

Embracing New Emerging Male Identities

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ABSTRACT: We use Raymond Williams' notion of "emergence" to document the development of new kinds of embodied masculinities in the Middle East and Mexico, two places that are characterized by strong local tropes of manliness in their respective cultures. A new wave of "emerging masculinities" is being enacted in the United States. Men there are demonstrating new ways of being men in an effort to challenge forms of masculinity that they consider to be harmfully dominant. They do this in part via interactions with emerging health technologies, such as assisted reproductive technologies for male infertility and pharmaceutical technologies for erectile dysfunction, which are now altering sociopolitical and personal realities in the United States. We suggest that masculinities study within anthropology must take into consideration these continuous, embodied changes in men's enactments of masculinities through time, on both an individual and social level, in order to be comprehensive. On top of that, we take scholars' suggestion that reformulations of hegemonic masculinity theory should take into account new comparative geographies, modes of male embodiment, and social dynamics of masculinity from across the world.

KEYWORDS: Dominant, Emerging Masculinities, Masculinities, Reproductive, Technologies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender, according to anthropologists and gender theorists, is not an inherent essence, but rather a relationally performed reaction to an individual's cultural and structural position. These assertions arose from efforts to comprehend women's global subordination, and it is because of this curiosity that ethnographic gender studies have traditionally concentrated on women. In contrast, few research has looked at the social production of maleness and masculinity. In a 2006 assessment of the 157 ethnographies of gender and reproduction that existed at the time, just one of them, Birthing Fathers, focused on males [1]. This is an issue since omitting males from gender research implies that their bodies, attitudes, and behaviors are both "natural" and "important."

To address this disparity, a rising corpus of anthropological research has focused on masculinity via a social constructionist perspective, resulting in new understandings of local masculinities. Much of the foundational work in this field has originated from Latin America and the Mediterranean region, and it focuses on masculinity and the HIV/AIDS epidemic's development. Other areas of the globe, such as Africa and the Middle East, have produced much less work on masculinity, and very little of it is ethnographically grounded[1].

Men's understandings of their own behaviors are strongly influenced by stereo-types of local masculinity, according to existing anthropological studies on masculinities. Men's efforts to embody or reject regionally dominant notions of masculinity are the subject of such research in general. Researchers believe that patrilineal civilizations spanning North Africa, Europe, and Asia are characterized by "lineal masculinity," in which men's hegemonic objectives are to have offspring, establish their own lineages, and be recognized as powerful clan and tribe leaders.

Researchers in the Dominican Republic's growing tourist sector demonstrate how heterosexually identified, sometimes married, male sex workers embrace the hegemonic ally masculine ideal of tigueraje, a type of masculinity based on tricksters, to mediate their same-sex work interactions. Meanwhile, researchers detail younger men's efforts in Mexico City to act "against machismo," and ethnography from Japan shows how young middle-class men are rejecting the corporate, heavy-drinking "salaryman model" of masculinity in favor of forging new forms of domestic partnership with wives or girlfriends [2].

We expand on these contemporary ethnographic instances of males negotiating hegemonic and alternative masculinities in this paper. To this aim, we propose the notion of "emergent masculinities" to account for continuous, context-specific, embodied shifts in men's masculinity enactments, especially when they interact with new health technology. In order to do so, we combine the ideas of Marxist Academics R. W. Connell and Raymond Williams on "hegemonic masculinity" and "emergence," respectively[2].

We apply this analytic to our ethnographic findings from two sites marked by powerful stereotypes of local manliness the Arab Middle East and Mexico showing how men in these areas use their experiences of changing reproductive and sexual health to live out manliness in new ways that defy pernicious stereotypes. Assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) are being used by males in the Middle East to overcome male infertility and create children within companionate relationships.

In Mexico, elderly men are rejecting erectile dysfunction (ED) medicines like Viagra, turning away from masculine displays that they deem "macho" and unfit for a dignified older age. We want to demonstrate how men's interactions with new reproductive and sexual health technologies shed light on the relational, embodied, and ever-changing character of lived masculinities throughout the course of a man's life and across generations by using these instances.

1.1 Emerging Masculinities:

Connell's theory of "hegemonic masculinity," the earliest and most extensively utilized social constructionist analytic created especially for researching masculinities, inspired our concept of "emerging masculinities." Connell attempted to reconcile the lived experience of male inequality with the fact of men's group domination over women by drawing openly on feminist theory and Marxist sociology. This new theory aimed to investigate male hierarchical inequality, connect masculinity analysis to feminist findings on the social construction of gender, and avoid the structure-versus-individual conflict that plagues current gender and class studies[3].

Connell utilized Antonio Gramsci's notion of "hegemony" to accomplish these objectives, a social process in which different groups acquire the "desire to conform" to a dominant group's way of being, enabling class-based dominance. Connell claimed that by examining masculinity through the lens of hegemony, academics may learn about the hierarchical creation of different masculinities, how power mediates this production, and the dialectical connections between hierarchical structures and practiced masculinities [4].

Hegemonic masculinity, according to the researchers, is a technique for being a man that legitimizes patriarchy and allows gendered social domination in a particular cultural context; it is influenced by, but not always similar to, cultural standards of manliness. Despite the fact that hegemonic masculinities differ among cultures, they frequently share characteristics that allow social domination, such as control of money and resources, beauty, virility, physical strength, heterosexuality, and emotional detachment. Many men may want to embody hegemonic masculinity, but only those with access to the required social and institutional resources are able to do so; this situation generates inequality among males, with excluded individuals becoming complicit. Researchers also suggest that males who occupy non-hegemonic masculinities may do so in a number of ways, ranging from uneasy resignation to outright defiance[4].

Although Connell is primarily interested in understanding connections between forms of masculinity in all of their dynamic complexity, academic implementations of this theory have resulted in static dualisms due to the emphasis on "hegemonic masculinity" in contrast to "subordinate" masculinity. Researchers criticize other academics' common presentation of hegemonic masculinity as a "assemblage of harmful characteristics" rather than as a context-dependent subject stance in a 20th-anniversary review of hegemonic masculinity theory. They say, for example, that equating hegemonic masculinity with machismo in Mexico or terrorism in the Middle East promotes the most negative conceptions of masculinity and is simply not true to the lives of most men [5].

Instead, males in these places may have complicated, conflicted, and transforming relationships with these hegemonic tropes. Researchers suggest four underdeveloped aspects of hegemonic masculinity theory to counteract this problematic reductivism: the nature of gender hierarchy, including the relationships between masculinities and femininities; the geography of masculine configurations, or the interaction of local, regional, and global factors in masculinity construction; and the process of social embodiment.

We concentrate on three of these undeveloped domains new comparative geographies of masculinity, new forms of male embodiment, and new fast changing dynamics of masculinities to investigate current elements of manhood in our various field settings, heeding this need for theoretical reformulation. By doing so, we deliberately shift our attention away from gender hierarchy as well as the hierarchically evocative phrase hegemonic masculinity itself and onto everything that is new and evolving in masculinity ideas and behaviors. We suggest the term emerging masculinities, which is meant to convey novelty and change, based on Williams' work on "emergence."

Williams, like Connell, is concerned in cultural hegemonic processes, while not being a masculinity researcher per. Researchers question how a dominating group maintains a cultural system, and how this system may alter over time, in his key article, "Dominant, Residual, and Emergent." "No dominant social order, and therefore no dominant culture, ever encompasses or exhausts all human activity, human energy, and human intention," he claims[6].

"New meanings and values, new practices, new connections, and new types of interactions are always being created," says the author. This process is referred to as "emergence" by Williams to indicate that it is new rather than strictly opposing or antagonistic to the prevailing culture. These newcomers may ultimately be absorbed into the prevailing culture, leading the social order to shift over time.

Williams' emphasis on the emerging, we think, may be usefully extended to the study of "emergent masculinities." To put it another way, masculine selfhood is neither a thing or a constant; rather, it is an ongoing act. From moment to moment and in various situations, men must behave like men in various ways. In a conversation with his wife, at work, over drinks with his friends, or while playing a game with his children, for example, a guy expresses masculinity in various ways. Individual masculinities may also shift in reaction to bigger life events, such as changing jobs, marrying, or becoming a parent.

Men, in particular, experience all of these changes in their bodies, which are also constantly altering; these changes include ageing, being sick or well, and being changed as a result of medical treatment, exercise, or neglect. All of this takes place in local social environments that are quickly changing as a consequence of globalization and a slew of political, economic, technical, and cultural shifts. Young "secular" males, for example, took to the streets of the Middle East in 2011 to promote democracy and protest social injustice. As shown by their protest, a genuine "revolution" in men's (and women's) social worlds is now taking place across the Middle East, and it needs academic study. We propose that the notion of "emergent masculinities" refers to these social transformation processes as men navigate and eventually transform their social environments[7].

In our opinion, emerging masculinities include social history, globalizing geographies, masculine embodiment, new masculine dynamics, and social movements in a manner that hegemonic masculinity does not. Hegemony focuses on the dominating and hierarchical, while emergence focuses on the new and transformational. When it comes to masculinity, emergence encompasses changes throughout the course of a man's life as he grows older, changes across generations as male adolescents mature into adults, and changes in social history that engage men in transformational social processes.

Finally, emerging masculinities focuses on new kinds of daily male behaviour that are associated with these social shifts. Men's desire to "date" their partners before marriage, men's acceptance of condoms and vasectomy as forms of male birth control, men's desire to live in nuclear families with their wives and children, men's encouragement of daughters' education, and men's use of social media technologies in homes and workplaces are just a few examples. All of these male behaviour are surfacing in the Middle East, Mexico, and elsewhere, but they can't be properly theorized if they're only considered in terms of gender hierarchies.

Furthermore, emerging masculinities must be understood in connection to the medical anthropological notion of "embodiment." Embodiment in respect to masculinity is contextualized both locally and historically. For example, in the modern West, "six-pack abs" have replaced the handlebar moustache as a symbol of virility, while a potbelly may indicate poor fitness in one culture but manly wealth in another. Individual men's bodily changes throughout time, for example, when they get older or become ill, need reformulations of their own methods of being men. As a result, emerging masculinities co-evolve with shifts in men's bodily embodiment aspirations and capabilities throughout the course of their lives and in various periods and locations[5].

Emergent masculinities also draw attention to the ways in which new medical technology allow new kinds of embodied male activity. Vitamins, testosterone, performance-enhancing medicines, antidepressants, insulin, antihypertensive, antiretroviral, ED treatments, and a variety of other life-prolonging or boosting medications are among these medicinal innovations. Men's involvement with medical technology, on the other hand, is multifaceted. Men may embrace genital surgery as a method of birth control or fertility improvement, for example. Using modern technology to embody new kinds of masculinity is a natural extension of anthropology's long-standing interest in the connection between physical and cultural experience in the context of developing social and institutional structures [6].

In this paper, we show how an embodied emerging masculinities method may be useful in two non-Euro-American ethnographic settings. We look at men's experiences with ARTs in the Middle East and ED medications in Mexico, two places where men are experimenting with new methods to position themselves in the face of persistent, internationally disseminated stereotypes. Following a description of our research, we look at how stereotypical notions of masculinity shape local perceptions of manliness in the Middle East and Mexico. Then, as Middle Eastern men confront infertility and ARTs, and Mexican men face declining erectile function and pharmaceutical therapies, we offer contrasting ethnographic examples of emerging masculinities. Our aim in providing these two examples is to demonstrate how ethnographers may use an emerging masculinities method to realize Connell's demand for a better understanding of the dynamics of manhood and men's social and physical embodiment in a range of geographic locations across the globe.

2. DISCUSSION

Middle Eastern and Mexican men, as shown by these anthropological vignettes, are self-consciously enacting new masculinities in response to their changing bodies and new medical technology that may mediate these changes. As a result of unique sexual and reproductive health problems and changes throughout time, our study groups were prompted to think very deliberately on their representations of masculinity in order to promote certain societal goals. Men who use health technologies are frequently aware of the social messages encoded in their treatments, according to previous ethnographic research, and this awareness, along with the physical effects of treatment and the individuals' specific social contexts, shapes their medically assisted ways of being men [8].

As a result, individual men may embrace, experiment with, or reject these medical innovations because they represent idealized standards of manhood, a process from which new forms of masculinity may develop, either individually or collectively over history. In a variety of ways, whether they are using ARTs to physically perform companionate marriage or rejecting the medical opportunity to engage in penetration-oriented sexuality, these men redefine what it means to be a man by relating the changing bodies to the shifting social environments in which they live [9].

The changing bodies of men across the globe need the re-invention of masculine practice and identity in order to keep up with the times. Although this process is particularly visible in our case studies, all men must constantly create new ways of being men as they connect to their changing bodies in the context of growing reformulations of local norms of masculinity in order to maintain their sense of self. According to us, masculinities theory and research must become more dynamic in order to account for the continuous, embodied, and interconnected changes in male identities and practices[10].

Previous research on hegemonic masculinity has shown that masculinity is hierarchical, relational, and situated in particular cultural settings. This is supported by the findings of this study. After that, as noted by Connell and demonstrated here, the next step is to develop theoretical approaches that, when applied to ethnographic cases of real men's lives, can account for the dynamism, embodiment, and geographically specific nuances that men's changing bodies and social worlds exhibit as they progress through their lives.

3. CONCLUSION

An emerging masculinities approach that takes new forms of male embodiment seriously as objects of empirical study may aid in the challenge of harmful stereotypes of masculinity that are still prevalent in many parts of the globe, particularly in developing countries. Taking an emerging male-ness approach necessitates the ethnographic recording of gender in practice of men behaving as men in their relationships with women and with other men in a variety of study contexts. The Middle East and Mexico are ideal locations for rethinking masculinity since men there are recasting their own lives in response to "toxic" notions that have been widely disseminated and hotly discussed locally. In summary, the men of the Middle East and Mexico are ready for the application of an emerging masculinities perspective.

After everything is said and done, we believe that the time has come for fresh ways of thinking about masculinity across the globe. Anthropologists are dedicated to ethnography as the most effective method of investigating the changing social environments of men as well as their shifting conceptions of masculinity and bodily experiences of manhood. We encourage others to do comparable studies on lived masculinities on a local level,

as we have done. We will be able to create an empirical foundation on which to build a more comprehensive emerging masculinities approach and to bring masculinity theory into the twenty-first century.

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