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Abstract:

We create our masculine selves by self-reflection in which other people, predominantly our partners, peers, and friends, play a central part. Masculinity has two factors: strength and quality. Strength is determined by a person’s self-reflection: the effectiveness and effort to invest time in his search for cultural resources of masculinity, and his ability to employ conductive resources in his search. The qualitative part of masculinity is investigated revitalizing Weber’s methodological concept of the ideal type as a surgical descriptive of people, society, and culture. While all three ideal-typical styles of masculinity – traditional, anti-traditional, and egalitarian – exist in all Western societies, their relative prevalence is culture-specific.

Creating the Masculine Self

Who are we? How do we conceive ourselves as beings? Rene Descartes’ phrase “I think, therefore, I am” (*cogito ergo sum*) is a good starting point. The American philosopher and sociologist George Herbert Mead is a more empowering source to consult for the question of who we are. He created a model of moral development of personality or character where self-reflection is the core variable for personal development. Mead defines the “self” as the character or personality of a person. Identities that construe the self can be added, modified, or receive changes in their relative importance (Stryker 1980, 1992, 1994). Over time, when new information is added, the organization of character (the self) disintegrates and has to be reorganized in a newer self. Imagine incoming junk mail, new books, bills, newspapers,

magazines accumulating on your desk. Over time you have created such a disorganized mess, that your table can only be recognized as a pile of trash. We have to attend to the organization of our desk on a daily or weekly basis. The same is true for our selves. How do we do that?

The self has to be acted upon in order to become a reflective self (Cooley 1902). In this reflective analysis (Peirce 1977), the self appears in consciousness and we become self-aware. Speaking in terms of Mead's (1932) and James's (1900) "I"- "me" dichotomy of the self, the "I" only emerges if we are self-aware. We then can interact with different aspects about our self (identities), create theories about ourselves, and define our self-concept (the "me"). Self-consciousness arises in reflective analysis. In the self-conscious state of reflective analysis, a new self can emerge. This is the process that Mead calls moral development. Conversely, the failure to engage in self-reflective growth – selfishness in Mead's terms – is immoral.

Masculinity is a central organizing aspect of the self. In a recursive process, masculinity is both: the product of the self and an influence on the self. Since we communicate our masculinities, this recursiveness becomes intersubjective. To understand the specific postmodern developments of masculinity, we have to understand the general mechanisms of the dynamic development of the self.

Ideology and the Reproduction of Masculinity

Without self-reflection, there is no masculinity. It is obvious that there are vast degrees of differentiation between the unreflective immoral man who is not self-aware, and the highest moral development of a highly reflective man who effectively engages other moral actors in the creation of his masculinity. If people effectively invest time in finding their masculinity and if they find conducive sources in their search they will develop a strong masculine self.

Masculinity, however, has two factors: strength and quality.

C. Wright Mills told us that in order to learn about ourselves we have to get away from our daily routines and look at ourselves from the outside. This outside perspective is similar to Mead's and James's idea that it is necessary for our moral development that we get away from the "me" aspect of the self and take the "I" aspect in order to critically evaluate the "me." The knee-jerk liberal is just as absorbed in his subculture as our working class hero; and he is just as unable to step away, take a critical stance about himself, and hereby develop morally. It does not matter if you get absorbed and distracted by TV series about male heroes or by reading politically correct hate literature about men. While in both extreme examples of the traditionalist and the anti-traditionalist, the qualitative concept of masculinity will be diametrically opposed, the quantity – that is, the presence or absence of moral development and uniqueness – can be similar.

Both men will validate their concept of masculinity with their friends; and both sets of friends might not be conducive to their reflective development. While the knee-jerk liberal will validate his biased opinions with his colleagues in women's studies, our working class hero might validate his perception of masculinity with his fellows in the local pub or on a hunting trip. Both extreme examples have one thing in common: they suffer from missing diversity. Ironically, the knee-jerk liberal thinks he owns the definition of diversity – which only contributes to his inability to reflect critically. While one man is reproducing the ideology of traditionalism, the other is stuck in the ideology of anti-traditionalist reaction. Let me use the problems of ideology and investigate the consequent masculinities in the form of ideal types.

Strength through Self Reflection

We understand ourselves in relation with other people, the meaning we assign to each other. Hereby we are actors and we are objects, we provide opportunities for others to define

themselves just as others help to define ourselves. We either create opportunities for these definitions to emerge or we rely on existing opportunity structures.

To understand self-reflection I suggest considering four factors of self-development: how much time we devote for self-reflection, how educated are we in this process, how much time we spend with others, and how responsive are these others to our investigation of ourselves. These four factors of self-reflection are core requirements for the moral development of every person and the consequent personal entity or personality. The first two factors are directly under our own control; the latter two involve other people.

Time we devote for self-reflection and the quality of this time

When do we find time to reflect upon ourselves? If we do not sleep we are distracted: we eat, we drink, we procreate, but merely we work and consume; and we work to consume. The largest chunk of time we spend outside work is with media consumption. This distraction from self-reflection is explained by the very core of postmodernist argument: economic, cultural, and demographic changes in society created the rise of the service economy, the reliance on symbolic meaning that is produced by the mass media, and an increasing globalization of institutions and culture. The construction of self-identity is merely a compilation of media-produced symbols. “I think, therefore, I am” turned into “I consume, therefore, I am.” Even though we could consume reflectively, creating a well-constructed patchwork of media-produced cultural symbols, we tend to consume passively. Our self-monitoring is reduced to narcissistic social comparison in which we investigate the appropriateness of our consumption that becomes our source of self-esteem. For the reflective and self-aware construction of the self, media consumption becomes a distraction rather than enrichment.

US adult males watch on the average 29 hours of TV every week (4.14 hours a day) and females 34 hours per week (4.86 hours a day) (South Dakota Department of Health 2006, American Academy of Pediatrics 2006). In addition to the time spent on TV, a traditional measure of media distraction, people plug into their iPods, surf the Internet, go online shopping, play computer games, or watch DVDs on their home theater systems. How much time is left for taking the position of the “I,” necessary to reflect upon oneself in order to create self-awareness and engage in self-reorganization, self-regulation, and the consequent moral growth? While our “me” is over-stimulated, our “I” tends to be brain-dead. If we do not manage taking an active stance in the production of our selves, we are restricted to regurgitating the symbols we learned in the galand of mass media. Masculinity becomes a patchwork of teaser clips that we recognize to fit the existing picture of men.

Time we spend with others, and the responsiveness of these others to our investigation of ourselves.

Since masculinity is reflective and intersubjective, we cannot construct masculinity without other people with whom we engage in meaningful interaction. This preposition also makes clear that we have to include females in the analysis of masculinity. More than that, for the development of heterosexual males, females, as significant others, are predominantly involved in the reflexive construction of masculinity. My approach to masculinity provides a radical departure from the feminist one-sex centeredness. With the honorable exceptions of some equity feminists (e.g., Christina Hoff Sommers 1994, 2000, 2003), feminists follow the example of the inquisition that generated the antichrist. Gender feminists include males in their writing only to generate the antichrist that makes their goddesses appear more holy.

Take the widely known statement of gender feminists that male friendships are shallow. This comparison is used to support the implied statement that friendships of females are deeper, more important, and of higher moral quality. The idea that males predominantly entertain shallow and instrumental friendships to entertain themselves is a widely shared stereotype induced by pseudoscientific gender studies (Stolba 1992).

For self-reflection it is, however, not only the question if men or if women have better and deeper friendships, it is also the question whose needs of self-reflection are addressed in the media. I visited the largest Barnes and Nobles bookshop in town and asked the clerk for the section on masculinity. She looked at me with an open mouth. I then specified “gender readings, just like women’s studies but for men.” “We cover male interest in the sports section,” was the grinning reply. There was a wall shelf on women, half a wall shelf on minorities, but only one book on men hidden in the sociology section; and this was on male aggression. Well, to be fair, I have to mention, this is West Texas.

After this shock, I conducted a more representative analysis of the popularity on publications on masculinities in the US. To determine the popularity of books on masculinity, I studied Amazon’s sales ranks. This analysis of top-selling books on masculinity provided some reality check for me who analyzed publications on masculinity and sexuality for years at the library of the Kinsey Institute. It showed that when it comes to the importance of male friendships for moral development biblical studies are much more progressive than feminist studies. Well, this should not surprise us because traditionalists always considered male friendships as an important tool for self-reflection. While feminism is busy putting the females on the podium, it widely denies the ability of males engaging in deep and meaningful friendships. The literature with a Bible study background generally acknowledges the ability of

men to maintain friendships, but has a preconception of why and how these friendships should be entertained. Neither the predominantly Christian traditionalists nor the predominantly feminist antitraditionalist reaction acknowledges room for development in male friendships. Together these ideologies support a two-pronged bias in the conception of male friendship. One is induced by the gender feminist literature, the other by the romantic notions we find in popular literature. Neither of these biased literatures addresses the fact that some men very well engage in deeply reflective conversations with males and with females. Well, some men might not, but some women might not either.

While the accessibility of information, that defines the postmodern age, provides an incredible tool for the development of masculinity, it also is a source of indulgence and unreflective consumption. Not only can this hinder our own involvement in our development, it makes it harder to connect to others that are equally sedated. If we are ineffective in engaging in meaningful in-depth social interaction we become bored and accelerate the vicious circle of consumption that further increases our loneliness. What's the solution to this postmodern dilemma rooted in the omnipotence of media?

We have to set some time aside to communicate with real people and through the looking glass learn about ourselves. We have to engage in deep (reflective) interaction, not in the reciprocal exchange of shallow niceties. In simple terms: masculinity most likely emerges in the quality time we share with some good friends; the more reflective we are and the better our friends are suited to support our self-reflections, the more likely we will create unique and moral masculine selves. However, even if we succeed to reflectively create our masculine selves, it will most likely follow one or the other predominant ideologies or gender dogmas.

Ideal Types Describe the Quality of Masculinity

Ideal-typical categories of masculinity for heterosexual males emerge from the relationships between males and females. We have the traditional patriarchic relationship, its anti-traditional (originally feminist) reaction, and, as a newer development, the egalitarian relationship. Traditional partners who think to own the copyright on family values allow men to legitimize their reign. Anti-traditionalists react against traditional ideology, and thereby legitimize a reversed power structure. While traditionalism and its largely feminist reaction are highly ideological, the third ideal type of egalitarianism is pragmatic. The pragmatism of the emerging new man with egalitarian masculinity is hampered by prevailing ideologies. All three forms of relationships contribute highly to the reflective development of masculinity. They provide masculine identities that supply cultural building blocks used to construct the masculine self.

Classifying ideal types of masculinity does not imply a predominance of structure in the creation of masculine selves; it rather provides a tool to investigate the creativity that individuals use in the construction of their masculinity. Methodologically, Weber's tradition of ideal types becomes an instrument of postmodern inquiry.

Traditionalism

Traditionalists largely accept the picture of a taken-for-granted organization of a relationship. This picture can be defined as “the general idea of assumptions and beliefs about masculinity that have become common sense, which may be uncritically absorbed or spontaneously consented to, but which are presumed to have an imperative character in shaping consciousness, norms of conduct, affect, or desire... Within civil society, the national popular

culture is where various agents of hegemony (the New Right, cultural producers such as journalists, politicians, television producers and filmmakers) give shape to the common sense of the people, including their taken-for-granted notions of masculinity and femininity” (Hanke 1998). While in general Christian religious legitimation of male supremacy is diminishing in Western countries, in the US Christian fundamentalism still provides an important cultural basis for traditional masculinity.

The business world is another stronghold of traditional male agendas. Even the colorful world of the media, and Hollywood’s movie industry in particular, always was a conservative business agenda. Hollywood exports the U.S. picture of masculinity that is based on mystic heroic individualism that unreflectively incorporates the contradictions of militarism and an anti-government attitude. Central political figures like Ronald Reagan started out as actors in Hollywood (Susan Jeffords 1994). In the new Millennium Arnold Schwarzenegger was elected by the California public as their governor. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Mr. Universe, immortalized violent male heroes like Conan the Barbarian, all kinds of paramilitary and military heroes, and the ultimate man, the Terminator, who, unable to follow his emotions, implemented aspects of a machine.

The religious, corporate, and military orientation in the US supports a neoconservative trend that promotes politically conservative values of masculinity and family (Schneider forthcoming). Concerning traditionalism, which is described by “authority of God, Fatherland and Family” (Inglehart and Baker 2000, p.25), the United States are very different from other postindustrial states. Comparing the United States with 64 other societies, the United States clearly falls on the traditional side, where it ranks with India, Bangladesh, Turkey, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Brazil, Pakistan, Peru, and Ireland. “The United States are a

deviant case, having a much more traditional value system than any other advanced society” (p.31). Reactions against traditionalism create a dichotomy that also makes the US an extreme example of the anti-traditional reaction.

Anti-Traditional Reaction

Anti-traditionalism is largely a gendered mirror image of traditionalism. Male dominance turned into female domination, and gender stereotypes have been modified to produce an anti-ideology. This anti-ideology is reflected in political correctness that we find in private and institutional social interaction. Radicalized females determined gender-correct behavior and pushed for the implementation in institutional regulations in order to change attitudes. Today the brainwashing procedure has been largely successful, especially in the educated elite of industrial nations in the Western World.

The US is an outstanding example. Here the forceful indoctrination and reeducation has a tradition in the reeducation programs that were implemented in the nations that surrendered to the Allied Forces after WWII. Cultural imperialists are not satisfied if the oppressed does the right thing; the oppressed have to convince the oppressor that they think the right way. The same self righteousness, the claim for the right to define values and attitudes of others, made US politicians initiate the first wars of the 21st Century. The voice of the government media in Orwell’s 1984 “Newspeak, doublethink, the mutability of the past” (1948) exemplifies how the use of politically correct language leads to the acceptance of institutional standards, and the reinterpretation of history. Gender feminists changed our language, implemented policies, and forced men to think in the context of a “regendered” history. Like in Arthur Koestler's (1940) image of Stalinism, the mercy of death is only granted if you learned to think the right way.

Anti-traditionalists have internalized the attitudes about masculinity provided by the feminist reaction. They learned to believe that males are not able to relate to their emotions. They misinterpret male initiatives as an outcome of male domination. They are afraid to relate to buddies, since they are thought to have relationships that are artificial and shallow. Stripping themselves from male bonds, they are becoming dependent on females for company. Competing for the company of ideologically likeminded females facilitates the vicious circle in the feminization of masculinity. If masculinity is feminized it is dead. Gender Stalinists killed masculinity in revanche for the death of femininity under the rule of traditionalists. In this sense pure anti-traditional masculinity is an oxymoron.

Why do men take anti-traditional attitudes if it kills masculinity? It's the old game in which men want to connect with females. If men cannot take females by (ideological and/or physical) force anymore, the display of anti-traditional attitudes will be the central part in the mating game. Some men engage in a hypocritical combination of anti-traditional mating calls and traditional male behaviors. After they played the domesticated self-castrated man to get laid, they boast with their scores when they are with their buddies. These hypocrites are likely to master rationalizations and/or cherish the drugs. Other more ideal-typical anti-traditionalist males truly internalize the gender feminist attitudes and live happily in slavery.

Since other persons are centrally important for the reflective development of the self, female partners have significant impact on the definition of masculinity for heterosexual males. Female-centered feminism has long overlooked the other gender in its investigation of femininity. Males were treated at best as a residual category for comparison, at worst, as objects of hate. More recently, however, even the hardest front of feminism seems to acknowledge men as relevant objects. Alice Schwarzer, the poster child of European feminist emancipation,

recently admitted that “men are human as well” (Schwarzer 2006). Obviously her insight is not sufficient to grant feminism a voice in the investigation of masculinity. The scientific inquiry of masculinity can hardly profit from one-sided gender research that rigorously ignored males. While I suggest ignoring gender feminist “research” in the scientific inquiry of masculinity, feminism has to be taken seriously in the consequences it created for men. One empirical consequence is the Zeitgeist it created that still provides fertile ideological ground for anti-traditional masculinity.

Egalitarianism

In a traditional relationship she does the dishes because she is female. In an anti-traditional relationship he does the dishes because she is male. In an egalitarian relationship he/she does the dishes because he/she finds the time to do it. Gender role ideologies have been replaced by pragmatic task orientation geared to manage a relationship that thrives on mutual benefits.

While bombarded by established traditional and anti-traditional norms of masculinity, egalitarians tend negotiate their masculinity in their relationships. They reject ideological blinders and at the microlevel of interaction create local norms that are valid within a relationship or an extended friendship network. This active normative construction requires societies that allow the possibility of private behavior and self-determination and hereby provide fertile ground for the emancipation of the individuals who then become unconstrained (Schneider 2005).

The development of egalitarian masculinity can also be a reaction against the excesses of anti-traditionalism. Just like females had to emancipate themselves from male dominance in the sixties, contemporary men who seek for masculinity have to emancipate themselves from ideas initiated by anti-traditionalism. There is an emerging frustration with false sexual harassment or

rape charges filed instrumentally against males. Victims of false memory syndrome – nearly exclusively male – start organizing themselves. We start realizing how in the US, the British, and the German school system boys are systematically shortchanged and that young women by far outnumber men in new university enrollments. Gender-biased divorce settlements and outright discrimination of males in contested child custody cases demonstrate how institutional power is misused against men. While in the nineties such abuses were only very privately discussed by men, today we see the very first critical reflections in the media. In June 2006 German public television, for example, aired a movie that portrayed female teens using drugs to seduce a man and claim rape when they are caught in the act by their parents (Schneider 2002). The male character with no possibilities of defense loses all private or professional perspectives and commits suicide. Goethe's Gretchen received a gender change that might spur a pendulum-reaction from anti-traditionalism to neo-traditionalism. However, only if men do not redo the mistake using the emancipation from anti-traditionalism to create a reaction against the other gender, but instead free themselves from gender ideologies in order to create a pragmatic discourse, will they be able to develop an egalitarian masculinity.

While traditional and anti-traditional norms of masculinity are cremated by structural support, pragmatic forms of masculinity are alive and dynamic. George Herbert Mead, Peirce, and James, the founding fathers of the pragmatist idea, identify the principle of constant negotiation in the moral construction of the self. We have to accept this process thinking of pragmatism in order to understand dynamic models. It is, however, not just the scientist who applies pragmatism; in the words of Fritz Heider (1958), people are naïve or lay scientist. Later is was Ethnomethodology that took the position of seeing lay people as engaging in scientific inquiry to make sense out of their world. In this tradition I argue that egalitarians knowingly or

unknowingly use pragmatist principles to negotiate their position in their intimate relationship. Hereby they accept or reject identities to enter the hierarchy of their selves and reflectively construct themselves as persons. Pragmatism is not just the absence of ideology but the acceptance of dynamic principles in the construction of entities like selves, relationships, and masculinities. The dynamic nature of pragmatism, that governs the egalitarian's construction of masculinity makes it hard, if not impossible, to pinpoint specific entities accepted in egalitarian masculinity. It is probably the diversity of masculine norms, and its individualistic and dynamic nature, that best describes egalitarian masculinity.

In the production of masculinity egalitarian individuals will not have as many structural resources and, therefore, will show the greatest initiative and reflection. This high rate of reflection, the key variable for the strength of masculinity, might be the source of colinearity in my model that differentiates strength and quality of masculinities.

The Reproduction of the Masculine Self

In empirical reality masculinity will not completely resemble the three ideal types of masculinity. People will always mix aspects of the ideal types. The question is the degree to which individuals incorporate one or the other ideal type in their concept of masculinity. Weber (1922) already stated that there is no ideal type in empirical reality. Ideal types are descriptive categories providing the causal logic for qualitative and quantitative comparative methods. People use different masculine identities for different aspects of their selves. Different masculine categories or ideal types become prevalent for the same individual in different aspects or situations. The maturity of the individual adds another factor. Taking the dynamic aspect of the self, identities can have different prevalence at different times or stages of development.

Traditionalism, Anti-Traditionalism, and Egalitarianism as Quarries for the Building Blocks of the Masculine Self

Macro Level: Keeping Building Blocks Politically Correct

Institutions and agents of socialization are structural entities that take a central role providing the cultural building blocks men use to create their individual masculinity. The family, the media, schools, the workplace, and in some areas the church are institutions that structure our socialization. Peer networks are central non-institutional agents of socialization. As adults we will construct our masculinity primarily in interaction with our spouses or partners, our friends and colleagues. All of these interactions are overshadowed by our shared consumption of media. While our interaction with friends and partners is not directly hampered by the straightjacket of political correctness, the workplace and the media will implicitly and explicitly follow a mandated picture of gender relations.

In the workplace we are subjected to the systematic implementation of political correctness. Equal employment opportunity (EEO) training sessions provide an example of how we formally reeducate men in the workplace. Government mandates are overenthusiastically communicated in EEO training session. Even if men escape the face-to-face insult provided by many programs, they are not able to avoid anti-male biases. Even if they opt for the apparently least intrusive procedure – like an online “study course” – they will be overwhelmed by the sexist bias forwarded in the “curriculum.” While the courses cannot avoid stating that males can be victims, pictures that illustrate sexual harassment and gender discrimination almost always depict men as offenders and females as victims. In this way EEO sessions are a picture perfect reproduction of the bias we find in the media. This bias pours fuel into the flames of gender feminists who do not rest until most men have internalized anti-male biases of the anti-

traditionalist as a guiding ideology. Once males accept their hate of males as self-hate they are accepted into the ranks of victims and become comrades in the war against the perceived crimes of patriarchy (e.g., sexism, domination, violence, and child molestation). The men who resist the brainwashing procedures of anti-traditionalists become instruments by serving as spiteful examples of deviants.

Since these cultural building blocks are widely rehearsed in the media and implemented in the legislation, jurisdiction, and law enforcement, men in the US are 11 times more likely to be incarcerated than women (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2005). The biased institutional treatment creates a self-serving bias that only presents dark pictures of men. Where do we find examples of nurturing men? Where are the men who love their partners and their children? Where are the men that welcome their female partners as equal friends? Where are male victims that lost their beloved children in contested child custody cases, who lost their money in vicious divorces, or lost their freedoms because they sit falsely accused in prison? Where are the men who are blackmailed and sexually abused by their spouses? Where are the men that are discriminated against at the workforce for their gender? The self-serving bias of the anti-traditionalist took all these men out of the picture. For most men, they are not part of the reflective construction of masculinity. Once men wear the ideological blinders they are unable to think for themselves. Unable to pragmatically negotiate their masculinity with their partners, they clearly differentiate themselves from egalitarian men who actively construct their masculinity.

In the US, institutional enforcement of gender politics parallels medieval practice. While established churches still dominate the picture of masculinity for the traditionalists, the anti-traditionalists have built their own secular systems of dogmatism. Just like the inquisition

constructed the antichrist, gender feminists use government institutions to create the picture of males to be threatening our society as violent criminals, rapists, child molesters, or pedophiles. This new inquisition needs the antichrist and the media delivers the images, like the holy Bible provided the words. EEO training sessions become sessions of worship and law becomes the instrument of truth. Contemporary US law mimics the *Maleus Maleficarum*, the forceful instrument of truth (*Hexenhammer*) that was written in 1487 by the Dominicans Institoris und J.Sprenger. Evidence can be exemplified in the legal procedures of most states in the US that allow prosecutors and psychologists to use anatomically correct dolls to create memories of sexual abuse in children (Ceci 1999). In a perversion of enlightened legal procedure, accused males have to prove their innocence once the memories are created.

It is not surprising that secularization versus religion is such an important theme in US political debates. The so-called secularization of the state has become an institutionalized religion by itself. While traditionalists favor the old religions, anti-traditionalists harvest the institutional power of their religion: anti-male ideology. The conflict between religion and quasi-religion parallels the conflict caused by the reformation in late medieval Europe, where a violent conflict of dogmas decimated the population of northern Europe by fifty percent. Non-ideological gender egalitarians have no voice in the cannon thunder created by the media battle between the religious right and the anti-traditionalist ideologists.

Micro Level: Where Individual Pragmatism faces Institutionalized Dogmas

While traditionalists and anti-traditionalists can consume extensive packages of ideas about masculinity that are conveniently bundled by their religious and quasi-religious camps, egalitarians have to think for themselves. Building blocks for the egalitarian masculinity are not indoctrinated by institutional agents of socialization, but have to be explored and obtained by a

curious person. With the supremacy of institutionalized dogmas about masculinity, do individuals stand a chance developing their own masculine agendas? Evaluating the individual abilities of self-organization, there are two sociological schisms.

One assumes that increased and globalized social control and surveillance creates an omnipotence of macro organization that limits the diversity of choices and the freedom of the individual to creatively construct a diverse self. Giant international institutions create globalized consumption (Ritzer 2003, 2004) that eliminates the diversity of ideas. The interests of these global institutions are protected by government machinery that is using modern technology of surveillance as an instrument for their means of oppression. The Battle of Seattle (Janet 2000, Yuen et al 2002) demonstrated the inferiority of individual protest against government protected interests of global corporations. Realizing their inability to stand up against the powerful oppressive U.S. institutions of control, a straitjacketed young generation reacts to oppression in fantasies of violence that they find supported in Heavy Metal music (Rafalovich & Schneider 2006). Ipodded into their fantasy world that is supported by global media corporations, they refrain from the open and violent protest that was still possible for the boomer generation. Since the 1970s, institutional surveillance, law enforcement, and detention have developed into a high tech warfare against citizens – merely males. The U.S. incarceration rate is at an all-time high (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2004); it is the highest in the world (Mauer 2003), and the victims are predominantly male. Global corporations and the institutions of legislation, law enforcement and detention, keep contemporary males well under institutional control.

In contrast, many symbolic interactionists and postmodernists will stress the increased freedom in late modernity (Giddens 1991). This is not restricted to a micro perspective. Sociologists like Heise and Durig (1997) stress the ability for individuals to empower themselves

by using the macro-tools of media and other institutions as instruments of their micro action. The accessibility of contemporary media – mainly internet pages, newsgroups and chatrooms, and iPod podcasts that revolutionized ham radio – created an interaction between micro level activities and macro facilities. The accessibility of the new media allows micro actors to use powerful macro instruments in actions that influence the micro and the macro world. Modern media not only increases the ability for individuals to create social networks, but it also enhances the impact of networks once they are established. Increased personal freedoms, the accessibility of modern media, and the related facilitated ability to organize social action by micro actors contributes to the discovery and promotion of diverse masculinities. These conditions allow pragmatic masculinities to arise even in an environment that is still dominated by institutionally enforced dogmatic (traditional and anti-traditional) masculinities.

The micro and the macro approach raise important points for the freedom and constraint of individuals who pragmatically create their masculinity. However, the merit of both sociological approaches differs for the explanation of the dogmatic and the pragmatic forms of masculinity. Building blocks of traditional and anti-traditional masculinity are distributed by established institutions. New ideas of masculinity are more likely to be communicated informally and/or with the new media that is less objected to institutional constraints. While building blocks in line with traditional or anti-traditional dogmas are readily available and administered, pragmatic egalitarian ideas have to be negotiated and obtained. Individual styles, such as conformity and consumerism versus critical thought or protest, will largely determine the masculinity that is chosen. While conformists are more likely to adopt dogmatic masculinities, that depending on their social environment are either traditional or anti-traditional,

nonconformists pragmatically construct masculinities. Reproducing the masculine self, non-ideological egalitarian men, might rely on grass root micro level action.

The different ability of men to engage in critical thinking and their personal preference for institutional conformity play a central role in their choice of building blocks that establish their masculine self. While traditional sociologists are likely to jump to the conclusion that education and income will be the central determinants of the ability of critical thought and the willingness to protest, I suggest that generation-specific cultures and subcultures are more central for the choice of masculinity. Frustration with the inequalities of traditionalism creates knee-jerk reactions that invite the adaptation of anti-traditional ideas. This tendency is often observed by the early boomer generation that by profiting from traditional policies experience guilt. The frustration caused by anti-traditional oppression can create a pendulum reaction that welcomes traditional masculine roles. This is in line with the tendency of neo-conservatism that we can observe in the US today (Schneider 1999, 2004). Since both cases are knee-jerk reactions, they do not invite for a truly critical and open-minded investigation of masculinity. Both generations – the boomers and generation X – were exposed to frustrations that limited their ability to obtain components of the egalitarian masculinity. It appears that today's new generation is more capable and willing to explore pragmatic forms of masculinity. This new generation is more likely to build their masculinity in defiance of traditional institutions and in reliance on personal communication that is supported by less restrained internet-based media. Aristotle was right when he blamed the new generation as the source for the demise of the Greek society. What he did not understand that youth is an agent of progress. If we are looking for the new man we have to accept our new generation and take them serious in our investigation of masculinity –

probably more serious than the established generation of anti-traditionalists who fill the shelves of gender literature.

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