



Facilitator Notes

Thinking About Men and Masculinity

Created by: Professor Gary W. Dowsett
Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society
La Trobe University
Melbourne, Australia

This module was developed as part of '**Introduction to Advancing Sexuality Studies: a short course on sexuality theory and research methodologies**'. The short course was developed by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia, *and* the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society.

Funded by the Ford Foundation

Licensing information

This module and the entire short course on sexuality theory and research methodologies are available under an 'Attribution, Non-Commercial, Share Alike' licence from Creative Commons.

This licence allows for work to be used as is, amended or built upon, on provision that:

- Any use or amendments are undertaken for a non-commercial purpose
- Credit is given to:
 - Module creator
 - Short course developers: the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia, and the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society (IASSCS)
 - The Ford Foundation (as short course funder).

In addition, any new creations based on original modules or the original short course must be licensed under identical terms. This ensures that any derivatives of the module or the short course will also be non-commercial.



This module was created by Professor Gary W. Dowsett and adapted by the Advancing Sexuality Studies short course team at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.

Contents

Background	4
Module approach	4
Overview	5
Required pre-readings	5
Optional pre-readings	5
Facilitator's preparation	6
Materials required	7
Module structure, materials and timing	8
Key to symbols and formatting	10
Introduction	12
Schedule	12
Module aims	13
Session 1. Contemporary understandings of men, masculinity and sexuality	14
Lecture part 1. Role theory, the individual, and masculine socialisation	14
Small group discussion	19
Lecture part 2. Hegemonic masculinity	19
Small group discussion	25
Lecture part 3. Masculinity and sexuality	26
Small group discussion	35
Session 2. Raising boys	36
Reading and discussion	36
Session 3. Changing masculinities?	37
Mini-lecture: objectification	37
Small group discussion	39
Group discussion	39
Mini-lecture (continued): commodification	39
Small group discussion	40
Group discussion	40
Mini-lecture (continued): anxiety	40
Small group discussion	41
Group discussion	41
Summary	41
Session 4. Men's sexual futures	43
Panel discussion	43
Conclusion	44
Optional assessment exercise	45
Further reading	46

Background

This module explores contemporary sociological theory on masculinity and sexuality, and invites participants to reflect on sexual issues related to men in their own social and professional contexts in terms of those ideas.

This module aims to:

- Provide an overview of contemporary sociological thinking about masculinity, men and men's sexuality
- Provide a theoretical account of the ways in which ideas about masculinity are currently changing and explore some of the effects of these changes for men.

Participants will:

- Develop a broad understanding of how masculinity has been conceptualised in gender and sexuality theory
- Explore the impact of contemporary social and cultural processes related to globalisation and consumerism on practices of masculinity
- Analyse contemporary debates in the field of masculinities related to sexuality and discuss possible future issues facing men at local, national and global scales.

Module approach

The first session of this module contains a substantial introductory lecture interspersed with small group discussion questions. The overall aim of the subsequent three sessions is to emphasise active learning on the part of participants. There is significant small group work, including group analysis of images, texts and videos (in Resources folder) in Session 3, and time provided for review and discussion of issues raised in small group work. The short course team advises that any review or amendment of the module maintains a focus on active learning.

Overview

Session 1. Introductory lecture

This lecture introduces students to the dominant approaches to understanding masculinity, from role theory and masculine socialisation theory to hegemonic masculinity. It also looks closely at the relationship between masculinity and sexuality, observing the part homosexuality has played in sustaining a social hierarchy of masculinities, and at contemporary pressures on male sexualities.

Session 2. Raising boys

In this session, participants will read the stories from the reading 'Real Boys' Voices' (in Resources folder) before answering a series of questions in small groups.

Session 3. Changing masculinities

Session 3 explores the impact of objectification, commodification, and anxiety on contemporary understandings and practices of masculinity. Participants will analyse images, texts and videos in small groups, before reporting their findings back to the larger group.

Session 4. Men's sexual futures

Session 4 is a moderated panel discussion that explores four possible future issues in men's sexual lives. This session requires four panellists to be briefed in advance of the module to provide them with time to prepare their arguments.

Conclusion

The learning and participant outcomes are summarised in the conclusion.

Required pre-readings (to be discussed in module group work)

- Barker, G. T. (2005) *In The Heat Of The Moment: Relating To Women, Having Sex. Dying To Be Men: Youth, Masculinity and Social Exclusion*. London, Routledge.
- Connell, R. W. (2005 [1995]) *The Science Of Masculinity. Masculinities*. Berkeley, University Of California Press.

Optional pre-readings

- Allen, L. (2007) 'Sensitive and real macho all at the same time': young heterosexual men and romance, *Men and Masculinities*, 10, 137-152.

- Barker, G. T. (2005) Why The Worry About Young Men? *Dying To Be Men: Youth, Masculinity and Social Exclusion*. London, Routledge.
- Dowsett, G. W. (1993) I'll show you mine, if you'll show me yours: gay men, masculinity research, men's studies and sex, *Theory and Society*, 22, 697-709.
- Meiu, G. P. (2009) 'Mombassa Morans': embodiment, sexual morality, and Samburu men in Kenya, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 43, 105-128.
- Segal, L. (1993) Changing men: masculinities in context, *Theory and Society*, 22, 625-641.

Facilitator's preparation

There are two key tasks which the facilitator must complete before delivering this module.

First, the facilitator must create *three* sets of different images of men for use in group work during Session 2. The aim is to create sets that bring together a wide range of representations of men and, therefore, of masculinity. Each set should contain at least 10 images. Suggested sources include magazines (particularly men's, health, or fashion magazines), newspapers, web pages, and advertisements. The images do not have to be still images—web-based video advertisements offer some fascinating representations of men and masculinity. But if you do collect video or computer-based images make sure that you will have the necessary hardware available for these images to be viewed.

Second, Session 4 requires four participants to be panellists in a discussion on the following topics (one topic per panellist):

- IVF technology will eventually make men redundant.
- In the future, more men will live alone and not in traditional family units.
- More men are going to turn homosexual as it becomes more widely accepted.
- More men will lead more of their working lives as migrant workers.

Ideally, the facilitator should select four participants in advance and ask them to prepare their 'position' on the topic. However it may not always be possible to prepare this activity beforehand. Facilitators could also assign the topics before starting Session 1 on the day of the module, and give the four panellists time and

assistance to prepare, during breaks. If this is not possible, the facilitator might choose to lead a whole group discussion on each of the topics in turn.

Materials required

For Session 2:

Extracts from Pollack, W. S. (2000) *Real Boys' Voices*. Penguin. (In Resources folder)

For Session 3:

Three sets of images of men and masculinity (see Facilitator's preparation, above).
Post-module assessment exercise reading: Appendix 'On Intellectual Craftsmanship' from: Mills, C.W. (1959/2000) *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford University Press (in Resources folder)

Module structure, materials and timing

Session & approach		PowerPoint	Other materials (provided or required)	Est. timing
Introduction, objectives, schedule				
		Slide 1-3		5 mins
Module aims	Facilitator delivery	4-5		5 mins
Session 1. Contemporary understandings of men, masculinity and sexuality				
		6		90 min
Lecture: Role theory, the individual, and masculine socialisation	Facilitator delivery, discussion	7-14	Lecture in Facilitator Notes	30 mins
Lecture: Hegemonic masculinity	Facilitator delivery, discussion	15-21	Lecture in Facilitator Notes	30 mins
Lecture: Masculinity and sexuality	Facilitator delivery, discussion	22-34	Lecture in Facilitator Notes	30 mins
Session 2. Raising boys				
		35		60 mins
Reading and discussion	Reading	36	'Real Boys' Voices' in Resources folder	20 mins
	Small group discussion	36		20 mins

	Report back	36		20 mins
Session 3. Changing masculinities		37		75 mins
Objectification	Facilitator delivery, small group analysis, and report back	38-39	Mini-lecture in Facilitator Notes; Images, texts, and videos in Resources folder	25 mins
Commodification	Facilitator delivery, small group analysis, and report back	40-41	Mini-lecture in Facilitator Notes; Images, texts, and videos in Resources folder	25 mins
Anxiety	Facilitator delivery, small group analysis, and report back	42-44	Mini-lecture in Facilitator Notes; Images, texts, and videos in Resources folder	25 mins
Session 4. Men's sexual futures		45		50 mins
Panel discussion	Panel discussion	46	Four participants to prepare in advance*	50 mins
Conclusion & acknowledgements		47-48		5 mins
Post-module assessment exercise		49	'On Intellectual Craftsmanship' in Resources folder	
Total				285 mins (Approx 4.5 hours)

* See 'Facilitator's preparation' section in Facilitator Notes

Key to symbols and formatting

Throughout these notes, the following symbols and formatting ‘clues’ have been used:

⇒ This symbol marks an instruction to the facilitator.

- Use of a bullet point indicates steps to be followed in completing an instruction.

|| This symbol, plus a different font which is larger and more widely spaced, indicates text to be read aloud. The end of the text to be read aloud will be indicated with the following symbol. ||

We have also indicated the points where a slide transition occurs on the PowerPoint presentation by inserting:

SLIDE

Module instructions

SLIDE 1

Introduction

(5 mins)

⇒ Read the following text (or adapt/replace as desired):

|| Masculinity has become a problem. By this we mean that the concept of masculinity is now used in widely differing ways to problematise issues relating to men and boys, but stands as an accepted category of scholarly inquiry and political endeavour. Once, masculinity was regarded as merely a set of attributes or a quality that a man or boy had more or less of. Yet, in the media, at the UN and academic conferences, and more recently in policy development in health care, education, international development, welfare and justice, masculinity has become the conceptual framework for trying to understand a set of longstanding, if newly recognised, social issues. This module explores these issues and relates them specifically to questions of sexuality. ||

SLIDE 2

SLIDE 3

Schedule

⇒ You will see that, currently, the module schedule does not include tea/coffee or lunch breaks. Insert as required.

SLIDE 4

Module aims

⇒ Read (on slide):

|| This module aims to:

- Provide participants with an overview of contemporary sociological thinking about masculinity, men and men's sexuality.
- Provide a theoretical account of the ways in which ideas about masculinity are currently changing and explore some of the effects of these changes for men. ||

SLIDE 5

|| Participants will:

- Develop a broad understanding of how masculinity has been conceptualised in gender and sexuality theory.
- Explore the impact of contemporary social and cultural processes related to globalisation and consumerism on practices of masculinity.
- Analyse contemporary debates in the field of masculinities related to sexuality and discuss possible future issues facing men at local, national and global scales. ||

SLIDE 6

Session 1. Contemporary understandings of men, masculinity and sexuality (90 mins)

Lecture part 1. Role theory, the individual, and masculine socialisation (15 mins)

⇒ Read:

|| It is often said that masculinity is in 'crisis'. Men are frequently described as being confused about their roles in society, particularly as women have gained more independence and equality. This is not a phenomenon just in Western or developed countries; more recently, the literature contains discussions on globalisation and masculinity (Connell 2005a, 2005b).

SLIDE 7

We now have an emerging men's health agenda in many countries, fuelled by evidence of particular health problems specific to men. Men's problems are also rehearsed in the popular media, in both developing and developed countries. There is public concern over: men's falling fertility rates; rising rates of impotency; the 'flight from women'; greater numbers of men 'turning' gay; enhanced morbidity and mortality rates in relation to various diseases; higher rates of accident in the workplace and in motor vehicles; men's roles in domestic and sexual violence; overindulgence in drugs and alcohol; and increasing problems among young men in relation to alienation and suicide.

SLIDE 8

In Western settings, there have also been a number of changes in ‘traditional’ masculinity, usually defined by strength (physical and mental), rationality, and self-control. In the late 1970s and 1980s, there was talk of ‘the new man’ and ‘SNAGs’ or ‘sensitive new age guys’. Motivated by political and personal connections with feminism and gender equality, these men were said to be more caring than ‘traditional’ men, willing to show emotion, commit to relationships, and take responsibility for child care.

SLIDE 9

More recently, we have witnessed the rise of the ‘metrosexual’, a term coined by British journalist Mark Simpson to describe the successful, inner-urban man interested in fashion, food, love and lifestyle.

SLIDE 10

In response to the metrosexual, commentators and marketers quickly identified the ‘retrosexual’ – defined by a more familiar image of rugged manhood. And, more recently still, media commentators have mentioned the rise of the ‘technosexual’; men whose masculinity is defined by their use of new communication technologies and media tools. These are more than just media-creations. What it *means to be a man*, at least in some social and cultural contexts, is diversifying. Yet, if what a man *is* is capable of changing, or being more than one thing, we need to better

understand the relationship between men and the social and cultural contexts in which they conduct their lives. Yet, getting clear thinking on these shifts and changes is harder than it appears. For a start, what does masculinity mean?

SLIDE 11

Certainly, masculinity is understood to refer to 'men', by which is meant, the male body. Is that all it takes to be a man? There are good reasons for rejecting this simplistic idea. First, if all one needs to be masculine is a male body, then any action by any male body can be understood as 'masculine'. But this is silly, given the diversity of actions men might engage in and the fact that women might engage in the majority of these very same acts! Second, the body is not as reliable in defining the sexes as male and female as we are led to believe. For example, the growing understanding of those born 'intersex' with ambiguous genitalia, or a chromosomal sex different to their genitalia or reproductive organs, reveals the problem with a binary, or two-part, model of gender (see Meyer-Bahlburg 2000).

In fact, the feminist biologist Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) has argued that in terms of chromosomal sex, there are at least five sexes! In other words, the body is a contested field of knowledge claims about sex and gender, and being either male or female is more complex than we think.

SLIDE 12

Another familiar and dominant approach to explaining masculinity is that found in 'sex role' and 'gender socialisation' theories. Originating in psychological research and widely taken up in gender analyses in the 1960s and 1970s, sex role theory attempts to define and measure 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits, as if these exist as natural features of normal men and women across time and place; we know historically that this is not true. A sex role includes a number of normative societal expectations about how one should behave as male or female. In this model of gender, masculinity and femininity are the two socially learned categories of behaviour and characteristics that elaborate the two biological sex differences, male and female. Such cultural values are primarily institutionalised through the family, schooling, mass media and religion, where children, it is thought, are socialised to become masculine and feminine.

SLIDE 13

A number of critical masculinity scholars have pointed out the limitations of these approaches to gender (Connell, 1995; Segal, 1997; Whitehead, 2002).

- First, differences between male and female bodies are exaggerated in such a way as they come to explain gender inequalities in terms

of biology: men and women are far more alike biologically than we are like fish or birds.

- Second, difference is understood as deviation from the normative mode of masculinity or femininity—is this the only way to understand difference?
- Third, each gender role category is vague, and socialisation theory is incapable of explaining changes in gender relations that are not initiated by changes to the institutionalised ‘gender scripts’ that socialise men and women.
- Fourth, the individual subject disappears in this model of gender relations, being entirely the product of history and culture, which is in fact, defined by sexual difference, not social relations (Connell, 1995: 26).

Issues of power are also absent in discussions of sex role. If sex roles follow natural sexual differences, and those who fail to conform to their required sex role are deviant, then it follows that society is not responsible for power imbalances and gender inequalities. Thus, this approach to gender supports the status quo.

For example, feminists have pointed out how women’s working lives are hindered by the gendered assumption that their capacity to give birth *to* children makes them more suitable to care *for* children. Men are subsequently advantaged in the employment market, and therefore economically, while women must sacrifice their own interests lest they be

considered selfish or failed women. Sex role and gender socialisation theories remain dominant in academic and policy discussions of men. These theories are also dominant in popular and everyday understandings of gender identity, and are often referred to as the ‘nature/nurture’ debate. ||

SLIDE 14

Small group discussion (10 mins small group work +5 mins feedback)

⇒ Divide participants into three small groups and ask each group to choose a rapporteur.

⇒ Provide each group with one of the following questions (on slide):

- Can you think of examples where sex role theory or socialisation theory is used to explain gender relations in your own community or research setting?
- How are boys and men understood to become ‘masculine’ or have ‘masculinity’ in your community? Is it the result of biology (being born ‘male/masculine’) or culture (learning how to be masculine)?
- Are all men equally masculine in your community? How are differences in masculine behaviour or self-presentation explained? **(10 mins)**

⇒ Ask the rapporteur from each group to summarise their group’s discussion. **(5 mins)**

SLIDE 15

Lecture part 2. Hegemonic masculinity (15 mins)

⇒ Read:

|| We have a great deal of evidence to suggest that masculinity—the social meanings and experience of ‘being’ a man—does not work like sex

role theory suggests. Certainly, each person is not free to do or be anything s/he chooses. Becoming a man takes a great deal of work in the face of powerful forces.

Educational institutions are one example. In his famous 1977 book *Learning to Labour: How working-class kids get working-class jobs*, Paul Willis described the curricular and institutional processes that took place in a British boys school and how these processes produced different kinds of masculinity. Only a small number of boys could succeed academically due to the limited number of university places available, and this produced in the majority of the academically failing boys a *reactive* masculinity that was commensurable with a kind of resilient, if damaged, pride. Willis's school-failing 'lads', as they were termed, were progressively alienated and brushed aside by the school, and took refuge in rehearsing a resistant working-class masculinity—a triumph of the male stereotype. They then found themselves back in the factories and workplaces of their fathers. What Willis's research revealed was that boys were not simply socialised into stereotypical male roles, but that working-class culture was actively mined by the boys to extract resources to resist the school's approved ways of being and doing masculinity. Indeed, in Willis' example, it is 'failed socialisation' that actually produces masculine stereotypical behaviour: surely, a theoretical paradox!

It was Willis's work and others like it that led to the Australian study of class and gender inequality in education that produced the formulation 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler & Dowsett, 1982). During that study, it was noticed that approved manhood and the associated masculinising processes in the elite boys high schools did not actually achieve a majority practice, i.e. most boys failed to achieve the attributes of successful and approved manhood. In other words, the model of successful masculinity held up as the best one can be could only be achieved by a few; yet this model of successful masculinity provided the yardstick whereby masculinity was measured for all. Consequently, most boys or men could not succeed unless they drew on notions of masculinity found in other institutional or cultural settings to articulate a masculine identity.

SLIDE 16

This analysis recognises that gender is hard work. No empty vessels here being socialised, just men struggling with contradictory or impossible measures, through variable practices in what amounts to a rigged race. In this way, most men are involved in a damaged gender project right from the start. This and related work on men led to the development of the field of 'critical masculinity studies' informed by a notion of multiple masculinities, a better way to understand gender theory as it pertains to men, for in most discussions and debates about gender, it is often only women who are included in the term gender.

According to Raewyn Connell (2000: 29):

Masculinities are configurations of practice within gender relations, a structure that includes large-scale institutions and economic relations as well as face-to-face relationships and sexuality. Masculinity is institutionalized in this structure, as well as being an aspect of individual character and personality.

This is a very useful definition because it profiles the *individual* and *interpersonal* as well as the *political* and *societal* (or *structural*).

SLIDE 17

According to the theory of hegemonic masculinity:

- Dominant definitions of masculinity are embedded in social institutions such as the state, education, and the family, which are settings in which men are also often in the dominant positions of power (as politicians, business leaders, bureaucrats, fathers, etc).
- Male power is not simply *held* by individual men, but is institutionalised in social structures and ideologies that support the gender order *in favour* of men.
- However, hegemony is not the same as dominance. Masculinity is contested, meaning that different definitions and practices of masculinity may come to supplant others as hegemonic.

SLIDE 18

- It may be that very few men might occupy the hegemonic position, and it may be practically impossible to define what hegemonic masculinity objectively is. Multiple forms of masculinity may be celebrated in any particular cultural context, and the reasons why they are celebrated may be contradictory. For instance, business masculinities are based on the celebration of different traits than those celebrated in sporting contexts, or military settings, yet each has a particular authority as ‘masculine’.
- Men are thus not only organised hierarchically in relation to women, but also in relation to each other.
- According to Connell’s theory, all men receive rewards or a *patriarchal dividend* from this gendered organisation of society, even if they find themselves excluded from the dominant definitions of masculinity. Indeed, hegemonic masculinity is based on the subordination and marginalisation of ‘lesser’ or ‘weaker’ men, e.g. gay men, men with disabilities, ethnic minorities, etc.

SLIDE 19

This model of gender relations allows for change in the meanings and practices of masculinity, and for resistance on the part of men who are subordinated or marginalised by the hegemonic form, while providing a theory of gendered power that runs alongside feminist analyses of patriarchy (Whitehead, 2002: 91). The differences between men in relation to idealised forms of masculinity can be understood better as

resilience and *resistance* to the effects of hegemonic masculinity, rather than as a failure of socialisation or a destabilisation of the male role as the literature would commonly suggest.

Indeed, as one example, gay community life and the achievement of gay civil and political rights in many parts of the world has seen a resistant sub-population of men refuse marginalisation and subordination, indeed persecution, and claim a place as equal citizens. Changes in South Africa since the end of Apartheid, particularly in relation to constitutional equality and gay marriage, and also the 2009 struggle in India to repeal the British colonial law criminalising homosexuality, are just two examples. Whatever else, we are seeing something other than simple subordination here. These dynamics in masculinity are part of Connell's larger analysis of the *gender order* as she calls it, i.e. a systematic structuring of the world along gender lines.

Importantly, the theory of hegemonic masculinity demands a focus on *practices* rather than personality or behaviour. Practices have their origins in social institutions, discourses and social networks in which men interact and from which they construct their identities. Some practices are freely chosen (such as weight lifting, for example), while others are highly regulated social norms that are often assumed without question, and are also difficult to resist (such as wearing masculine clothing). Thus, it is important not to focus overly on the agency of the individual and be aware of the social forces in play. For example, men's

higher rates of workplace accident and occupational injury are not simply a problem of individual recklessness or bravado; they are, among other things, the by-product of poor occupational health and safety management, regulation and training.

SLIDE 20

This line of argument suggests that larger historical and cultural forces might be investigated to produce a more social explanation for a dramatically shifting gender order.

One example where we can see this in operation is the world of work. In the West, productive work has been rapidly decreasing for nearly thirty years, including the demise of the youth labour market. Many young men (and women) see their futures as lying in extended schooling with the advent of their full adult life being delayed well into their twenties. For many working-class young men in the West today, it is not the male role that has changed, but the loss of the material circumstances, the jobs, the training, upon which a 'traditional' working-class masculine identity was once constructed (McDowell, 2003). ||

SLIDE 21

Small group discussion (10 mins small group work + 5 mins feedback)

⇒ In the three small groups from the first discussion activity, provide each group with one of the following questions (on slide):

- What challenges are facing young men in your community today? How might these be related to masculinity?
- How are men in your community described by health and education officials, media commentators, and men themselves?
- Are definitions of masculinity changing in response to wider changes in your community? **(10 mins)**

⇒ Ask the rapporteur from each group to summarise their group's discussion. **(5 mins)**

SLIDE 22

Lecture part 3. Masculinity and sexuality (15 mins)

⇒ Read:

|| For the most part, the hegemonic masculinity as a framework neglects sexuality with its emphasis on gender. Sexuality becomes just a part of the hierarchical ordering of masculinities as a configuration of practice that sustains the heteropatriarchal gender order. There is a political commitment in masculinity studies to gender as the primary organising principle of modern social life. While this does not preclude analyses of sexuality, or other axes of social experience and oppression such as 'race', ethnicity, class, and embodiment, it does privilege gender as the principal social relation. We could ask: what might a privileging of sexuality theory offer to such an analysis? If we threw sexuality into the mix with more force, what might we gain in understanding male, men, masculinity and social change?

Sexuality is certainly a field in which definitions of masculinity and experiences of men are rapidly changing.

SLIDE 23

The marketing of men's bodies as sexy to sell everything from underwear to cars has become an aspect of everyday experience for many men in developed countries.

SLIDE 24

An objectified masculine sexuality—a kind of 'phallic passivity' (Dowsett 1996)—challenges conventional definitions of masculinity. Traditional cultural definitions of masculinity equate femininity with passivity and *objectification*, while masculinity is associated with active *subjectivity*. Feminist and gender scholars have pointed out how men's authority often rests on their capacity to objectify others while remaining invisible or disembodied—the 'view from nowhere' (Bordo, 1999). For men to be seen as rational, and in control, they need to appear uninterested in such 'superficial' and 'feminine' things like appearance or emotions. Men who are overly focused on their appearance can still be accused of being weak or homosexual. Remember how the rise of the 'metrosexual' was quickly met with the 'retrosexual' in marketing and media settings. Yet, these definitions are also being significantly challenged in contemporary cultures.

For example, bodybuilding among young men has become very important worldwide, and, even in pop music video clips, young men lift their t-shirts to display a six-pack to ogling girls. Further, there would appear to be a rise in stress fractures among boys and young men who push their fast growing bones beyond their capacities in bodybuilding and other such sports. Perhaps not surprisingly, androgen use to build muscles would also appear to be on the rise. So too are reports of anorexia and bulimia among teenage boys. Boys and young men would appear to be desperately working at dangerous embodiment practices to make their bodies achieve a physical ideal that has as much to do with physical strength as it has to do with physical appearance.

SLIDE 25

The increasing popularity globally of men's magazines like *Men's Health* certainly indicates a growing concern with men's bodies for, despite the title, such magazines are largely concerned with body development and fitness. But, these magazines also reflect a nagging concern with being a man, or as it could be better configured: with 'doing masculinity'. Among the regular items in such magazines is managing to cook for oneself — particularly simple, low fat, tasty treats. *Men's Health* (US) even has a regular column entitled 'A man, a can, and a plan' designed to turn kitchen klutz into culinary commando. Is this only about role change or shifts in the domestic demographics of the gender order?

More than masculinity, it is the abiding sense of the sexual that overwhelms in such magazines. Men are also regularly exhorted to become better consumers. Advertising for men now includes fashion, fitness, cosmetics and, finally, Viagra.

SLIDE 26

For men, 'Viagra' is no longer just a pill; it is destiny. A recent edition of Men's Health magazine (Australia) ran an ad that sums up these cultural shifts. The full-page ad on the inside back cover was for 'AussieBum', a very up-market and rapidly growing brand of men's swimwear and underwear.

SLIDE 27

This particular ad is for a range of underwear called 'Tutti Frutti' that utilises a tropical floral motif in a tight-fitting hipster brief. A big, muscled, tanned man with a shaved head, naked save for a coral necklace and his tight, hot pink knickers, sits half leaning out of a front-seat car door, his genital bulge clearly profiled, looking very dejected, his head in his hands. Behind him in the car is an attractive woman who is touching up her lipstick in the rear-view mirror and clearly looking very happy with what has just occurred. The caption reads: 'Guys are just sexual objects to abuse'.

Does masculinity theory provide the best viewing frame here? Might sexuality need to be more central to the analytical gaze? Maybe gay men

have something to teach straight men about these shifts in masculine sexuality? (see Simpson 1994). There is increasing evidence that gay men want to appear muscular but lean, in contrast to the larger bulkier style of muscular body sought by non-gay men. How can we explain this difference? Maybe gay men, as the central historical product of the invention and deployment of sexuality as a field of knowledge, reveal the interplay of the *sexual* with the *commercial*, revealing the limits of gender as a framework for explaining the changes men are encountering in their personal lives?

SLIDE 28

These shifts in understandings of masculinity lead men to reflect upon their bodies and sexual selves as ongoing projects of self-improvement. The cultural conventions of masculinity, including self-control, are combined with a sexual objectification of the male body ensuring that men's practices and anxieties share more in common with women's experiences of sexuality than ever before. Men are no longer masculine by virtue of being born into a male body; rather, masculinity has become something that has to be self-consciously worked at.

SLIDE 29

Might it be that sexuality, as a marketable and exploitable product of the self, is voraciously colonising the social world? What does this mean for heteronormativity? Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick (1990) has argued that Western patriarchy is sustained by a 'homosociality' between men that

relies on homophobia as its cornerstone. But as heterosexual men increasingly engage in bodily practices that once defined homosexuality as feminine and other, the differences between gay and straight men become increasingly narrow. What does this mean for heterosexual masculinity?

There are certainly surprising developments in men's sexual practices. In heterosexual pornography, anal sex is now a significant genre. And, it is not just women who are being anally penetrated.

SLIDE 30

Heterosexual men, according to media sources, are discovering the sexual pleasure of anal stimulation. A fear of homosexuality, signified by disgust at the prospect of anal sex, once acted to police all men's sexuality and structure heterosexuality. To engage the idea that all men might experience anal pleasure suggests that gay men are not 'other' at all; rather, gay men are merely 'proximate' (Jonathan Dollimore, 1991), and all men's potential sexual pleasures are a shared capacity. But once this corporeal and symbolic boundary is breached, what becomes of masculinity? What will 'being a man' look like?

SLIDE 31

These are big questions. Most discussions of men, from feminist and gender theorists to men's movement authors and masculinities scholars, can only analyse masculinity by leaving gay men out of their

consideration (Dowsett, 1993). Indeed, in the developing world, the glaring omission of gay or other homosexually inclined men and their prevention needs has been a tragedy in the face of HIV/AIDS. The same is largely true for Indigenous and minority ethnic men in many countries and it is true for boys too.

Other differences between men are equally important to note and not neglect. Two such differences are race and ethnicity. In particular, Indigenous men and their lives are important, and the politics of including Indigenous men fully in the discussion on masculinity in many countries continues to be a challenge. Certainly, the situations for minority racial or ethnic men in many countries will challenge us all to rethink the situation of men, their health, socio-economic circumstances, and their legitimate sexual interests.

As for boys, there is an urgent task to ascertain how to include them in our research and policy. Boys tend to be ignored or defined in passive ways that deny their voices, particularly where sexuality is concerned. Similarly, men with intellectual disabilities tend to be infantilised, their sexualities considered inconvenient or inappropriate, and therefore beyond the discussion of sexual rights.

These differences between men are not listed here merely as some kind of menu to choose from, or a claim for taking note of 'diversity'. Instead, we need to recognise that it is largely the embodied relations between men,

rather than our diversities, that determine our relationships and experiences. This means power relations, not merely diversity. It registers not only a pecking order of masculinities, but also a multi-layered discrimination based on differences other than gender hierarchies, differences deeply etched not just in bodies and spaces, but in relations determined through historical and societal practice. These relations between men are also deeply about sexuality, even when sex itself is not occurring.

SLIDE 32

We also must move our thinking outside the confines of the West and take regard of other regions of the world and what they offer to any analysis of men and masculinity. As just one example, in the field of HIV/AIDS, understanding men's sexual activities and desires is going to be central to understanding HIV transmission and the containment of a still rapidly growing pandemic.

But, does standard gender theory or the hegemony/subordination model map onto other cultures the same way? Does sexuality play a different part in the ordering of daily life elsewhere? For example, there are longstanding traditions of transgender people in many cultures in the world. Some of the most distinctive exist in the Asia-Pacific region (e.g. Jackson 1997; Jenkins 1998; Oetomo 2000), and these confound the comfortable relationship between sex and gender in ways with which we have yet to grapple effectively. There are also challenges to this binary

and its primacy that are pre-figured in cultures such as the Dayak in Indonesian Borneo, who regard male and female genitalia as the same, merely inversions of each other (Helliwell 2000).

SLIDE 33

These questions point the direction toward a more critical understanding of masculinities than that currently found in many research approaches and policy frameworks where male sexuality is described as a function of nature, patriarchy or both. Rethinking the concept of masculinity requires that we embrace the ambiguities in the very terms to which gender and sexuality theory is so attached, challenging man/woman, male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, and subject/object.

We need to engage actively with biology and work with the body and the practices of embodiment to capture lived experience as *performative*, as acts of daily social transformation. We need to recognise resilience and resistance as creative, not just as subordinated. In the social sciences, we need to grapple more with popular culture and with social theory about popular culture developed outside our narrow disciplinary frameworks. We must embrace power as productive, as Foucault argued, and understand its capacity for generating change. This is the way we can best understand what is happening with men and sexuality. ||

SLIDE 34

Small group discussion (10 mins small group discussion + 5 mins feedback)

- ⇒ Participants should form three small groups. Provide each group with one of the following questions (on slide):
- Is there a discussion about male sexuality in your community? Which men and what practices are under scrutiny?
 - Is male sexuality described as a problem in your community? For women? For men?
 - Are definitions and images of masculinity changing in your community? Are these changes related to sexuality? How are men responding to such changes?
- (10 mins)**
- ⇒ Ask the rapporteur from each group to summarise their group's discussion. **(5 mins)**
- ⇒ Summarise the final small group discussion exercise by drawing connections between the themes raised in the lecture and the examples provided by participants.

SLIDE 35

Session 2. Raising boys

(60 mins)

⇒ Explain to participants that this activity involves independent reading of the extracts from Pollack, W. S. (2000) *Real Boys' Voices*, small group work, and a feedback discussion.

- The extracts can be found in the Resources folder.

SLIDE 36

Reading and discussion

⇒ Divide the participants into three groups and ensure that each selects a rapporteur.

⇒ Explain the activity instructions (on the slide):

- Each participant should read the stories from 'Real boys' voices'

(20 mins)

- In groups, participants should discuss the stories and ascertain the message that each boy is trying to give the reader

(10 mins)

- Each group should think about these issues at a social level and try to answer one of the following questions:

⇒ At this point, allocate each group one of the following questions (on slide):

- What's wrong with boys?
- What's wrong with what happens to boys?
- What's right with boys that we would like to keep and build on?

(10 mins)

⇒ Ask each of the three groups to report back for 5 minutes.

(15 mins)

⇒ Sum up the discussion noting the 'work' that boys do at intellectual and emotional levels to become boys and men.

(5 mins)

SLIDE 37

Session 3. Changing masculinities?

(75 mins)

- ⇒ Explain to participants that this session explores the impact of objectification, commodification, and anxiety on contemporary understandings and practices of masculinity. The session includes a 15-minute lecture interspersed with small group discussions where participants will analyse images, texts and videos (45 minutes).
- ⇒ Divide participants into three groups and ensure that each group selects a rapporteur.
- ⇒ Give each group a range of representations of men and masculinity (see Facilitator's preparation for notes on collecting these images).

Mini-lecture: objectification

(5 mins)

⇒ Read:

|| This session builds on the previous one by noting that while all boys and men must work hard at becoming men, the idea of what men are is also changing and subject to social and cultural forces.

Over the past thirty or so years, masculinities, i.e. the socially constructed and approved ways in which men live as men, as well as understand themselves as men, have radically changed. This has been, partly, in response to feminism and the success of the women's movement, but it has also been tied up with broader cultural and economic changes. In one obvious way, men have become a different kind of market than they once were. These days, images of male sexuality (as opposed to female sexuality) are used to sell men anything from underwear, to perfume, cars and sport. These changes can be understood in terms of three things: objectification, commodification, and anxiety.

SLIDE 38

Objectification might simply be defined as treating a person as a thing or tool. The philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1995: 257) defined objectification as: ‘...treating as an object what is really not an object, what is, in fact, a human being’. Some aspects of Nussbaum’s definition of objectification include:

- Denial of autonomy: The objectifier treats the object as lacking in autonomy and self-determination.
- Ownership: The objectifier treats the object as something that is owned by another, can be bought or sold, etc.
- Denial of subjectivity: The objectifier treats the object as something whose experience and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account.

While objectification has often been regarded by many feminist writers as a morally bad feature of men’s treatment of women, Nussbaum argues that this may be more complex and objectification might not be only negative. Indeed, objectification may be a feature of sexual desire without necessarily implying oppression or abuse. There are many examples from gay male literature and from art that support this point. As Dowsett (1993) has argued, without objectification there can be no desire, without subjectification there can be no pleasure. ||

Small group discussion

(10 mins)

- ⇒ Check to see if participants have any questions about Nussbaum's definition.
- ⇒ In their small groups, ask participants to analyse the sets of images with which they have been provided, in terms of this definition of objectification. Refer to the following questions (on slide):
 - Is objectification present in these examples?
 - How does it function?

SLIDE 39

Group discussion

(10 mins)

- ⇒ Pose the following questions to the whole group for responses from anyone, referring back to the images, and check if others agree or disagree (on slide):
 - Who are the viewers who are gazing on men's bodies as an act of objectification?
 - What effects does this have for the way we think about men?
 - Is objectification only negative?

SLIDE 40

Mini-lecture (continued): commodification

(3 mins)

⇒ Read:

|| Commodification might be described as a type of objectification that specifically implies the assigning of a monetary value to something that has not previously or should not be valued in this way. Commodification implies that something is available for buying and selling. Thus, the commodification of sex suggests that something that is normally understood to be freely given and received is actually available for sale

and purchase. Commodification can also occur indirectly, where images of men's bodies are used to create a market for things or services beyond men themselves. ||

Small group discussion (10 mins)

- ⇒ Check to see if participants have any questions about commodification.
- ⇒ In their small groups, ask participants to analyse the images, texts and videos provided in terms of commodification.

SLIDE 41

Group discussion (10 mins)

- ⇒ Pose the following questions to the whole group for responses from anyone, referring back to the photos and videos, and check if others agree or disagree (on slide):
 - What is being sold, explicitly and implicitly?
 - Where and how can this be bought?
 - What are the effects of commodification for the person or thing that is commodified?

SLIDE 42

Mini-lecture (continued): anxiety (2min)

⇒ Read:

|| One of the effects of objectification and commodification is that masculinity is no longer a taken-for-granted category. Masculinity is something that must be consciously produced and worried over. Arguably, this has always been the case for women, but as men have become a new market for the fashion and beauty industries, this self-

consciousness has been transmitted to men. We might understand this shift to be experienced by men as a form of anxiety. ||

Small group discussion (5 mins)

- ⇒ Ask participants if they have any questions about this description of anxiety.
- ⇒ In small groups, ask participants to consider the ways the images, texts and videos they have as examples may produce anxiety, and what form that anxiety might take.

SLIDE 43

Group discussion (10 mins)

- ⇒ Pose the following questions to the whole group for responses from anyone, referring back to the photos and videos, and check if others agree or disagree (on slide):
 - How do objectification and commodification create anxiety about masculinity?
 - Do objectification and commodification suggest solutions to men's worries about being masculine enough?
 - What is the relationship between desirability and masculinity?

SLIDE 44

Summary (10 mins)

- ⇒ Sum up the activity by posing the following questions and obtaining a general response from participants (on slide):
 - Are men better off?
 - Is this equality with women but in a different way?
 - What might the future hold for men?
 - Will it be better or worse?

SLIDE 45

Session 4. Men's sexual futures

(50 mins)

- ⇒ This session involves a panel discussion that requires four panellists to be identified and briefed in advance to give them time to prepare their arguments (see the note on 'facilitator's preparation' at the beginning of this guide).
- ⇒ Explain to participants that this session is a panel discussion exploring the possible sexual futures of men. The examples chosen reflect debates and opinions regularly seen in the public domain on issues to do with masculinity and men's sexual lives. Rather than a debate, this panel discussion should be exploratory and seek to develop hypotheses about what futures confront men.

SLIDE 46

Panel discussion

- ⇒ Appoint a moderator whose job it is to facilitate the discussion and ensure that all panellists have fair time to put their points of view.
- ⇒ Explain that the moderator will facilitate the panel discussion, and that each panellist will speak for between 5 and 10 minutes on the following topics (on the slide):
 - IVF technology will eventually make men redundant.
 - In the future, more men will live alone and not in traditional family units.
 - More men are going to turn homosexual as it becomes more widely accepted.
 - More men will lead more of their working lives as migrant workers.
- ⇒ Explain that after all four panellists have spoken, the moderator will facilitate a question and answer session between the panellists and the rest of the participants (the 'audience').

(50 mins)

SLIDE 47

Conclusion

(5 mins)

⇒ After 45 minutes sum up the exercise with the following comment. Read:

|| This panel discussion on men's futures has only focused on some issues. ||

⇒ Cite some of the examples discussed in the panel discussion.

⇒ Continue to read:

|| There are a number of issues that we could have addressed but had no time for. One major issue is that of men and violence, a subject that is gaining considerable attention the world over in terms of wars and civil unrest, rape and other forms of sexual violence, the connection between sport and coercive sex, and religion-inspired violence. The module's bibliography contains a number of references that take these issues further. A second issue is men's health, a growing field of work in which masculinity is a theoretical tool. There are many issues here: men's reproductive health; HIV/AIDS and the controversy over male circumcision; men doing sex work; men, pornography and sexual obsession; men as clients of sex workers; men's sexual difficulties, etc. These remain issues for further study. ||

SLIDE 48

Short course acknowledgements.

SLIDE 49

Optional assessment exercise

Reading (see Resources folder): Mills, C. Wright (1959/2000), 'Appendix on Intellectual Craftsmanship', in *The Sociological Imagination*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 195-228.

Over a two-week period, each course participant should collect clippings and/or photographs/images from daily newspapers, magazines and websites, and establish a clippings file that addresses one of the themes raised in this module, such as men being better fathers, men's bodies in advertising, objectification and commodification, homosexuality, Westernisation and globalisation of masculinity, etc.

Each participant should then send this clipping file to the course coordinator, accompanied by a brief one-page explanation of what has been collected and outlining how it illustrates the theme the participant chose, and discussing issues these clippings raised for the participant for future thinking about masculinity and sexuality.

Further reading

(includes lecture bibliography)

- Allen, L. (2007) 'Sensitive and real macho all at the same time': young heterosexual men and romance, *Men and Masculinities*, 10, 137-152.
- Barker, G., Ricardo, C. & Nascimento, M. (2007) Engaging Men and Boys In Changing Gender-Based Inequity in Health: Evidence from Programme Interventions. Geneva, World Health Organization. Available At: [Http://www.who.int/Gender/Documents/Engaging Men Boys.Pdf](http://www.who.int/Gender/Documents/Engaging_Men_Boys.Pdf)
- Barker, G. T. (2005a) *Dying To Be Men: Youth, Masculinity and Social Exclusion*. London, Routledge.
- Barker, G. T. (2005b) Why the Worry about Young Men? *Dying To Be Men: Youth, Masculinity and Social Exclusion*. London, Routledge.
- Bordo, S. (1999) *The Male Body: A New Look at Men in Public and Private*. New York. Farrar, Giroux & Strauss.
- Campbell, C. (2001) 'Going Underground and Going After Women': Masculinity and HIV Transmission Amongst Black Workers on the Gold Mines. In Morrell, R. (Ed.) *Changing Men in Southern Africa*. Scottsville, University Of Natal Press.
- Cockburn, C. (1983) *Brothers: Male Dominance and Technological Change*. London, Pluto Press.
- Connell, R. W. (1998) Masculinities and globalization, *Men and Masculinities*, 1, 3-23.
- Connell, R. W. (2000) *The Men and The Boys*. Sydney, George Allen and Unwin.
- Connell, R. W. (2002) *Gender*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Connell, R. W. (2005) Change among the gatekeepers: men, masculinities, and gender equality in the global arena, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30, 1801-1825.
- Connell, R. W. (2005 [1995]) *Masculinities*. Berkeley, University Of California Press.
- Connell, R. W., Ashenden, D. J., Kessler, S. & Dowsett, G. W. (1982) *Making the Difference: Schools, Families and Social Division*. Sydney, George Allen & Unwin.
- Dollimore, J. (1991) *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Donaldson, M. (1993) What is hegemonic masculinity?, *Theory and Society*, 22, 643-657.
- Dowsett, G. W. (1993) I'll show you mine, if you'll show me yours: gay men, masculinity research, men's studies and sex, *Theory and Society*, 22, 697-709.
- Dowsett, G. W. (1996) *Practicing Desire: Homosexual Sex in the Era of Aids*. Stanford Ca, Stanford University Press.
- Dowsett, G. W. (2006) Moving Masculinities and Social Change: Why Do Men Matter? Canberra, Gender Relations Centre of the Australian National University. Available at [Http://Rspas.Anu.Edu.Au/Grc/Publications/Pdfs/Wp_20_Dowsett.Pdf](http://Rspas.Anu.Edu.Au/Grc/Publications/Pdfs/Wp_20_Dowsett.Pdf)
- Dunk, T. W. (2003) *It's a Working Man's Town: Male Working-Class Culture*. Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Farrel, K. (2003) Naked nation: The Full Monty, working-class masculinity, and the British image, *Men and Masculinities*, 6, 119-135.
- Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000) *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. New York, Basic Books.
- Flood, M. (2008) The Men's Bibliography. [Http://Mensbiblio.Xyonline.Net/](http://Mensbiblio.Xyonline.Net/).
- Frosh, S., Phoenix, A. & Pattman, R. (2002) *Young Masculinities: Understanding Boys in Contemporary Society*. Hampshire, Palgrave.

- Greene, M. E. & Biddlecom, A. E. (2000) Absent and problematic men: demographic accounts of male reproductive roles, *Population and Development Review*, 26, 81-115.
- Helliwell, C. (2000) 'It's only a penis': rape, feminism and difference, *Signs*, 5, 789-816.
- Jackson, P. A. (1997) Kathoey >> Gay >> Man: The Historical Emergence of Gay Male Identity in Thailand. In Manderson, L. & Jolly, M. (Eds.) *Sites Of Desire Economies Of Pleasure: Sexualities in Asia and The Pacific*. Chicago, The University Of Chicago Press.
- Jenkins, C. & Nahar, N. (1998) Hijras and HIV Risk - Transgender Communities in Bangladesh. *5th International Conference on Aids in Asia and the Pacific*. Kuala Lumpur.
- Jewkes, R., Dunkle, K., Koss, M. P., Levin, J. B., Nduna, M., Jama, N. & Sikweyiya, Y. (2006) Rape perpetration by young, rural South African men: prevalence, patterns and risk factors, *Social Science and Medicine*, 63, 2949-2961.
- McDowell, L. (2003) *Redundant Masculinities: Employment Change and White Working Class Youth*. Malden, Ma, Blackwell Publishing.
- Meiu, G. P. (2009) 'Mombassa Morans': embodiment, sexual morality, and Samburu men in Kenya, *Canadian Journal Of African Studies*, 43, 105-128.
- Meyer-Bahlburg, H. F. L. (2000) Discussion Paper: Sexual Orientation - Discussion of Bem and Herdt from a Psychobiological Persepective. In Bancroft, J. (Ed.) *The Role Of Theory In Sex Research*. Bloomington, Indian University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (1995) Objectification, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 24, 249-291.
- Oetomo, D. (2000) Masculinities in Indonesia: Genders, Sexualites and Identities in a Changing Society. In Parker, R., Barbosa, R. M. & Aggleton, P. (Eds.) *Framing The Sexual Subject: The Politics of Gender, Sexuality, and Power*. Berkeley, University Of California Press.
- Sedgwick, E. K. (1990) *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press.
- Segal, L. (1990) *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men*. London, Virago Press Limited.
- Segal, L. (1993) Changing men: masculinities in context, *Theory and Society*, 22, 625-641.
- Seidler, V. J. (2006) *Young Men and Masculinities: Global Cultures and Intimate Lives*. London, Zed Books.
- Silberschmidt, M. (2005) Poverty, Male Disempowerment, and Male Sexuality: Rethinking Men and Masculinities in Rural and Urban East Africa. In Ouzgane, L. & Morrell, R. (Eds.) *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*. Scottsville, University Of Kwazulu-Natal Press.
- Simpson, M. (1994) *Male Impersonators: Men Performing Masculinity*. New York, Routledge.
- Stacey, J. (1993) Toward kinder, gentler uses for testosterone, *Theory and Society*, 22, 711-721.
- Whitehead, S. (2002) *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Willis, P. (1977) *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. Farnborough, Saxon House.
- Wood, K. & Jewkes, R. (1997) Violence, rape and sexual coercion: everyday love in a South African township, *Gender & Development*, 5, 41-46.

Wood, K. & Jewkes, R. (2001) 'Dangerous' Love: Reflections on Violence Among Xhosa Township Youth. In Morrell, R. (Ed.) *Changing Men in Southern Africa*. Scottsville, University Of Natal Press.