be to live in a more peaceable more democratic kind of way”.

“There are also public policy interventions which might create the possibilities of change in masculinity given that the most violent institutions in the world are states military, prison systems, police forces, how can we reduce the impact of that kind of organized violence is also part of the problem of changing masculinities”.



So, today we have established the dynamic nature and the potentiality of the masculine subject, masculinities and men’s studies in the context of the approach taken by Connell and Messerschmidt. In the next module, we will present the various reformulations suggested by these authors to reform, revisit and reassess the concept of “hegemonic masculinities” and present a more contemporary approach to men and men’s studies.

Thank you.

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