Hegemonic Masculinity and Globalization: 'Transnational Business Masculinities' and Beyond

Abstract

In recent years Masculinity Studies writers, in particular R.W. Connell, have focussed on the relationship between globalization and 'hegemonic' forms of masculinity. This paper provides an assessment of this scholarship and argues that whilst Connell and others have usefully identified the gendered nature of globalization, Masculinity scholars have also provided a somewhat limiting account of the global hegemonic role of a monolithic top-down 'transnational business masculinity'. By contrast, we suggest a demassification of this notion of hegemonic masculinity. Such a demassification enables the opening up of a dialogue between Masculinity Studies and Feminist and other critical globalization scholars allowing for a more nuanced analysis that can attend to both the unevenness of globalization in different settings and more detailed awareness of interactions between global and local/cultural/state imperatives. Our aim here is to move away from conceptualisations of globalization and hegemonic masculinity that are exceptionally top-down towards an analysis of the contested and shifting nature of gender identity at the global as well as the local level, to highlight the ways in which different hegemonic masculinities are negotiated, and even resisted. We argue that by understanding 'transnational business masculinity' as a discursive ideal that legitimates the workings of global capitalism, there is scope for a greater level of engagement between critical globalization scholarship and gender studies. This might also open the door to an account of globalization that entails more detailed reference to women and femininities.

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This paper presents an exploration of how the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity', found within the field of Masculinity Studies¹ and associated most closely with the work of RW Connell, has been brought to bear on studies of globalization. Connell in particular, has employed the idea of 'transnational business masculinity' in seeking to explain how certain forms of masculine identity have gone global—emphasising the 'hegemonic' status of a transnational business elite. This understanding of a hegemonic form of masculinity that underpins and yet is also created by neoliberal globalization has an intuitive appeal. As many Masculinity Studies scholars are prone to emphasise, contemporary manifestations of a hegemonic masculine identity can be witnessed in the trading rooms of investment banks, the board rooms of multinational corporations and the business class lounges of international airports (Kimmel, 2005, p. 415; Acker, 2004, p. 29). We seek to investigate this relationship between 'globalization' and 'hegemonic masculinity' and in doing so raise certain concerns about how discussions of hegemonic masculinity(ies) have developed to incorporate a concern with the global.

The emphasis on hegemonic masculinity brings important gendered issues to the forefront of contemporary discussions of globalization. Perhaps most significantly, these writings draw attention to how gender identities are thoroughly implicated in processes associated with neoliberal globalization. Globalization and global politics are not gender-free but are rooted in the privileging of certain forms of

masculinity within what Connell terms a 'world gender order' (Connell, 2005a, pp. xxii). Thus whilst 'most studies of globalization have little or nothing to say about gender' (Connell, 2005a, pp. xxi), Masculinity Studies scholars make visible the gendered character, for example, of the rhetorically gender-neutral neoliberal market agenda in global politics, diplomacy, international institutions and economic policy-making. Such writings therefore clearly complement the emphasis in Feminist International Relations (IR) on the ways in which both the theory and practice of global politics are thoroughly masculinized (Tickner, 1991; Whitworth, 1997). Making masculinity visible within the politics and processes associated with contemporary globalization matters because it forces those of us who wish to develop a more critical understanding of globalization to understand how gender frames the world in which we live. However, making masculinity visible is inevitably a difficult task. As Kimmel (1997) argues, masculinity has assumed the banality of the unstated norm; not requiring comment, let alone explanation. Indeed, its invisibility bespeaks its privilege.

While we certainly agree with Masculinity Studies writers that the study of gender and masculinities in global politics is of great significance, we nevertheless suggest that perhaps this is the moment to pause and look somewhat more closely at the theoretical and terminological tools presently employed by these writers. As Connell points out, existing analyses of masculinities in many regions and countries cannot simply be added together to create a 'global understanding of masculinities'. Rather, a grasp of large-scale social processes and social relationships is necessary to understand 'masculinities on a world scale' (Connell, 2005a, pp. xx-xxi).

This paper is divided into three main parts. The initial discussion locates the study of hegemonic masculinities within studies of global politics. In this section we aim to establish the significance and relevance of an interrogation into the term 'hegemonic masculinities' for scholars engaged in gender-focussed research in International Politics (including studies of Globalization/s). We note that there has been a coming together of scholarship between those working in the field of Masculinity Studies (typically sociologists) and feminist scholars working on global political issues. It is the presumed relationship between hegemonic masculinity(ies) and globalization/s that forms the basis for this increased interaction.

In the face of this growing body of work drawing together the gender theorising of Masculinity and Feminist scholars, we would argue that it becomes ever more important for those working with the concept of hegemonic masculinity to pay careful attention to the complexities and contradictions that we feel are integral to Masculinity Studies writings. In this context, within the second section of the paper, we point to some of the problems and issues that emerge in relation to the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity'—a term almost ubiquitously used in Masculinity Studies writings about both local and global arenas. Our concern is, broadly, that 'hegemonic masculinity' is employed as both an account of ideological (in a Gramscian sense) hegemony—that is, as an account of the political mechanism of legitimatizing and mobilizing male dominance in the global arena—and as a generalizable list of the characteristics of an elite group of men. This coupling is problematic because there is no inevitably neat fit between the means to political legitimation of male dominance as a form of rule and the actual social dominance of particular men. Moreover, we suggest that the difficulties attached to such a presumed equivalence are exacerbated

as the term has been globalized. Thus this section of the paper serves to offer some useful directions for considering the analysis of gender and masculinities in global politics

In the third part of the paper, we focus on the possibilities and limitations of closer engagements between masculinity studies and critical studies of globalization. Firstly, we raise questions about the way in which 'gate-keeper' Masculinity Studies scholars have rejected what they term 'discursive' approaches to the study of men and masculinity. This is a reflection of reservations evident in the generally macrosociological perspectives of significant writers in the field regarding postmodern frameworks like those developed by Judith Butler (Connell, 2000, p. 20; Beasley, 2005, p. 226; see also Brickell, 2005). Yet, one of the most significant shifts within critical studies of globalization within the field of International Political Economy (IPE) in recent years has been the growing employment of discursive approaches that seek to investigate the relationship between the ideational and practical material effects of such discourses (Weldes, 2001; Hay and Marsh, 2000; Cameron and Palan, 2004). Secondly, we raise questions about the highly top-down nature of viewing globalization through a 'lens' of a monolithic hegemonic masculinity. In particular the tendency to equate hegemonic masculinity with a 'transnational business masculinity' effectively reifies the role of the multinational corporation (MNC) in contemporary accounts of globalization. This position is considerably at odds with those critical studies of globalization that have emphasised the 'hybrid' nature of globalization, the multiple sites and sightings of globalization and, significantly, and the role that states play in mediating and transforming the relationship between the global and the local (including globalized and localized gender cultures). Obviously there are problems

with the way in which many critical IPE scholars have continually ignored gender (Waylen, 2006; Griffin 2007 and 2009). Even so, what we point to in this article is that Masculinity Studies scholars may have something to learn from this 'third wave' of non-rationalist critical IPE thinking. ²

Locating hegemonic masculinities within the discipline of International Politics

It is widely noted that 'gendered lenses' provide important empirical and theoretical insights into contemporary understandings of globalization (Peterson 2003; Peterson and Runyan 1998) (as well as related processes such as militarization (Enloe 2007)). Feminist scholarship has sought to confront and contest supposedly 'genderneutral' understanding of international politics looking at how global processes have gendered impacts and how the gendered nature of international politics impacts on local lives, cultures and societies. Furthermore, by bringing a concern with women and gender into our understanding of global politics, feminist scholars played a role in opening up the study of globalization to more diverse and critical perspectives that engaged the voices and perspectives of the disadvantaged (Murphy 1996). And yet, the focus on women's experiences and voices in IR has *not* meant that questions of men and masculinity have been sidelined (Carver 2003, p. 230)—most feminist scholarship has incorporated an understanding of the masculinized nature of international politics into its analysis of gendered power relations.

This move to incorporate the 'man question' (Zalewski 1998) into academic studies of international politics has lead to interesting and innovative research that draws upon the wide array of critical studies of men and masculinities. Of particular interest are Connell's writings on hegemonic masculinity(ies) that are seen to provide a useful

theoretical lens through which feminist scholars of global politics have sought to understand processes such as militarization and foreign policy making (Kronsell 2006, Hutchings 2008) war and nationalism (Munn 2008, Conway 2008) and the reproduction of neoliberal subjectivities (e.g. via global media imagery) (Hooper 2001).

At the same time, we see within critical Masculinity studies a much greater engagement with the international—notably Connell's recent writings focus attention on how processes of economic globalization relate to the emergence of 'transnational business masculinities' as a the latest manifestation of a mode of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell 2005; Connell 2000). Our concern is this paper is to argue that there is a need for a through analysis of the theoretical tools employed by critical scholars of men and masculinities—and in particular to draw attention to some of the problems that are implicit to the attempts by Connell and others to 'globalize' concepts of hegemonic masculinity. It is to the problems that we feel are entrenched within contemporary usages of the idea of hegemonic masculinity (both at a local and at a global level) that the discussion now turns.

Hegemonic masculinities: Extending the concept from the local to the global

What is immediately striking about Masculinity Studies is the domination of the Masculinity subfield by a small range of influential leading writers³. Connell's contribution is, for instance, acknowledged by virtually every commentator in the area. His work⁴ undoubtedly provides the 'central reference point for many, if not most, writers on men and masculinity' (Wetherell and Edley, 1998). The term 'hegemonic masculinity' reflects Connell's attachment to a broadly Gramscian

understanding of hegemony (i.e. how particular sets of ideologies concerning ideals of manliness serve to provide the ideological support for patriarchal social relations). Connell's work on hegemonic masculinity is linked to his earlier writings on gender and power in which he articulated the view that within particular social contexts there exist specific 'gender orders' in which a particular ideology of hegemonic masculinity dominates. Furthermore, the term 'hegemonic masculinity' is a means to recognising that 'all masculinities are not created equal' (Kimmel, 1997). The term invokes attention to the diversity within masculinities; to multiple masculinities. While remaining strongly focussed on the overall hierarchical positioning of men as a group in relation to women as a group, the term provides a more nuanced reading of gendered power and a recognition of hierarchical relations between men. Masculinity is thus to be seen in this framing not as the monolithic form of patriarchal power over women but rather as a continuously constituted and contested set of interlocking hierarchical social relations. While we recognise the importance and significance of the critical focus on men and masculinities found within Masculinity Studies, we wish to draw attention to some of the concerns that we have with the term hegemonic masculinity. In particular, as we highlight in the following discussion, the problematic manner in which much literature on hegemonic masculinity(ies) has engaged with notions of the global.

Problems as the term goes global

For key critical masculinity scholars it is globalization—specifically a multinationalled neoliberal globalization—that is recognised as 'the most obviously important' issue in the future of the field researching masculinity. Specifically, this is understood in terms of 'the relation of masculinities to those emerging dominant powers in the global capitalist economy, the transnational corporations' (Connell et al., 2005, p. 9). Connell's particular contribution to this field is that globalization, in creating what has been termed a 'world' or 'global gender order', involves the re-articulation of national hegemonic masculinities into the global arena. Specifically he refers here to 'transnational business masculinity', which he describes as definitively taking the leading role as the emergent gendered world order, an order associated with the dominant institutions of the world economy and the globalization of the neo-liberal market agenda. The leading role of transnational business masculinity re-articulates older and more locally based bourgeois managerial hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 2005b, pp. 84, 76-7; Connell, 2005a, p. 263; Connell and Wood, 2005). In this account transnational business masculinity is seen to occupy the position of

hegemonic masculinity on a world scale—that is to say, a dominant form of masculinity that embodies, organizes, and legitimates men's domination in the world gender order as a whole (Connell, 2000, p. 46).

This notion of hegemonic masculinity is, however, understood as embodying more that just a Gramscian-style mechanism for gaining consent. Rather, the political legitimating meaning of hegemonic masculinity quickly slides towards its meaning as the 'dominant' masculinity and how an actual group of men 'embodies' this dominant positioning, including how this group exhibits particular personality traits. Connell asserts that 'world politics is now more and more organized around the needs of transnational capital', placing 'strategic power in the hands of particular groups of men—managers and entrepreneurs'—who self-consciously manage their bodies and

emotions as well as money, and are increasingly detached from older loyalties to nation, business organisation, family and marital partners (Connell, 2005a, p. xxiii; Connell and Wood, 2005, p. 359). Drawing upon Connell's work the sociologist Joan Acker endorses this view that hegemonic masculinities are embodied in the specific characteristics of multinational business-men suggesting that we think of 'Rupert Murdoch, Phil Knight or Bill Gates'. Adding '[t]his masculinity is supported and reinforced by the ethos of the free-market, competition and a "win or die" environment. This is the masculine image of those who organize and lead the drive to global control and the opening of markets to international competition' (Acker 2004, p. 29). These men are, in Connell's account, dispositionally highly atomistic—competitive and largely distanced from social or personal commitments. They embody a neo-liberal version of an emphasized traditional masculinity, without any requirement to direct bodily strength (Connell, 2005a, pp. xxiii, 255-6; Connell, 2005b, p. 77).

Whilst hegemonic masculinity is usually presented as an ideal—there is a tendency in the scholarship to equate hegemonic masculinity with the specific characteristics of particular groups of men (such as investment bankers or CEOs)

Such a usage is no doubt understandable pedagogically and in the context of political activism, in that it gives gendered power a human face, a visceral reality, and makes the term more accessible and less abstract. All the same, the slide to dominant types of men/actual men—even if understandable and related to an attempt to give embodied materiality to the political mechanism of a legitimating cultural ideal—has problematic consequences. It is important to be able to disentangle hegemonic from merely dominant types/dominant actual men and their associated personality traits. A

senior male manager in a major accounting firm may represent a dominant masculinity in that he wields a widely accepted institutional power and may even have particular personality traits associated with that dominance, but may not necessarily be the politically legitimating cultural ideal invoked by the term hegemonic masculinity. Accountants—even those with considerable authority—are scarcely deemed the mobilising model of manliness to which all men should aspire. They may exercise power, but are not able to legitimate it. As Connell himself notes, many men who hold significant social power do not embody hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 838).

Whilst we would call upon Connell to instill a greater conceptual clarity in his useage of the term hegemonic masculinity as both an ideological mechanism and as a set of characteristics that define key individuals (see also Beasley 2008), it is nonetheless important to recognise that an important political point is being made in the recognition that these business executives embody a more 'rational' and business-minded masculinity. Notions of rationality and competitiveness transnational business masculinities are, essentially, 'economic-man' writ large (Beneria cited in Acker 2004). Such viewed are underpinned ideologically by a commitment to *laissez-faire* individualism and the centrality of the market-mechanism. Yet despite recognising the utility to be gained from a focus on transnational business masculinity, we would suggest that it is not clear why Connell is so adamant that business masculinity occupies world hegemonic status in a globalizing world, and why he regards other potential contenders—he draws attention to military and political masculinities—as of less significance in this legitimating and mobilising role. There seems at minimum here a limited engagement with the highly fractious literature on globalization.

Connell's focus on the hegemonic role of business leaders, on the primary significance of the economic in his account of a globalizing world, does not contend with those writers who might dispute this focus and by contrast propose multiple, uneven and contradictory globalizations. Mann (2001), for instance, suggests that these mixed patterns—he specifies economic, military, political and ideological patterns—mean that we are not moving toward a singular global society and that unprecedented hegemony is more characteristic of contemporary military power than economic relations (see also Peterson, 2004).

Whatever the force of different perspectives on globalization, the point is that it is not straightforward to perceive it in the way that Connell does, and hence no simple matter to claim that transnational business masculinity, a masculinity organised in relation to an essentially economic realm, is *the* hegemonic form on a world scale, legitimating men's dominance in the global gender order as a whole. Given this, why does Connell make the claim? Connell, in his global and macro historical moments, is inclined to presume that masculinity (a gender category) is to be understood by its constitution through class relations (Beasley, 2005, pp. 226-8). Connell proposes that we are witnessing a struggle between a masculinity developed in 'imperialist ventures'—based on racialised group status and violent domination—and a more recent modern masculinity based on competitive individualism and technical unemotional expertise (Connell, 2005a, pp. 80-6, 185-203).

While gender in this approach certainly gives particular characteristics to globalizing capitalism, it seems to be carried along by and within host class relations—a comparatively passive and responsive sub-structure. Gender here tends to

get subsumed within class, as it was in traditional Marxian analyses, and in the same vein class becomes shorthand for relations between men, while women's contributions to the shaping of global history seem to disappear (Beasley, 2005, pp. 226-8). Such a perspective seems curiously at odds with Connell's overriding conception of gender as a shaping force in local and global social relations. It also sits uneasily alongside Connell's assertion that hegemonic masculinity is a relational concept and his recognition that looking only at men and proceeding without including women in the analysis of gender relations is highly problematic (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 837). This is precisely a point on which Feminist analyses of global politics have proved more robust (Beasley and Elias, 2006).

Connell's framework is frequently replicated in Masculinity Studies writings, even in the work of those who are far less wedded to an economic focus in research on the politics of masculinity on a world scale (Kimmel, 2005, pp. 414-7). Yet the crucial feature of the term hegemonic masculinity is precisely that it enables the Gramscian conception of power as more multi-faceted than mere coercion, including economic coercion, and that it is not supposedly to be equated solely with economic or military dominance. Connell's term has the great advantage that encourages a creative and subtle understanding of power as constitutive, as always associated with the mobilisation of consent and complicit embodied identities. However, Connell, along with many other Masculinity Studies writers, tends to fall back into more limited, even economistic readings of hegemony when dealing with the global⁵.

We are not suggesting that the leading contender for the position of hegemonic masculinity on a world scale is not transnational business masculinity, nor are we

necessarily disputing that the other contenders are military and political. Our point here is simply to stress that the term does not actually enable these judgements at present. Broadly speaking, it is not clear how one would assess whether any particular version of masculinity has an over-arching legitimating function. Connell's highly influential, even pervasive account of hegemonic masculinity is shown in his work on globalization and the development of the global/world gender order to rest on some relatively undefined bases. There is very little information in his work on the question of analysing the crucial matter of how the *legitimation* of gendered power occurs and thus how to assess which masculinity is the hegemonic one. It is not self-evident overall how to judge which masculinity (or masculinities) might be deemed hegemonic over all others. Rather Connell, and indeed Masculinity Studies writers generally, are somewhat silent on the matter of how to demonstrate the legitimating/mobilising role that constitutes hegemonic authority and instead rely heavily on filling out their accounts of hegemonic masculinity by specification of the content of masculinities asserted to have a legitimating role—that is, specifying types of men.

Rethinking hegemonic masculinities in global politics

Our criticism is thus targeted at claims regarding the monolithic, global *hegemonic* status of a specific group of actual business*men*. Such accounts of the gendered character of globalization proceed largely without reference to women, and construct globalization as a primarily economic, uniform and indeed top-down phenomenon. But what if gendered globalization is less singular, less one-way, more complex and

nuanced than Connell's account proposes? And, what if attending only to men is insufficient? In this final section of the paper we turn to consider how Masculinity Studies scholarship on globalization might be re-framed in ways that take account of a more critically informed reading of globalization/s. We argue that such a rethinking involves a reassertion of the importance of the discursive production of globalization and a recognition of the complex/hybrid processes at stake in the politics of contemporary globalization.

Reasserting the role of discourse

We suggest in particular a more focussed characterisation of hegemonic masculinity as concerned with a *political ideal* or discourse, as an enabling mode of representation, which mobilises institutions and practices. Characterising hegemonic masculinity in relation to a narrowed meaning as a political ideal prevents a slide towards depictions of men with institutional power and instead concentrates the term upon its legitimating function, which may or may not refer to men with actual power. This suggested re-thinking of the concept of hegemonic masculinity—towards a focus upon a mobilising political ideal—may however not be acceptable to Connell or other Masculinity Studies writers like Jeff Hearn or Kenneth Clatterbaugh, who tend to display antagonism to any focus on 'the symbolic', 'representation' or 'discourses'. They adopt a form of macro sociological social constructionism, which involves dividing off 'discursive' from 'material' processes, structures, interests and practices. The division between discursive and material is depicted rather along the lines of the materialist base/superstructure metaphor—a metaphor which assumes the ultimate crucial status of activities deemed material and particularly the economic

infrastructure. 6 In this context, Connell and Messerschmidt insist that while hegemonic masculinity,

involves the formulation of cultural ideals, it should not be regarded *only* as a cultural norm. Gender relations also are constituted through *non-discursive practices*, including wage labour, violence, sexuality, domestic labour, and childcare (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 842, emphasis added).

This seems initially to be an inclusive approach, a 'not only but also' framework, in which hegemonic masculinity is identified with a discursive cultural norm but additionally with 'non-discursive' elements. However, what is important here is an ongoing inclination in Connell's approach to maintain a distinction between discursive and non-discursive—described in terms of an opposition between nonmaterial and material—alongside a prioritisation of the latter (see also Ouzgane and Coleman, 1998). Not surprisingly Connell argues in the 'Introduction to the Second Edition' of *Masculinities* (2005a), just as he did in earlier work (Connell, 2002, p. 71; Connell, 2000, pp. 20-1), that 'discursive approaches have significant limits. They give no grip on issues about economic inequality and the state' (Connell, 2005a, p. xix). No wonder, given the materialist base/superstructure presumptions evident in his depiction of 'discursive approaches', that Connell understands hegemonic masculinity in 'the world gender order as a whole' as transnational business masculinity and globalization itself in primarily economic terms. No wonder, when dealing with macro and global, his analysis tends to subsume gender within class, with class primarily depicted as relations between men.

Connell's presumption that discursive approaches are at odds with 'material' concerns may lead him to dispute our suggestion that we should re-think hegemonic masculinity as a political ideal, as a discourse. However, it is worth considering whether such a re-thinking also enables us to re-think Connell's assumptions regarding what counts. If his base/superstructure account of the separation between discursive and material and the priority accorded the latter is questionable, then not only may hegemonic masculinity be understood differently but there is no reason to presume that the global gender order is *necessarily* and monolithically legitimated by elite transnational businessmen. This is no trivial matter. For example, if materially dominant and hegemonic masculinities are not exactly the same things, this is likely to have a significant impact on the focus of political work to achieve global social justice and gender equality. In short, if these materially powerful businessmen are not the apex of the reproduction of masculine authority in an emergent world gender order, such a possibility has a significant implications for the development of counterhegemonic strategies and, relatedly, for the constitution of resistant 'network solidarities' at both national and global levels (Gould 2006). Focussing attention on the male CEOs of multinational banks may not be central to the struggle for global gender justice, and may indeed be misdirected.

Debating Connell's antagonism to 'discursive approaches', and his associated commitment to 'the material', might also lead us down another track. His usage of hegemonic masculinity—along with that of other Masculinity Studies writers—has become unnecessarily, and inadvertently, positioned in the 'first wave', of globalization scholarship and at a distance from recent developments in the field. The so-called 'first wave' of globalization scholarship rested on the assumption that

globalization is simply a fact out there, an unproblematic given, and is straightforwardly an economic phenomenon, demanding an emphasis on the multinational corporation (MNC). Similar assumptions arise in Connell's focus on MNCs and transnational businessmen—the concept of transnational business masculinity is inevitably tied, in our view, to a MNC-led economistic view of globalization. By contrast, the turn within critical political economy/globalization studies, for example, is towards approaches that stress the discursive production of globalization within the everyday practices of international politics (deGoede 2006). The important point here is that, in much of this literature, discourses are viewed as having both ideational and practical material effects (Hay and Marsh 2000). This discursive 'turn' considers the notion of globalization as a self-evidently economic imperative and the multinational firm as globalization's primary agent, not as unproblematic facts but as framed in relation to neoliberal discourses (Weldes, 2001). One (feminist) strand of this literature has focussed particular attention on unravelling how discourses of globalization constitute gender relations (Bergeron, 2001; Peterson 2004; Griffin 2007). In this context, Feminist and other critical globalization scholars expose potential shortcomings of the Masculinities writings on globalization by suggesting how these writings may take for granted and indeed reiterate assumptions about globalization and the role of MNCs that precisely require debate.

Reconsidering hegemonic masculinity as a discursive political ideal involves taking up conceptions of the discursive which are not estranged from the material world, nor discrete from it, without assuming that this amounts to a strategy of dematerialisation or a refusal of persistent even enduring systemic patterns in social relations. This kind of re-thinking of the term usefully opens up a dialogue between

Masculinity Studies and critical globalization scholars, in that the influence of transnational business masculinity may be viewed as operating at a discursive level—as a powerful ideal that has played an important role in shaping material processes associated with globalization.

The emphasis on the MNC as the primary agent of globalization that is implicit in Connell's notion of transnational business masculinity is reflective of liberal globalization scholarship which places the firm at the centre of an increasingly interdependent global economy (Elias 2004: 13). By contrast, we would suggest that it is more useful to focus on the discourses and ideas that have enabled the MNC to be viewed and constructed as the primary agent of neoliberal globalization. This is perhaps less of a criticism, than a re-conceptualising of the Masculinities Studies literature. Indeed, the MNC can be viewed as an important site for the production of ideas relating to hegemonic masculinity. However, it is important initially to identify how and why the firm is understood as so central to the current phase of (economic) globalization. This requires that we investigate globalization as a discourse (one that is rooted in notions of the innate rationality and progressive nature of the market economy—Block, 1990) and not just as a straight forward economic phenomenon. An interesting contrast can, therefore be made between Masculinity Studies scholarship and a Feminist literature that has emphasised the discursive production of economic globalization in framing gender relations (Bergeron, 2001). For example, deGoede's work has traced the emergence of gendered discourses in the seventeenth century that sought to construct the realm of global finance in terms of its 'innate' rationality (rather than as an 'irrational' realm of gambling). deGoede employs the metaphor 'mastering lady credit' to describe these processes (that is, how the irrational and

'feminine' was reconstructed as a rational realm of international business practice)

(deGoede, 2005). Similar themes can be found within the work of scholars such as

Ling and Han (1998), who identify how the fall-out from the 1997 Asian financial

crisis has been associated with a 'feminization' of 'irrational' Asian business practice

('crony capitalism') and the need for the opening up of Asian markets to rational

('masculine') global business interests.

In thinking through how hegemonic masculinities are discursively produced, we also need to open up space for thinking about the discursive production of femininities. Although the performance of these gendered discourses is mediated by other forms of social identity—specifically race, religion, ethnicity and nationality amongst others—the production of transnational business masculinities are intimately linked to ideas concerning docile and nimble fingered 'productive femininity' (Elias 2008). In this context, we can point to the role of the firm in the production of gender identities centred around notions of the 'docile' factory 'girl' or 'flexible femininity' (Salzinger, 2004; Elias, 2005; Freeman, 2000).

Reframing globalization within multiple contexts

A strength of critical globalization scholarship in IPE is that it points to how globalization is not a singular, universal or uniform process. Much of the early globalization literature viewed globalization as 'the developing outcome of some historical process' (Rosenberg, 2000). The problem with viewing globalising as a uniform and all encompassing process is highlighted by scholars who argue that views of globalization as inevitable and as something that gradually pervades every aspects of human activity are misguided (Amoore et al, 1997).

With this in mind we need to consider how globalization is not a straightforward top-down process and, as recent writings within both critical IPE and human geography have sought to stress, pay attention to the experience of globalization located in everyday life and practice (a theme to which we return below). However, the literature associated with the term hegemonic masculinity here proves to be somewhat problematic. Current approaches in Masculinity Studies retain the notion of 'hegemonic masculinity' as a singular monolith. Connell and Messerschmidt in their recent clarification of the term (2005, p. 845) reassert the singular character of hegemonic masculinity, as precisely about that which is deemed the pinnacle of a pyramid of masculinities. Transnational business masculinity is presented as the hegemonic form for the world as a whole. Yet it may be argued, that the political legitimating function of hegemonic masculinity is unlikely to be left to one idealised model (such as transnational business masculinity) alone. Hegemonic masculinity, even at the local level, may be seen as hierarchical and plural. It seems even more likely that there is not one single hegemon on the global scale. Whilst it is, of course, important to look at global processes/structures and reveal how they are gendered (or more specifically masculinized), it is also necessary to investigate the relationship between the local and the global and to think through how everyday practices and relationships are reconfigured (or not). Indeed we suggest in this context that the term hegemonic does not require an indivisible mono-type, Hegemonic masculinity, at least in the global setting, needs to be demassified.

But how do we start to conceptualise how globalized gendered discourses touch down in local spaces? If these discourses cannot be understood in terms of the spread of a singular monolithic model, how might they be conceived? Perhaps the answer to this question lies in making sure that the state remains central to our analysis of the relationship between the global and the local in the politics of global restructuring. Indeed, we cannot even begin to think about how globalizing masculinities 'touch down' without a focus on this key institution. It goes without saying that Connell's early work incorporates a specific focus on the state—after all this was a major preoccupation in his earlier work (Connell, 1990). However, it should also be noted that in his writings on globalization, Connell to a certain extent buys into arguments concerning the 'decline of the state' in the face of (economic) globalization. Hence, he asserts that,

[g]lobalization is best understood as centering on a set of linked economic changes characteristic of the current stage of capitalism. The main changes are the expansion of worldwide markets, the restructuring of local economies under pressure of the world economy, and the creation of new economic institutions (Connell, 2005b, pp. 72-3).

Where the state is discussed, the argument is made that the corrosive influence of global capitalism is undermining the power of states to implement welfare-oriented policies that may have positive effects in terms of gender equity. In this sense, the rather benign (Western European) state is being undermined by an aggressive masculinist capitalism (Connell, 2005b, pp. 83-84).

Two concerns can be raised here. First, such a view fails to recognise the role that states themselves have played in constructing the current phase of global capitalism. As numerous scholars have pointed out, it was state policies that created the deregulation of finance and investment that enables transnational flows of finance

and industrial capital. The notion of the 'neoliberal' or 'regulatory' state is widely employed within a range of critical political economy writings (written by both IPE scholars and geographers) in order to point to the extent to which the globalization of (neoliberal) capitalism has depended on specific state formations (Jayasuria 2005; Smith & Rochovská 2007: 1171). Second, such a perspective obscures the extent to which states and practices of 'nation-building' are themselves deeply gendered. We should pay particular attention to Rai's 'caution against nostalgia for the centralized nation-state among critics of globalization' (Rai, 2002, p. 199).

Aihwa Ong's work (2000) provides a very interesting way into thinking about the role of the state within a gender framework. Importantly, her writings focus on the role of the state in non-Western contexts and illustrates how the relationship between global capitalist production and localized gendered regimes (of production and reproduction) are effectively mediated by the state. Focussing on the East Asian context, Ong develops a model of 'graduated sovereignty' in reference to the shifting relations between market, state and society manifested in government policies that act to re-shape the relationship between specific populations of people (marked by intersecting gender and ethnic identities) and the global market economy. The differential treatment of segments of the population takes place at the same time as the development of a 'state-transnational network', which includes the ceding of certain aspects of sovereignty to certain multinational corporations operating in export processing zones. In this sense, the state is undergoing a process of transformation that reflects an engagement with the global, but this is a transformation that is deeply rooted and embedded in the local socio-political context.

As Ong's model correctly identifies, gender identities do not exist in isolation but intersect with other forms of social identity, other forms of identity that like gender are often embedded in local societies through specific state policies. This is a point that must be emphasised in thinking through the gendered global-local nexus. Indeed, the multiple spaces and sightings of 'hybrid' globalization emphasised in the work of scholars such as Amin (2002) are deeply gendered, racialised and classed. Thus, a focus on hegemonic masculinity provides just one way through which we can understand the gendered politics of globalization.

Connell and other Masculinity Studies writers characterise and employ the term hegemonic masculinity within the global context in ways that produce a range of significant problems. The emphasis on an economically-deterministic view of globalization is at odds with the shift towards thinking about the discursive production of globalization that is seen in feminist studies of globalization that have focussed on the discursive production of gender identities within the contemporary global economy. Hegemonic Masculinity provides an important entry point into investigating the gendered character of globalization but, we would argue, only if it is understood as an important discursive ideal, a political mechanism mobilising legitimation for globalizing gender inequities, rather than simply as a rather unreflective way of recognising elite groups of men and their particular personality traits in contemporary globalized spaces.

Conclusion

Masculinity Studies writers, and Connell in particular, have made crucial contributions to gender analysis at a local, national level, and at the level of the global

their work alerts us to the ways in which supposedly gender-neutral global processes are linked to the politics of masculinity. Nevertheless, we suggest that what is needed is a re-thinking of some of the assumptions within Masculinity Studies writings which give rise to overly economistic, insufficiently nuanced, and uniform top-down analyses of gendered globalization. In a sense, therefore, what we are doing in this paper is calling for a greater engagement between Masculinity Studies writings on globalization and what Amin and Palan have labelled a 'critical IPE'—that is, an IPE perspective that is 'capable of grasping the orderings and practices that are intersubjective, historicized, socially-embedded and non-cognitive' (2001, p. 560)

It is helpful to reconsider hegemonic masculinity as a discursive ideal that is not singular or monolithic, while also taking up conceptions of the discursive which are not distanced from the material world and instead actively shape it. This would require writers like Connell to reassess his doubts about the possibilities of at least some forms of postmodern thinking. However, such a reassessment, we suggest, works to overcome an existing unhelpful distance between Masculinity Studies analyses and Feminist and other critical globalization scholarship, encourages more nuanced accounts of the global gender order, that may well produce more integrated and relational approaches to understanding how globalization impacts upon both men and women around the world.

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31

¹ In brief, the term 'Masculinity Studies' refers to a subfield of Gender Studies and has a concern with critical analysis of masculinities. This entails a focus on justice in relation to gender and sexuality arrangements. Unlike men's rights approaches, for example, Masculinity Studies writers decidedly do not take up the cause of masculinity. These writers do not aim to shore up masculinity and its existing

social status, but rather engage in questioning gender hierarchy (see Beasley, 2005, chapters 16 and 17).

² In using the term the 'third wave' to describe recent IPE scholarship on globalization we follow Bruff's (2005) definition, which draws upon work by Hay and March (2000). Bruff suggests that IPE scholarship can be understood in terms of a series of waves. The first wave (of which Ohmae's work is typical) involved the acceptance of economic globalization as fundamentally transforming the political world; the second offers a 'sceptical' take on globalization. The third wave has brought together an interest in the relationship between globalization and the state with a strongly social constructivist (and, increasingly, poststructuralist (deGoede 2006)) understanding of the role of the ideational/discursive in international politics. In this sense, this third wave is a critical perspective that employs ideas associated with the post-positivist turn in International Relations. At the heart of this approach lies a concern to identify globalization as a powerful discourse that plays a role in constructing the world in which we live.

³ Most notably, among the leading writers in this sub-field of Gender Studies are RW Connell, Michael Kimmell and Jeff Hearn. See Beasley (2005) for an overview of some of these leading critical Masculinity Studies authors.

⁴ We have used the masculine pronoun 'he' throughout this paper to refer to R. W. Connell because the works discussed in the paper were written by Connell before Connell's transition to a transgender positioning and hence when use of this pronoun was appropriate.

⁵ Interesting parallels can be drawn here with Jessop and Sum's concern that Neo-Gramscian IPE scholarship has tended to overemphasise the material at the expense of notions of social construction and discourse. Their argument for a 'cultural political economy' perspective draws upon Gramsci's notions of hegemony to develop a critical perspective on globalization that avoids this problem by pointing to how Gramsci's analysis demonstrates the 'coconstitution and coevolution of the material and discursive' (Jessop and Sum 2006: p. 157).

⁶ Connell, 2005a, pp. xviii-xix, 72-3; Connell, 2002, p. 71; Hearn, 1998; Hearn, 1996; Hearn and Collinson, 1994; Clatterbaugh, 1998.

⁷ See endnote 2 above.