

Volume 4, Number 2

Hipatia Press

www.hipatiapress.com



Articles

Black Masculinity and Plantation Patriarchy in Margaret Walker's
Jubilee - Agnieszka Łobodziec123

Queering Catholic Fundamentalism: On Liking Theology in
 Masculinities Research - Kevin J. Burke144

Crossing Gender Boundaries or Challenging Masculinities? Female
 Combatants in the Kenya Defence Forces' (KDF) War against Al-
 Shabaab Militants – Mokua Ombati163

La Construcción de una Agenda de Políticas Públicas de Género de los
 Hombres en México: Prolegómenos - Juan Carlos Ramírez Rodríguez,
 Norma Celina Gutiérrez de la Torre & Lizett Guadalupe Cázares
 Hernández186

Reviews

Alternative Masculinities for a Changing World – Liviu Catalin Mara
211

Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages –Miguel Ángel
 Pulido213

Instructions for authors, subscriptions and further details:

<http://mcs.hipatiapress.com>

Black Masculinity and Plantation Patriarchy in Margaret Walker's *Jubilee*

Agnieszka Łobodziec¹

1) Univerisity of Zielona Gora, Poland

Date of publication: June 21st, 2015

Edition period: June 2015-October 2015

To cite this article: Łobodziec , A. (2015). Black Masculinity and Plantation Patriarchy in Margaret Walker's *Jubilee*. *Masculinities and Social Change*, 4(2), 123-143. doi: 10.17583/MCS.2015.1413

To link this article: <http://doi.org/10.17583/MCS.2015.1413>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

The terms and conditions of use are related to the Open Journal System and to [Creative Commons Attribution License \(CC-BY\)](#).

Black Masculinity and Plantation Patriarchy in Margaret Walker's *Jubilee*

Agnieszka Łobodziec
Univerisity of Zielona Gora, Poland

Abstract

In *Jubilee*, Margaret Walker depicts plantation patriarchy as a racial and gendered context that coerces black men to redefine their masculine conceptualizations. The fictitious slave plantation represents the system which commodifies and divides black people “into those with skills [...], field hands, ‘breeding females,’ concubines, and children” (Nichols, 1972, p. 10). This portrayal of slave plantation is congruent with historically documented circumstances, when “Much of [the slave] labor was gender- or age- specific” (Ash, 2010, p. 20). As far as the position of black men is concerned, ascribed a subordinate status to that of white masters, overseers, and servants, both free and enslaved black men begin to imbibe patriarchal mindset and redefine their own masculine prowess. As Margaret Walker portrays, this response to oppressive plantation patriarchy effects multifarious black male postures, ranging from resisting and self-asserting warriors to humiliated and silenced victims.

Keywords: plantation patriarchy, gender roles, black men, emasculation, masculine affirmations

Masculinidad Negra y Patriarcado de Plantación en *Jubilee* de Margaret Walker

Agnieszka Łobodziec
Univerisity of Zielona Gora, Poland

Resumen

En *Jubilee*, Margaret Walker muestra el patriarcado de plantación como un contexto desmarcado por el género y la raza que obliga al hombre negro a redefinir sus conceptos de lo masculino. La plantación de esclavos en esta obra de ficción representa al sistema que mercantiliza y divide a los negros “en quienes tienen habilidades [...], mano de obra para el campo, ‘hembras reproductoras’, concubinas y niños” (Nichols, 1972, p. 10). Este retrato de la plantación de esclavos se corresponde con las circunstancias que han sido documentadas en la historia, cuando “buena parte de la mano de obra [esclava] se especificaba según el género o la edad” (Ash, 2010, p. 20). En lo que respecta a la posición del hombre negro, la cual estaba subordinada a la de los amos blancos, la de los capataces y la de los sirvientes, tanto los hombres negros libres como los esclavos comenzaron a absorber la mentalidad patriarcal y a redefinir su propio coraje masculino. Como lo plantea Margaret Walker, esta respuesta al patriarcado opresor de las plantaciones determina múltiples facetas de las posturas del hombre negro, que van desde el guerrero desafiante y dominante hasta la víctima humillada y silenciada.

Palabras clave: patriarcado de plantación, roles de género, hombre negro, castración, afirmaciones masculinas

Beell Hooks labels the peculiar system of slave plantations as plantation patriarchy (2004, p.1). The slave plantation reconstructed by Margaret Walker in *Jubilee* indeed testifies to the plantation's patriarchal nature. Black male characters' responses to their inferior status encompass negotiation of twofold conceptualization of patriarchy, which can be divided into oppressive and benevolent expressions of masculine dominance. The former entails violent, humiliating exercise of white male power; the latter involves a caring, protective posture. The White slaveholders and overseers function as the dominant patriarchal subjects oppressive towards their objects: black men and women. On the other hand, in relation to their own wives and families, white men seek to act as benevolent patriarchs. Black men, in turn, are unable to fulfill patriarchal roles within the confining circumstances. Nevertheless, despite a general sense of powerlessness, some black men still seek to establish a harmonious family life, founded on a gender role division.

Oppressive Patriarchal Nature of Slave Plantation

Margaret Walker in *Jubilee* portrays slave plantation as a structure that secures white men's power and control over human merchandise embodied by black enslaved people. The white master, J. Morris Dutton, epitomizes a white capitalist, patriarchal slaveholder, who affirms his alleged superiority over black men.

First of all, J. Morris Dutton's father inculcates in him capitalist, oppressive, patriarchal ideals, which constitute a fundamental point of departure for growth towards manhood. The Dutton men aspire to the Southern Euro-American conventions that "delineated models of the ways in which women and men lived as members of a gender" (Fox-Genovese, 1988, p. 196). According to these models, a man, "the cavalier or gentleman, was strong, masterful, quick to anger, ready with his pistol, sometimes too fond of liquor, but, withal, chivalrous and protective of those who accepted the legitimacy of his claim to command" (*ibid.*, p. 197). Correspondingly, as a young man, Morris particularly enjoys hunting, a typically masculine activity. In later years, he reminisces about the "good times he had [...] when he was just a slip of a lad and his father took

him coon hunting at night with the hounds, slaves, patter-rollers, and all!” (Walker, 1999, p. 33). Hunting offers an opportunity of sharing time with his socially influential and recognized father, which supposedly increases Morris’ masculine self-esteem. It is also an occasion where the slaveholder-to-be is shown the inferior position of black slaves, who are regarded on the hunting trip as being on the same level as dogs, or lower, when one thinks of dogs as man’s best ‘friends.’ The most powerful and, expectedly, wisest man in charge of hunting is his father. Moreover, supposedly, through hunting, the young boy gets accustomed to weaponry, a feature associated with masculine toughness and power.

Another source of Morris’ pride lies in his father’s historic and awarded involvement in the American Revolution, where he fought with George Washington. Afterwards, his father was awarded a considerable honorarium for his service as a model soldier, which presumably enabled him to expand his own father’s plantation. Finally, as an heir of his “mother’s holdings and his father’s father’s land” (*ibid.*, p. 34), John Morris becomes one of the most affluent planters. Therefore, having been raised in a realm constructed along patriarchal role models, John regards the maintenance of the patriarchal tradition within his household as his inherited duty. At one point, while looking at his ancestors’ portraits, he thinks, “Every time I look at them I think they are telling me to uphold the honor of this house. I have inherited their responsibility just as my son will inherit the honor of this house when I am dead” (*ibid.*, p. 182). Attaining honor means to hold on one’s power and dominance. Slavery, as reconstructed in the novel *Jubilee*, facilitates the realization of this patriarchal objective.

Above all, Morris attains a respectable position in the broader society as the owner of a prosperous plantation. His considerable assets assure political career. He knows he possesses “enough slaves to give him a large number of votes. For every five slaves he could count three votes” (*ibid.*, p. 32). His involvement in politics also excites his wife, Big Missy, who hopes to socialize with more dignified persons. “Perhaps now that John was coming up in the political world their social life would be greatly expanded” (*ibid.*, p. 73). According to her expectations, influential white men gather at Morris’ house in order to converse on “the news and the crops and the weather, their slaves, and the politics of the country, the state, and the nation” (*ibid.*, p. 75). At social meetings, the white men also

express mutual male solidarity; “After dinner, over brandy and cigars, with the ladies once more out of earshot, the men began congratulating John Morris Dutton on his recent election to the state legislature and joking with him over his political future” (*ibid.*, p. 77). Further, since active engagement in political life determines one’s masculine power, at the age of fifty-seven, Morris takes pride in his fifteen-year-long membership “in the House of Representatives of the Georgia Legislature” (*ibid.*, p. 177).

White male political engagement also helps to maintain the sanctioned slavery system. In pursuit of personal and political objectives, white slaveholders continue to regard black slaves as objects. At the gatherings within the Morris’ home, they reference their black slaves as inferior beings, a property that has to be controlled and cared for and that is expected to expand profits. One of the men states, “Corn as fine as any in the country, more than enough to feed all my mules and nigras through the winter” (*ibid.*, p. 76). Another man points out, “I haven’t had much trouble this year, but a lot of my nigras have been sick and sometimes last winter as many as eight and ten a day were out of the fields, laid up and couldn’t work, or *wouldn’t* work, I don’t know which” (*ibid.*, p. 75). A third man calls a forty-five-year old black male slave a ‘boy.’ Anyway, most men, including John Morris, complain about their black slaves’ illness, thus their inability to efficiently perform arduous tasks. They do not express any concern regarding the causations of the slaves’ diseases and the potential threat to their health or life. Moreover, the white males seek ultimate power over the black slaves, which, they believe, is the confirmation of the natural bifurcation between the so-called master race and the slave race. Accordingly, Judge Ezra Winston contends,

I’m afraid we are in for some more battles on the national issues and for the protection of our natural rights here in the state of Georgia [...] Such as our sacred way of life, our agricultural system, classic culture, with the natural divisions of mankind into servile and genteel races (*ibid.*, p. 79).

All things considered, John Morris holds gatherings of influential white men because he is aware of their political power, which can secure his career. “The election was a mere formality; of course he had won. His guests tonight, together with himself, were the richest planters in central

Georgia and they controlled, both politically and financially, a third of the state” (*ibid.*, p. 78).

Apart from being political, the oppressive plantation patriarchy had also a sexual dimension as the historian Darlene Clark Hine observes,

The scholarly consensus is that at least 58 percent of all slave women between the ages of fifteen and thirty were sexually abused by white males. Rape had the added advantage of producing new slaves and thus enriching masters while satisfying white men’s carnal desires. Perhaps the most daunting task confronting black women historians is to persuade students of slavery to see it as more than an economic institution. Slavery was also a sexual institution, and it was white male control of black women as sexual beings that shored up the patriarchal dimension of the system. (1996, p. 36)

There are a number of reasons for this brutality. First, there is the sexual deviancy of white men conditioned by racialized fetishization. In *Jubilee*, John Morris utilizes his slave Hetta as an object to satisfy his sexual lust. He remembers “how she had looked growing up [...] Her small young breasts tilted up, and even her slight hips and buttocks were set high on her body” (Walker, 1999 p. 8). Secondly, by abusing a black woman sexually, the young man “with hot blood in his veins” (*ibid.*, p. 7) can satisfy his sexual proclivities before marrying a white lady. He develops such stance under the influence of his father, who once instructed him that “it was better for a young man of quality to learn life by breaking in a young nigger wench than it was for him to spoil a pure white virgin girl. And he had wanted Hetta, so his father gave her to him, and he had satisfied his lust with her” (*ibid.*, p. 8-9). Later, John Morris marries Salina, a young lady from Savanna. He discovers she is sexually frigid as she considers procreation the only proper instance of sexual intercourse, something she does not want to experience again after birthing two children. At this point, Salina epitomizes the Southern gentlewoman, expected to be “innocent of any hint of hunger, temper, or passion” (Fox-Genovese, 1988, p. 197). In such circumstances, in order to satisfy his passion, John Morris continues to force himself upon Hetta. The extramarital affair not only brings sexual satisfaction but it also serves to reproduce the slave labor force. Therefore, when John Morris fathers children from his black slave, he does not

formally acknowledge parenthood. Instead, he humiliates a black slave man whom he appoints as the children's surrogate father. He does not find fathering children of the black woman particularly troublesome. "When she began having babies, it was no problem. He gave her Jake for a husband and that was that" (Walker, 1999, p. 9). Engaging his patriarchal power, he decides on the nature and structure of slaves' familial life.

Another means of maintaining white patriarchal dominance is participation in the Civil War. First of all, in sync with "the citizen-soldier ideal" (Parker, 2009 p. 67), most southern white men regard enlistment as the affirmation of masculinity. For instance, Johnny, John Morris Dutton's son, takes pride in his graduation from West Point, becomes interested in politics, enlists into the cavalry, and believes his engagement in the Civil War is his mission. He views all the aforementioned undertakings and achievements as evidence of his masculinity. On the battlefield, Johnny reveals an obsession with masculine power.

In fact, the flashing guns exhilarated him and he felt the blood racing hot in his face. He came alive on the battlefield. He always kept a cool head, and he was alert in all his movements. In a way, he felt himself unusually fortunate. He was born into a class of men who naturally took the role of leadership in this war (Walker, 1999, p. 216).

He sees his martial abilities and expertise with weapons as traits of his southern patriarchal heritage.

Another class of white men that plays a significant role within the plantation patriarchal order is composed of the overseers. In *Jubilee*, the white overseer, Grimes, seeks to exercise power and to establish a prosperous household. Above all, his dominance over slaves is a way by which he affirms his higher status over at least one group of the social ladder. He belongs to the lowest white social class, often referred to as "poor white trash," or "po buckra" (*ibid.*, p. 60). The group inhabits an area of unproductive, hilly land, relatively far from the slaveholders' mansion. Actually, Grimes lives "in circumstances not much better than the slaves. His house [is] slightly better than the Negro Quarter houses on the plantation, and his wife, Janey, [is] only an indifferent housekeeper" (*ibid.*, p. 60). Nevertheless, Grimes hopes to better himself, "to have a farm of his

own” (*ibid.*, p. 27) and to spend more time fishing and hunting as the plantation owner does.

In the meantime, the slave plantation offers an arena where the overseer has an opportunity to exercise masculine power through violent oppression of black people. “His job of driving niggers kept him on the run” (*ibid.*, p. 60). Several instances evidence excessive violence. Firstly, when he discovers that meat has disappeared from a smokehouse, he becomes homicidal. He says, “If I could only find the nigger that done it, I’d killed him” (*ibid.*, p. 63). He examines the slaves’ cabins at lengths, searching for suspects and “threatening to beat every nigger involved and shoot the ringleader” (*ibid.*, p. 64). Secondly, Grimes brutally kills the elderly man named Grandpa Tom, who objects to using the plantation master’s well-bred horses as mules in the fields. He also helps in murdering other elderly slaves, Uncle Plato and Uncle Esau, whom he commands to labor in the fields. He regards them as useless because they collapse after less than one hour of picking cotton in scorching heat. Maliciously, Grimes forces them to enter the old house that Grimes’ guards set fire to. Without investigation, the death of the men is referred to as “accidental” (*ibid.*, p. 135).

To sum up, in *Jubilee*, Margaret Walker envisions the manner in which white slaveholders and overseers commodify and emasculate black enslaved men. They disregard the humanity of black slaves, whose only role is to serve as an efficient labor force.

Free black men’s response to plantation patriarchy

In *Jubilee*, Margaret Walker depicts the influence of plantation patriarchy on both free and enslaved black men. The manner in which the male characters respond to patriarchal practices depends on the extent to which they realize their capability of fulfilling patriarchal roles and, by this means, affirm their masculinity. It is obvious that a free black man manifests more hope, positive self-esteem, and sense of self-sufficiency than enslaved black men. Nevertheless, the legal system and white supremacy aim to impede both free and enslaved black men’s independent agency.

The character Randall Ware epitomizes a free black man who aspires to realize patriarchal roles. Nevertheless, the established slavocracy and oppressive patriarchy delimit his freedom. First of all, white patriarchs find

black male freedom threatening and undesirable. They fear disruption of the racially hierarchical order on the plantations, which free black men could initiate through encouraging black slaves' resistance, rebellion, and even insurrection. For this reason, white men approach Randall Ware's employment at the Duttons' plantation as a blacksmith with reservation.

Rarely, indeed, did a free Negro come on the place to work. The overseers were afraid of the trouble free Negroes might make among the slaves, but there had not been a blacksmith on the place for a long time, so this man had been brought in from the nearby village where he owned his own smithy (*ibid.*, p. 87).

In fear of the free black man's disruption of the plantation order, whites implement certain laws that delimit the black man's freedom, as the following fragment relates:

As a free man in Georgia, Randall Ware had his troubles. The law was strict in the surveillance of all blacks, and the free black man was only slightly better off than the slaves. His movements were proscribed and all his actions defined. His legal status was flimsy because he must always have a white guardian. This white guardian must be a property owner of some means, and technically, the free man was attached to the land of his white guardian in much the same manner of a serf or slave. His status was also similar to that of an indentured servant whose time was not his own. (*ibid.*, p. 92)

Quasi-independent, Randall Ware has to have a white guardian. Fortunately, he develops a friendly relationship with a white man, who is an abolitionist and who even "willed this young black friend much of his property" (*ibid.*, p. 91). On the other hand, although he becomes the owner of considerable property, owning a piece of land, a shop, and a workshop, the state financially benefits from his status and from his income because, every year, it compels him to "renew his free papers by paying an exorbitant tax which increased annually" (*ibid.*, p. 92). Additionally, he has to have a certain amount of income in order to register as a free man and has a "difficulty in owning firearms [similarly to] a slave or an Indian" (*ibid.*, p. 92). All things considered, a free black man does not possess the same privileges as a free white man does. As a matter of fact, he is a

second-class citizen, who has to act according to discriminating rules forced upon him by white men.

Another area where a black man's freedom is limited is in regard to family life. No matter how much he loves an enslaved black woman, he is not allowed to freely marry her, because she belongs to her white master. Paradoxically, Vyry is a daughter of her slave master John Morris Dutton, a free white man. Nevertheless, she does not inherit her father's status. According to the law, she is "tied to slavery by a black mother" (*ibid.*, p. 93). Randall Ware knows that "as a mulatto, by Georgia law she could be free to marry a free man with her master's consent, that is, if she could get that consent" (*ibid.*, p. 93). In such circumstances, Randall has only two alternatives: either to attempt to buy Vyry from her master or to abscond with her. He realizes the former will be very difficult, if not impossible, and the latter would be illegal. Seeking to independently fulfill the role of benevolent patriarch, initially he does not consider fleeing with Vyry. With considerable money at his disposal, he hopes to purchase her.

He reassured himself that he could be confident that gold would buy anything on the market. His money had always been powerful enough to buy anything he wanted. Surely it would be powerful enough to buy the object of his heart's dearest desire (*ibid.*, p. 93).

Unfortunately, against his expectations, Vyry's master does not want to sell her. Further, he faces another dilemma engendered by white plantation patriarchy, which deprives him of the right to formally claim paternity to a child whose mother is a slave. "Now they would have a child in the spring and this child would not be free either. This child would belong to Marster" (*ibid.*, p. 141). No matter how much Randall and Vyry try to break free, Vyry's white master asserts his power over the black family. When Vyry asks Morris for permission to marry a free black man, he immediately reproaches her, claiming ownership of Vyry and her child. Infuriated, he exclaims,

Getting a child by you don't make him own you nor own the child. I own you, and I own your unborn child. When you ask me to let you marry a free-issue nigra you ask me by the law of the state of

Georgia to set you, a mulatto woman, free, and that's a mighty lot to ask (*ibid.*, p. 144).

Therefore, the law places Randall Ware in a subordinate position as husband and father of his enslaved wife and child. It is the white man who is the “master of his situation, and he knew it” (*ibid.*, p. 145). Afterwards, Randall Wares’ “own position became more dangerous and more insecure. There were loud, open threats against the free black man, and the threats to his freedom [...] Georgia was considering a law to regulate free men” (*ibid.*, p. 153). One day Randall has to flee the South.

Enslaved black man's mute response to emasculating plantation patriarchy

In Margaret Walker's *Jubilee*, the character of Jake represents a subjugated, helpless black enslaved man, unable to resist white oppressors. He does not have the power over his family life, over which he would like to act as a benevolent patriarch. First of all, his slave master chooses an enslaved black woman as a spouse for him, determining his marital status. Jake is given Hattie after his master Morris John Dutton has sired children with her. Since Dutton does not want to formally recognize paternity to the children, he selects a black enslaved man as their surrogate father. This undertaking has another humiliating dimension. Jake opines, “Marster had broke her in, and then ‘give her to me’” (*ibid.*, p. 14). According to patriarchal conventions, the black man should have sexually initiated his wife. The white male usurps this convention as he regards the black man's wife as an object of his own sexual lust. The abuse is not only premarital but it also continues when Jake and Hattie are married. The master's intervention into Jake's marital life constitutes a tremendous emotional challenge. At one time, Jake feels a “bitter dry taste in his mouth” (*ibid.*, p. 14) when he finds out that the white enslaver visits Hetta, while Jake labors in the field. At another time, he feels devalued, suspecting his wife might consider “herself too good for him” (*ibid.*, p. 14) because of her forced concubinage with the white master. Therefore, not only is he a husband deprived of his right to oversee his family life but also he is continuously besought by conflicting emotions.

Secondly, Jake cannot assert his manhood as the legitimate father of his own and those of his wife's children. One reason is the fact that his wife gives some of the children away to the white enslaver, who does not express any fatherly concern about them but regards them just as additions to his slave free labor force. Thus, the master has the right to sell them at any time. This literary portrayal alludes to the actual menacing circumstances surrounding the black family, in which "Few slave children ever knew their fathers or enjoyed the love and care of both parents" (Nichols, 1972, p. 15). Knowing this, no wonder then that Jake refrains from expressing his feelings towards the children, not to mention future plans concerning them. His speechlessness and seeming disaffection are a kind of survival strategy. Deeper emotional engagements would be unendurable in a situation where he does not have the right to bring up his own offspring.

As a result of emotional repression and the sense of emasculation, Jake remains silent in a number of humiliating, painful, and helpless circumstances. When, at the age of twenty-nine, Hetta dies after birthing her fifteenth child, Jake says "nothing, as usual, and Marster only laugh[s]" (Walker, 1999, p. 6). While most slaves stand around Hetta's bed, Jake remains in a corner, "where he could look behind the quilt" (*ibid.*, p. 11). Actually, Hetta's intense suffering affects him deeply and he walks out of the cabin. The only thing he can utter is "a terrible groan" (*ibid.*, p. 13). He feels like withdrawing entirely from the death scene. "He wanted to go off alone in the woods or work in the fields and not be here when Hetta died" (*ibid.*, p. 14). On the whole, Jake's silent withdrawal evidences awareness of an inferior status to that of his white master, something he cannot oppose. He is a dehumanized and emasculated man, as the following passage relates:

Jake's path seldom crossed Marster's. He stayed out of his way as much as possible, but if by chance they ever came face to face, Marster laughed and slapped Jake's back and talked down to his slave, Jake, like he did to one of his good hound dogs. Jake hated Marster and despised himself and looked at Hetta and got mad and evil. But that was the end of it. He never dared say anything or do anything about it. (*ibid.*, p. 14-15)

Further, the fusion of pent-up rage, self-contempt, and hopelessness renders emasculated Jake strangely indifferent towards his status of 'property,' a thing belonging to his master. He ironically contends, "Well, now she is dying, and they'll send me away [...]. Guess in a way I am glad to get away from here. Marster's always said he'll get a fair price for a good stud like me" (*ibid.*, p. 15). Jake is aware that after Hetta's death his master has no more use for him and he is going to be sold away. The only thing that temporarily troubles him is his son's future. He inquires, "What would they do with his helpless black child then" (*ibid.*, p. 14). Thus, whatever thoughts cross Jake's mind, they express the sense of helplessness and hopelessness of a black enslaved man, unable to affirm his manhood and humanity on a white plantation.

Other instances of the silent response of black males to white male oppression relate to the enslaved men's inability to express rage due to paralyzing fear. From a very young age, black men are forced to repress their contempt towards the white male brutality, which is utilized as a means to secure the enslaved men's submission and obedience towards their white oppressors. Emasculated slave boys stand numb while the black woman Lucy is severely whipped, as punishment for attempting to run away. The black boys are just "lounging around with solemn expressions on their faces" (*ibid.*, p. 113), while the tortured black woman is "twitching all over and foaming at the mouth" (*ibid.*). Further, when the overseer Grimes orders the guard, using a piece of heated iron, to burn the letter "R," which stands for runaway slave, on Lucy's face, the slave boys "tremble in terror" (*ibid.*, p. 114) and cry out, "Mister Grimes I feels awful sick to my stomach!" (*ibid.*). At the same time, the black men know that they do not possess the power to protect the black woman, because the slave master, overseer, and guards have the ultimate, unquestionable authority over them.

More horrendous than torture, the lynching of black women renders the paralyzed black men speechless. Paradoxically, what the black slaves regard as horrific white masters approach as festive. The slaveholders arrange the lynching of two black women sentenced for murder on the fourth of July to celebrate national Independence Day. They order their cooks to prepare plentiful food since the hanging is going to be the peak of the picnic. The slaves, on the other hand, wonder, "How you reckon we will swallow over a hanging?" (*ibid.*, p. 119). Interestingly, it is predominantly

white men who are most excited about the execution. “Up in the tress were perched a number of whites, chiefly boys and young men who heckled the crowd, calling out obscenities and insulting jokes” (*ibid.*). When it comes to slave owning families, many of them are “represented by the men only” (*ibid.*). The terrified black people remain silent. The authorities in charge of the execution are also white males. They approach the death scene as a board of dignified patriarchs.

Exactly on the stroke of twelve noon the judge came out in his black robes and with him the preacher, also in black robes, and the two women prisoners in chains between their guards [...] With them also were county officials. The hangman sat like a hawk, perched on a stool, also wearing the blackest black (*ibid.*, p. 120-121).

They hope the execution will be an effective warning directed to other black slaves who plan on insurrection, poisoning, or any other violent act against their masters. Indeed, all the black people are “frightened and sickened out of their wits” (*ibid.*, p. 125) by the view of two black women hanging’ one “throttled with her eyes popping and bulging and her tongue forced out and hanging in plain view of the crowd” (*ibid.*, p. 124). While black children scream and their mothers faint in response to the barbaric executions, black men exhibit peculiarly paralyzing postures of insanity, as “on the faces of some of the men and boys there was an unnatural look, neither human nor sane, a look of pleasurable excitement, a naked look of thrills born from cruel terror” (*ibid.*, p. 125). The black men’s silent response results from a sense of shock and awe. They know they cannot aid the women, who, having committed the act or not, are seen by slaves as models of resistance to the slavery’s brutality. They feel incapable of fighting the white men who refer to the women as unforgivable sinners and “black bitches” (*ibid.*, p. 124). With their rights abrogated by Black Codes “tightening the control of master over slave” (*ibid.*, p. 49), they can only watch, as they are stunned into silence by the horror before them.

In summary, the characters who do not actively oppose white oppression, represent black men who are overwhelmed by the emasculating system of slavery, which inculcates within them the conviction that they are socially inferior. “This is what the idea of race achieved. In the situation the

idea of race did not exist merely to effect a separation between peoples; it did this incident to its major function of control” (Thompson, 1975, p. 116). In the process of ascribing certain, opposing, features and roles to black and white people, “It was not sufficient to assert the superiority of the white man and the inferiority of the black man; it was much more important to persuade the black man to accept the allegation of his own inferiority” (ibid., p. 116). The inferiority that the selected literary characters have internalized has more of a social dimension than an ontological one. Moreover, it is brought on by a sense of social powerlessness rather than by black male acceptance of their inferiority.

Black men’s resistance to oppressive plantation patriarchy

Margaret Walker also projects the characters who resist the white male oppression, in contradistinction to the mute and submissive response to slavery. Such an undertaking is congruent with the literary tradition of black American women writers who reimagine “the attitudes and morality of women, men, girls, and boys who chafe at and defy the restrictions imposed by the dominant White capitalist value system” (Cannon, 2003 p. 64). In *Jubilee*, the Civil War is reconstructed as a black men’s opportunity to redefine and affirm their masculinity and humanity through active struggle against the capitalist, patriarchal system of slavery.

Black males’ initial involvement in the Civil War sometimes had a paradoxical dimension, because white Southern slaveholders and Confederate Army forced the slaves to contribute their labor for the war effort, which actually was against the slaves’ own interest. In the novel, although black males perform laborious activities, risking their lives in varied circumstances, they know their efforts will not lead to liberation. For instance, the Confederates use the black men to make gunpowder, the means employed against those who fight for the slaves’ manumission.

This work was hot [...] so they worked stripped naked to the waist with noise and fire as their constant companions. If a slave were not careful, unskilled and unaccustomed as he was to such work, he might lose a hand and then he was no longer good for the job (Walker, 1999, p. 211).

However, no matter how confining the circumstances are, the slaves seek to find opportunities to resist the ‘watchful eye’ of the oppressive overseer. Even though “shackled in iron and heavily guarded for the journey” (*ibid.*) towards munitions works, some prisoners on the work gangs manage to escape. Learning of the Union Army, some of them seek to join it in order to fight for their own freedom.

The black character Jim’s initial participation in the Civil War also exemplifies the paradoxical nature of the war. He accompanies his master John Dutton, an avid Confederate soldier. When Dutton is severely wounded on the battlefield, his slave Jim experiences conflicting emotions. On the one hand, remembering the hostility of plantation patriarchy, he seeks to break free from the Duttons’ plantation. On the other hand, he is “tied to a strange code of honor, duty, and noblesse oblige which he could not have explained” (*ibid.*, p. 220-221). Therefore, as a committed servant, he takes his wounded master back to the plantation. He also approaches the war with ambiguous feelings. Violence and guns terrify him, but at the same time thoughts of freedom inspire him. Participation in the Civil War enables him to learn more of the state’s political condition. The role and mission of the Union Army are made known to him. He witnesses the ardent freedom attempts of black people. He saw “crowds of Negroes fleeing from the plantations, hiding in the woods and swamps and mountains while gangs of them were guerillas in the country and camping on the roadsides and in the foothills” (*ibid.*, p. 220). Jim, however, instead of joining the resisting black troops, felt an inexplicable call to assist his master. Nevertheless, although Jim treats his enemy humanely, Jim is aware that he could never “settle down again into the routine of the plantation” (*ibid.*, p. 237).

Other black men succeed in joining the Union Army, which enrages white Confederate soldiers, who curse when they see black men fighting against them as equal soldiers. Some black men reveal their rage on the battlefield, where they finally can stand face to face with the southern white man, their real enemy. Theirs is a killing rage, expressed mercilessly. Margaret Walker hyperbolically presents the intensity of this rage through a deadly scene in which a black soldier kills Kevin, a white soldier, John Dutton’s cousin, who, paradoxically, sees violence and war as unnecessary. Happy to live until the last day of his obligatory military mission, and

hoping to join his beloved family in due time, Kevin fearlessly participates in a battle. Unexpectedly, he is dispatched by a black soldier.

Suddenly he stumbled and looked up in the face of a huge black Negro. The soldier had his bayonet pointed at Kevin but what surprised Kevin most was the look of hatred on the black man's face. Kevin raised his own bayonet to protect himself and strike at the same time. As he plunged it into the Negro's groin, he felt the pain of a stabbing knife in his own abdomen and twisting against it he grabbed the other man's gun while turning loose his own. His assailant fell back with a cry of pain, and Kevin struggled in his own mortal agony to pull the blade out of his stomach. (*ibid.*, p. 249)

The scene of a black man and a white man in mortal combat on the battlefield pinpoints the historically and politically conditioned animosity between them. At the same time, it implies that the white oppressor is confronted on equal basis. The white man's attitude towards the war and violence and his search for peaceful conflict resolution have no bearing. The black man sees him as the enemy that must be dealt with in pursuance of the black freedom struggle. The white man, in turn, uses violent self-defense, a means he previously refuted.

Eventually, black men in a large number begin to flee the Southern plantations ruled by white patriarchal oppressors. The Union Army offers a most promising alternative, although racial equality is denied to the runaway slaves. Initially, they are even exploited. Nevertheless, although black men perform the same backbreaking work in the Union Army as that on the plantation, it now seems more bearable because they labor for their own freedom. The following passage relates the nature of black people's flight from the South and the role of black men in the Union Army:

[...] the year 1863 saw a wholesale disappearance of the black people from the southern plantations. Thousands of them were fleeing to the protection of the Union armies. They left the hoe in the field. They left the making of the guns and gunpowder in the factories. They fled from the Confederate fortifications and breastworks for the southern army. The whole work force of the southern states went on a general strike. And what the black slaves

had done for the Confederacy under bondage they now did for the Union free of charge, for there was little pay or compensation they could gain from anything they did. It was enough to be free. Freedom from chattel bondage filled the Negro people with exultation, with praise to God, and thanks to Mr. Lincoln, the Moses who had come. For Mr. Lincoln had certainly changed his mind about the black man. (*ibid.*, p. 246)

As evidenced here, black men seek to affirm their manhood as freedom fighters, by choosing to escape from plantation. They work as men motivated by the hope of future advancement and not as a resignedly dehumanized labor force exploited for the benefit of an oppressive master.

Finally, after the Civil War, the black men can establish their own patriarchal households. In *Jubilee*, Margaret Walker portrays black men who regard having their own family as a primary objective after the Emancipation Proclamation. In his forties, Jim, a houseboy at the Duttons' plantation, reunites with his beloved May Liza, and they both leave the Big House in order to start a family life in freedom. Another character, Innis Brown, encourages Vryy, whose husband has not returned from the war, to leave the plantation and marry him. To Innis, lonely and homeless, she seems a perfect marital prospect. She already has two children, for whom he could be a loving father. He develops a particular close relationship with Vryy's son, Jimmy. He feels almost like a family protector, keeping an eye on Vryy's cabin. He offers to do so because it is dangerous for a single black woman with two children to live alone on a plantation, which most men have vacated. Even before Innis and Vryy leave the plantation, they cooperatively divide family gender roles between them. She proves to be a skillful and resourceful housewife, capable of preparing delicious meals, making soap from grease and wood ashes, making candles from tallow, and weaving and making warm winter clothes. Innis hunts in order to provide food. He seeks to become a self-sufficient and independent man as he declares, "I wants to work for myself. I ain't a slave no more [...] and I wants to work for myself" (*ibid.*, p. 301). Eventually, he convinces Vryy to marry him, which she does only because of her common sense. Innis, however, is not much concerned about Vryy's emotional coolness towards the marriage. He is more "excited" and "jubilant" (*ibid.*, p. 307) because he can at last be a real family man.

Historically, three major responses of the enslaved black men to slavery have been discerned:

cooperation, covert aggression, and rebellion. The cooperative slave was faithful and obedient, tended to identify with his master, and sought to please him. Most of the slaves, whose lot was very hard, felt hostile and bitter and, while they feared the consequences of open rebellion, showed their anger and aggression in passive or roundabout ways. The third group includes slaves who refused to allow themselves to be used. They fought the system by sabotage, self-mutilation, flight or revolt. (Nichols, 1972, p. 15).

Regarding the literary portrayal of the aforementioned responses, Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* depicts primarily the last two. The passive response of black male characters constitutes silent repression of their rage. The fear of white male punishment stifles black men's resistance. As the character Jim in Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* manifests, the outcome of such passivity is hopelessness and powerlessness. The rebellion, in turn, involves Randall Ware's attempt to establish his family life and to be a family provider and his and other black men's confrontation of their white oppressors on the battlefield during The Civil War.

Conclusions

In *Jubilee*, Margaret Walker portrays the interconnectedness between plantation patriarchy and the etiology of black American men's redefinition of masculinity.

The novel constitutes the fusion of documented historical data and the writers' imagination. Referring to a number of essential documental materials in the form of, for instance, historical accounts, slave narratives, newspaper articles that she managed to collect before writing *Jubilee*, Walker states,

I had only to give my material the feel of a fabric of life. At this point I seemed to have a vision of the whole artistic task before me – the creation of fiction from fact, the development of imagined clothing, of muscle and flesh for the real and living bones of history (1990, p. 58).

This approach to writing evidences Walker's concern with an artistic imagination that envisions the interior lives of people who existed during the sparsely documented historical period of slavery. The novelist reconstructs considerable interiority through imagining the black men's emotions that surfaced under oppressive circumstances.

The image of the Big House, the surrounding husbandry, and plantation represent white male pride and sense of supremacy over black enslaved males. If white male overseers are at the lower level of the social ladder, they seek to emulate slaveholders. As far as the black men are concerned, their emotional state is affected by the response to the oppressive patriarchal realm, which forces a redefinition of manhood. Black manhood is reconstructed as a twofold ideal, comprising the affirmation of two inseparable components - mainly humanity and masculinity. All the black male characters are placed in milieus dominated by white males, who define what a successful man in America means. Practically, "[i]f masculinity could only be achieved by protecting and providing for one's family, then under this system black men could never be 'real' man" (Hooks, 2003 p. 126). Black men, deprived of the rights and means to fully realize these patriarchal ideals, manifest a range of emotions in their confrontation with white males. A black free man, Randall Ware, though not fully recognized by the mainstream society, expresses positive self-esteem and hope for future advancement. In contradistinction, Margaret Walker also portrays black men who suppress their emotions as a survival strategy. Some black characters, as a result of their inability to protect black women "from the sexual advance of white men" (Green, 2009, p. 5), to resist exploitation at the hands of white slaveholders, to establish their own loving families, and to govern their own lives, submerge themselves in hopelessness and powerlessness. Finally, it is the Civil War that truly facilitates black men's hope for masculine affirmations.

References

- Ash, S. V. (2010). *The black experience in the Civil War South*. Santa Barbara: Praeger.

- Cannon, K. G. (2003). *Katie's canon: Womanism and the soul of the black community*. New York: Continuum.
- Fox-Genovese, E. (1988). *Within the plantation household: Black and white women of the South*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press.
- Green, T. T. (2009). *A fatherless child: Autobiographical perspectives on African American men*. Columbia; London: University of Missouri Press.
- Hine, D. C. (1996). *Speak truth to power: Black professional class in United States history*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson Pub.
- Hooks, B. (2003). *Rock my soul: Black people and self-esteem*. New York: Atria Books.
- Hooks, B. (2004). *We real cool: Black men and masculinity*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Nichols, C. H. (1972). *Black men in chains: Narratives by escaped slaves*. New York: Lawrence Hill and Co.
- Parker, C. S. (2009). *Fighting for democracy: Black veterans and the struggle against white supremacy in the postwar South*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Thompson, E. T. (1975). *Plantation societies, race relations, and the South: The regimentation of populations*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Walker, M. (1990). How I wrote *Jubilee*. In M. Graham (Ed.) *How I wrote Jubilee and other essays on life and literature*. New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York.
- Walker, M. (1999). *Jubilee*. Boston and New York: A Mariner Book.

Agnieszka Łobodziec, PhD, is Assistant Professor and the Head of the Section of Literature of the English Speaking World, English Department, University of Zielona Gora, Poland.

Contact Address: Direct correspondence to Agnieszka Łobodziec, Faculty of Humanities, al. Wojska Polskiego 71a, 65-762 Zielona Gora, Poland, email: agat47@yahoo.com

Instructions for authors, subscriptions and further details:

<http://mcs.hipatiapress.com>

Queering Catholic Fundamentalism: On Liking Theology in Masculinities Research

Kevin J. Burke¹

1) University of Georgia, United States

Date of publication: June 21st, 2015

Edition period: June 2015-October 2015

To cite this article: Burke, K.J. (2015). Queering Catholic Fundamentalism: On Liking Theology in Masculinities Research. *Masculinities and Social Change*, 4(2), 144-162. doi: 10.17583/MCS.2015.1509

To link this article: <http://doi.org/10.17583/MCS.2015.1509>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

The terms and conditions of use are related to the Open Journal System and to [Creative Commons Attribution License](#) (CC-BY).

Queering Catholic Fundamentalism: On Liking Theology in Masculinities Research

Kevin J. Burke

University of Georgia, United States

Abstract

This article seeks to build on recent movement in the fields of religion and gender studies in order to analyze and critically reflect on “the relation, confrontation and intersection of gender and religion” (Korte, 2011, p. 2). Here the author works to investigate the possibility that emerges in new forms of analysis that marry theological interventions with masculinities studies as a way to newly attend to patriarchy and fundamentalism. Utilizing feminist Catholic theology, the work addresses unique and recent problems that have emerged in the Church in the face of a new era that appears both more progressive and that has engendered conservative backlash. Along the way the article addresses issues of gender and sexuality as they relate to the priesthood and Pope Francis’ recent assertions linking gender theory to ideological colonization and even nuclear armaments.

Keywords: suicide behavior, homosexuality, homophobia, hegemonic masculinity

Haciendo Queer el Fundamentalismo Católico: El Gusto por la Teología en la Investigación sobre Masculinidades

Kevin Burke

University of Notre Dame, United States

Resumen

Este artículo trata de aprovechar reciente movimiento en el campo de la religión y los estudios de género con el fin de analizar y reflexionar críticamente sobre " la relación, la confrontación y la intersección de género y la religión " (Korte, 2011, p. 2). Aquí el autor trabaja para investigar la posibilidad de que emerge en nuevas formas de análisis que se casan con las intervenciones teológicas con estudios de masculinidades como una forma de recién asistir al patriarcado y el fundamentalismo. Utilizando la teología católica feminista, la obra aborda los problemas únicos y recientes que han surgido en la Iglesia en la cara de una nueva era que aparece tanto más progresista y ha engendrado reacción conservadora. En el camino el artículo se ocupa de cuestiones de género y sexualidad en su relación con el sacerdocio y las afirmaciones recientes Francisco que vinculan la teoría de género a la colonización ideológica e incluso armamentos nucleares.

Palabras clave: teología feminista, catolicismo, masculinidades, cristianismo muscular

“Western culture...made a persistent effort to transfer male anxieties onto women (and feminized men) and turned the female anatomy into the antithesis of the male body. Women are fluid; men are not. *They are dirty; we are not*” (Kronendorfer, 2010, p. 63).

“Masculinity is built partly on the vigorous disavowal of female masculinity and partly on a simultaneous reconstruction of male masculinity in imitation of the female masculinity it claims to have rejected” (Halberstam, 1998, p. 49).

Butler (2004), in a precursor to her more recent work on grievability and precariousness (e.g. 2010), suggests that the question of humanity in and through gender and queer (and really any, hopefully) theory ought to be “What constitutes *the limit of what can be thought as true?*” (2004, p. 156). This role of truth will become more important as we delve into religion and its hold (precarious itself or defensive, perhaps) on certain kinds of ontologies. But given that we will in this space discuss Catholicism narrowly, and religion more broadly, it’s worth recalling the powerful and perhaps un/limited applications of certain interpretations of John 14:6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” Still, one might ask in certain fields of academic study whether and if there can be truths found through tools and traditions not much leveraged or often dismissed for their supposed irrelevance if not irrationality. In this case I write very particularly about religion and its constitutive partner, theology. What might be gained, in other words, were scholars of gender and particularly masculinities, to leverage theological interventions and concepts within the field more consistently and robustly, particularly in response to the very failings of religion that have pushed queer folks, and researchers more broadly, away from churches over the century (millennia, perhaps)?

For now it’s worth considering that saying “that gender is performative is not simply to insist on a right to produce a pleasurable and subversive spectacle but to allegorize the spectacular and consequential ways in which reality is both reproduced and contested” (Butler, 2004, p. 30). This work seeks to consider the limits of truth as read through the particular truths that

are produced in a specific, and ongoing, moment in the Catholic Church. It does so utilizing critical feminist theological texts as a way to understand and challenge certain forms of differently emergent patriarchy in contemporary Catholic discourse and practice. Of course Catholicism is not the only major religion in the world perpetuating problematic gendered and sexual teachings behind the scrim of dogma; indeed other scholars have done good work thinking through fundamentalism and gender across various religious traditions (e.g. DeConick, 2011; Madigan, 2011). In this space, however, I emplace my engagement within the Catholic tradition because of my own expertise (see: Burke, 2011; 2012) and the desire to begin a conversation that scholars of masculinities elsewhere in the world might continue it in contextually specific ways.

Here I examine recent movements, read through the lenses of masculinities studies, queer theory and particularly feminist theology, in order to make sense of the kinds of realities around gender and masculinity that (might) become reproduced and contested. With this work I hope to “find the shape of a new story that starts to emerge when there is a rupture in impossibility” (Alison, 2003, p. xi) when we a) take religion seriously (Nord & Haynes, 1998) in masculinities studies and b) look to resacralize the social sciences (Wexler, 2013) not to proselytize but to think about what to do when “we are caught up in the world of giving sacred meanings” where we are thus potentially “caught up in the world of reciprocal violence, of good and bad measured over against other people” (p. 9). The notion is — in a world where religion does much work in reinforcing reductive views of gender, and particularly masculinities, where some certain lives become impossible — that the tools of theology might best serve us in thinking of how to create the necessary ruptures in impossibility to move forward. One might, then, in this regard, turn to Johnson’s (2007) *Quest for the Living God* which notes that, especially in a religious sense, “holding our truth as absolutely true does not mean we have to consider ourselves in possession of all the truth worth having. For God ‘is greater than our heart’” (p. 177). In a similar vein, the social sciences broadly, and masculinities studies more narrowly might perhaps do well to let go of the sense that a truth that considers religion as only ever in need of rebuttal or as beyond rationality misses the possibility of:

An entirely different map and sets of not-easily-accessed processes for the creation and distribution of power that would require us to think less in terms of conventional resources and institutions, and more toward the less visible, more interior and esoteric forms of power as demanding our theoretical attention. (Wexler, 2013, p. 67)

But what, then, does all of this have to do with the Catholic Church, as thought through masculinities studies in particular?

The New Emangelization

After his deposal from the Apostolic Signatura and demotion to the largely symbolic role of Patron of the Order of the Knights of Malta, American Cardinal Raymond Burke, a noted culture warrior, has taken the mantle of anti-reformer within the Roman Catholic Church, sniping at proposals from the current Pope Francis who has sought something of a *détente* (at least as reported widely) around issues related to gender and sexuality in the Church.¹ Should the above be largely gibberish to you, please know that you aren't alone. One of the shortcomings of masculinities studies falls in the ways in which it fails, often, to engage with organized religion in more than cursory ways (e.g. Harris, 1995; McCormack, 2012). It's not vital that members of the research community track the ministrations of the Roman Curia (or any other administrative body related to a multinational religious organization like the Vatican), but it is the case that the field often misses out on the rich theological writings that might be drawn upon to rebut religious arguments aimed at reifying gender conformity through fundamentalist interpretations of dogma (see: Alison, 2001, 2003 for happy exceptions). That is: as the field expands and deepens, it makes sense to push its interdisciplinarity into new realms. In this case, theology and religious studies seem ripe for engagement. For, in the face of arguments referring to "God's plan" it's worth using theology to point out that such pablum is "often a front for men's plans and a cover for inadequacy, ignorance, and evil" (Daly, 1972, p. 30).

Madigan (2011) notes that "since a central concern of fundamentalism is to restore what is claimed to be a hierarchical and divinely sanctioned patriarchal social order feminism [and its offshoots, like Masculinities Studies] above all is opposed as essentially inimical to fundamentalist

objectives” (p. 48). This is, clearly, not merely a Catholic (nor Christian) problem. However, in this article I propose a revision of masculinities to include and engage, in particular, radical, queer, and feminist theology as a challenge to “Christology” that “has become androlatry and therefore idolatry” (p. 116). Which would mean both “taking such a term as ‘homosexual’ out of the context of negative judgments and allowing it to mean a deep and intimate relationship with a person of the same sex, with or without genital activity” (Daly, 1985, p. 126) while also closely examining “at the heart of patriarchy...the economic dependency of women and control of women’s reproductive power” (Madigan, 2011, p. 99). One might, as here, engage women theologians writing of the Church, or particularly, find ruptures rooted in the marriage of masculinities studies and religion. Krondorfer (2010) does some of this work in proposing the critical engagement with the “confessiography” (p. 8) by which men in particular produce the (heavily mediated) self through writing and reading in the confessional mode (p. 9). Couched in an era (or eras) where “paradigms, authorities, or technologies lose their persuasive or coercive power” and “masculine identities become unstable...some men...confess their conflicted soul” (p. 234). This is not a work seeking to force the confessional on the field of Masculinities. Rather, what I aim is to comprehend movements in Catholic fundamentalism in recent years, using old tools in new ways to provide another route toward understanding and eventually, inherently, rebuttal.

There are hopeful movements related to this particular critique; the journal *Religion and Gender*² is just one; the *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality*³ was another. What I propose here, however, is an engagement in masculinities studies that takes seriously theological arguments as a ready critique to the kind of complementarity and essentialization that is perhaps most studiously upheld in the teachings of Pope John Paul II and his *Theology of the Body* which, for Madigan (2011), “continued the papal tendency to idealize women, constantly highlighting the ‘dignity’ of women” while “never adequately address[ing] the contextual issues of women’s social and economic disadvantage, including women’s lack of voice and agency in the church” (p. 119). This served to reinforce teachings centered on gender (and sexual) complementarity and continues to reify a structured separation of women and men, masculinity

and femininity that was inscribed, by the Pope in particular, as ontological as well as dogmatic. Its contemporary manifestations remain with us in particular in two new turns in conservative/fundamentalist circles of the Church (and other churches it should be said) fixing blame on women (and feminized and particularly gay men) for the downfall of the Catholic clergy — both morally in the ongoing sexual abuse crisis and in the crisis of falling vocations — and seeking to assert a renewed church through a version of the “‘third wave’ of Muscular Christianity” (Gelfer, 2013, p. 78). This latter shift has led in some Protestant denominations to the rise of so-called Mixed-Martial Arts style ‘fight churches’⁴ but it has manifest in Catholic circles in particular in the form of a new insularity wrought within the priesthood that asserts a “Man Crisis in the Catholic Church”⁵ brought on, at least in part by the insidious presence of women and girls on the altar. The threat to the male priesthood brought by girls in albs standing beside prelates cannot be underestimated in the eyes of the aforementioned Cardinal Burke for:

[the introduction of female alter servers] has contributed to a loss of priestly vocations. It requires a certain manly discipline to serve as an altar boy in the service at the side of [a] priest, and most priests have their first deep experiences of the liturgy as altar boys. If we are not training young men as altar boys, giving them an experience of serving God in the liturgy, we should not be surprised that vocations have fallen dramatically.⁶

The interview with the Cardinal comes from the New Evangelization Project which takes as its mission “drawing men to Jesus Christ and His Catholic Church” and mirrors Pope Benedict’s call for a New Evangelization meant to “deepen [Catholic] faith” through an evangelization that goes forth into the world and ‘re-proposes’ the Gospel.⁷ This concern regarding “female pollution” (Thorne, 1993, p. 83) is tied to Kristeva’s notion of the abject, which “provokes fear and disgust because it exposes the border between self and other. This border is fragile. The abject threatens to dissolve the subject by dissolving the border” (Longhurst, 2001, p. 20). Particularly given the supposed ontological change that occurs to men in the Catholic faith who are ordained priests — in a faith where women are famously denied ordination — the need to maintain boundaries

at or around the altar, especially in fundamentalist circles makes a certain kind of sense. Here we see the glimpse of a very real danger for patriarchy and hierarchy in the Church for if girls can serve at the altar just like their male counterparts, perhaps the gender divide between them that sorts boys neatly into the possible for the priesthood, might be fragile enough to allow women to perform the rites of the Eucharist and be directly tied to Transubstantiation. And close examination of Burke's statement renders it logically incoherent since of course girls have been allowed the role of altar servers for years; unless the good Cardinal is engaging the various manifestations of female masculinities in the world (he's not), one fears he has rendered his own statements wholly moot.

Performativity reveals the possible in this space whereby "the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all" (Butler, 2008, p. 190). In this sense, Burke's comments have a certain logic to them: polluted by the possibility that girls might actually be just as capable as boys in altar serving, that which is ontologically different about boys, that makes them, thus, able for the priesthood, starts to melt away. Of course blaming girls for the downfall of the priesthood is one approach; quite another might include "seek[ing] out forms of behavior which challenge exclusionary and dominative social practices, and not leave the values of compassion and solidarity at an ineffective level of abstraction" (Cahill, 1996, p. 129).

It makes sense, then, to think about the ways in which a "concentration on gender differences rather than gender relations" (Mac an Ghaill, 1994, p. 68) within a given religious tradition might produce a dogma of complementarity that must needs be guarded, fiercely and reductively. What is perhaps less well engaged, at least in the masculinities literature is an explicit linking between the ways in which "families are not closed universes but places where larger structures meet and interact" (Connell, 1982, p. 73) especially as regards the structuring practices of religion. Certainly Connell (2002) has written about "a refusal by men to be under the authority of women" (and feminized men) "in many religions, among them Catholic Christianity, mainstream Islam, and some sects of Buddhism" (p. 6). But how, we should ask, might theology (the undergirding structure holding up such refusals of authority) be made to speak differently, to perform new things, new genders, new sexualities, new

possible lives? That is: Masculinities may well be comfortable enough in thinking about religion, even challenging its claims, but what might be gained in addressing problematic notions about gender and sexuality with a resacralization that takes theology seriously on its own terms?

It would seem (and many have argued) that the election of Jorge Bergoglio as Pope Francis in 2013 might suggest more nuanced (progressive, even, given his off the cuff comment regarding gays: “who am I to judge?”⁸) approaches both to women and to the various developments in the study of gender construction over the last forty years. Certainly the very public rebuke of Burke, and his reduction to something of a guttersnipe in the formal structure of the Church, suggests movement in a new (if not a different) direction for the Church. What is missing, however, is an in-depth discussion of the current backlash against such seeming progress within the Church that has repercussions far beyond the roughly 1.2 billion Catholics in the world⁹ and the vast numbers of ex-Catholics¹⁰ raised in and inevitably informed by restrictive teachings of the Church regarding gender and sexuality. Going forward I draw from feminist religious studies and recent events within the Church to illustrate what an informed theological critique might look like, rooted in masculinities studies and in response in particular to a new kind of muscular Catholicism that offers an historical precedent for a historically contextual, and theologically limited “masculine-identified Christianity that promotes...masculine normativity” (Gelfer, 2013, p. 86).

Muscular Christianity and a Gay Priesthood

Kimmel (2012) tracks the various iterations of muscular Christianity over time noting that the first manifestation, at least in the American context “was imported from England through...novels...which fused a hardy physical manliness with ideals of Christian service” (p. 129). Within the movement in the late 19th and early 20th century, “prayer” became “a manly duty” (p. 130) in a “religion rippling with hard muscles, manly grit coupled with moral resolve” (p. 131). Late 20th century versions of the movement became more closely tied to athletics and capitalism; these “masculinists insisted that the separation of the sexes was the only way to preserve what is different (and interesting) about either women or men” (p.

227). Kimmel circles back as well, tracing the development and flourishing of mid-century all-male clubs as “refuges” from the intrusion of women (and other others, certainly).

In Catholic circles, the all-male club for the laity (something like the Knights of Columbus or single-sexed schools) was always secondary to the ultimate all-male sanctuary of the priesthood. And while the calling of celibacy has been readily tied to the Greek valuation of male abstemiousness in the face of desire (Foucault, 1988), Catholic religious tradition has held it as also an unique cross to bear, and one that was viewed as preferential for men to even marriage (prior to Vatican II explicitly and one might argue even still, though tacitly). In the midst of that all-male club however has always run a quiet and robust gay priesthood. This is not to suggest ‘gayness’ such as it is somehow runs counter to the masculine, but it does tend to complicate more structural visions of Connell’s (1995) original (though much modified and constructively nuanced in the intervening years) sense of ‘Hegemonic masculinity’ which “is not a fixed character type” but which is rather “the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable” (p. 76). In this sense, then, it’s useful to note Connell’s assertion that “at any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted” (p. 77). Pascoe (2007) makes the point differently noting that we are at our best in research in sexualities and masculinities in particular when we “think about sexuality as an organizing principle of social life” such that “it is not just the property of individuals” (p. 9). Here we find that generally speaking “male homosexuality is not pathologized but gay male *effeminacy* is. The lack of masculinity is the problem, not the sexual practice or orientation” (p. 59). Certainly Church teaching around the ontological failings of gay individuals complicates this assertion, but it is in particular the cauterizing of gay male activity marked as particularly notable because of its linkage with effeminacy that suggests a danger against which, it should be said, some in the Church have steeled themselves.

Within the Church — its hierarchy, and more conservative teachings taken as universal though theologically undermined here as elsewhere — homosexuality is considered an “inclination, though not itself a sin” which still ‘constitutes a tendency towards behavior that is intrinsically evil, and

therefore must be considered objectively disordered” (From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as cited in Alison, 2003, p. 93). Given this intrinsic disorder, rooted in a certain kind of Natural Law teaching that assumes not only complementarity of genders but in particular “heterogenital complementarity” as the only just manifestation of the “moral sexual act” (Salzman & Lawler, 2008, p. 67), the Magisterium of the Church, charged with laying down the fundamental laws of the faith, offers a “more complete definition of sexual orientation” that “distinguishes between ‘a homosexual tendency,’ which proves to be ‘transitory,’ and ‘homosexuals who are *definitely* such because of some kind of innate instinct” (p. 65). Given that any homosexual act¹¹ is considered morally licit because it doesn’t conform to heterogenital complementarity and closes “the sexual act to the gift of life” (p. 227), the Church gave itself a bit of wiggle room to accept celibate gays, even as (or particularly as) priests. This changed in Pope Benedict’s (Francis’ predecessor) book, *Light of the World* (2010) which asserted that “The Congregation for Education issued a decision...to the effect that homosexual candidates cannot become priests because their sexual orientation estranges them from the proper sense of paternity, from the intrinsic nature of priestly being.” (p. 152). The move seems meant to “head off a situation where the celibacy of priests would practically end up being identified with the tendency toward homosexuality” (p. 152). It might seem an odd move given Wills’ collection of data across studies that found that “20 percent of priests were homosexually oriented” and noting that “25 percent of priests under thirty-five” at the time of an Andrew Greeley study were gay (p. 186). Further work from Thomas Fox (as cited in Wills, 2000) suggests that “in some cases there have been reports of predominantly gay seminaries” and other research points to “seminaries that were 70 percent gay” (p. 194).

The problem, of course, isn’t that priests may or may not be gay, though the climate of the seminary and the Church writ large might suggest issues of incomplete acceptance that weigh heavily on priests and which may drive them away from vocations altogether (e.g. Alison, 2001). The issue lies in an emergent sense that the imagined gay priest, tied through stereotype to a kind of unacceptable and assumed effeminacy can become a scapegoat — “the bearer of the sins of the people...banished to the wilderness” (Spong, 2007, p. 166) — both for reduced vocations and for the

longstanding sex abuse crisis that has haunted the Church and particularly its victims. Alongside, then, the rise of what we might call fringe movements like the ‘new emangelization’ has come — in answer it should be said to widespread political and now legal acceptance of gay marriage in the United States — movement towards the use of morality clauses in Catholic schools¹² seen as a disciplinary mechanism, in some circles, to keep gay lay teachers in the closet about their sexuality or their feelings about equality and sexuality. The point is to note that the decrease in vocations has led to a concurrent decrease in clergy teaching in Catholic schools, the largest private school system in the world¹³, which has meant that more fundamentalist and conservative strains in the Church have struggled to find ways to enforce uniformity of belief (and teaching) in schools. Armstrong (2015) makes the point that “whenever a fundamentalist movement is attacked,” or perceives itself as under attack, “it almost invariably becomes more extreme. It shows malcontents that their fear is well grounded: the secular world really *is* out to destroy them” (p. 305). Rather than engaging in a new way of approaching “the moral question for a Christian ethics of sex and gender” such that we might “socialize the body...in ways which enlarge our social capacities for compassion toward others and solidarity in the common good” (Cahill, 1996, p. 164), Burke, and other conservative (males mostly, though not only) within the Church retrench, cloaked in any number of ways, but particularly in a dual defensiveness and with nods to tradition (dogma) forgetting that “tradition must not be considered only affirmatively, but also critically” (Ratzinger, as cited in Farley, 2006, p. 186).

In the face, then, of advances in secular policy in the United States and amidst the supposed reforming movement of a Pope seen as progressive in the press (though perhaps not fully by those who are paying attention to his writings; more on this in a moment), one mode of retreat can come in the targeting of vulnerable masculinities, and another in the enforcement of gender difference. A muscular Christianity can’t, in other words, tolerate any more the possible effeminacy of a gay priest, nor the effeminacy of girls in the presence of men on the altar or, “part of the struggle for hegemony in the gender order is the use of culture” and here Church norms, and recourse to tradition, “for...disciplinary purposes: setting standards, claiming popular assent and discrediting those who fall short. The

production of exemplary masculinities is thus integral to the politics of masculinity” (Connell, 1995, p. 214). Faced with evidence that the priesthood is, in some sense, dying on the vine (and perceiving this as the result of attacks from both modernity and gender equity), the lone recourse for the fundamentalist strain in Catholic circles is to lash out: to lay the blame for the sex abuse crisis at the feet of homosexual dysfunction and in the face of the insidiousness of women contravening the accepted complementarity of the social order. Muscles flexed, the priesthood has returned to the closet. In the process an opportunity for a renewed “Christian ethics of sex and gender” has been lost, as has the chance that we might “replicate the radical social challenge of early Christianity, if not necessarily its concrete moral practices” (Cahill, 1996, p. 124). Such a challenge would note that:

Openness to the other in the intimacy of embodied selves...these human possibilities need not be limited by culturally construed boundaries of gender; they can tell us something important about transcendent bodies; and they give us clues to the kinds of loves that are stronger than death. (Farley, 2006, p. 173)

A Masculinities Studies that takes feminist theology into account has the opportunity to make such arguments, particularly when eschatology emerges.

Feminism and Nuclear War

In Tornielli and Galeazzi (2015), amidst an otherwise progressive argument for socially just economic practices (the title of the book is, after all, *This Economy Kills: Pope Francis on Capitalism and Social Justice*), the pontiff draws some troubling connections worth encountering and challenging. He notes that every “historical period has ‘Herods’ that ‘destroy, that plot designs of death, that disfigure the face of man and woman, destroying creation.”¹⁴ In the process he condemns gender theory and likens “it to nuclear war and genetic manipulation.”¹⁵ He continues, saying, “let’s think of the nuclear arms, of the possibility to annihilate in a few instants a very high number of human beings...Let’s think also of genetic manipulation, of the manipulation of life, or of the gender theory, that does not recognize the

order of creation.” This abiding sense of the end-times, that a developing understanding of gender on a continuum brings about something akin to the fiery destruction of the Earth by atomic fission is mirrored in a press conference given by the pope in which he spoke of gender theory in the same vein as “ideological colonization” on par with “the Hitler youth.”¹⁶ These pronouncements do not sound much like the man who was, to this point, most famous in the popular media for his off-the-cuff response — ‘who am I to judge?’ — when asked in the abstract about gay priests. As regards gender theory, however, it seems one might choose to judge away, harshly, and with not a bit of hyperbole along the way. This aligns him much more closely than most casual observers would suspect — as the narrative tends to be that his papacy is a break from if not a direct rebuttal to — with his predecessor Benedict. The pope emeritus noted in a “2012 Christmas address”:

People dispute the idea that they are given a nature, given by their bodily identity, that serves as a defining element of the human being. They deny their nature and decide that it is not something previously given to them, but that they make it for themselves. According to the biblical creation account, being created by God as male and female pertains to the essence of the human creature. This duality is an essential aspect of what being human is all about, as ordained by God. This very duality as something previously given is what is now disputed.¹⁷

One might be tempted to wonder just what God was doing as regards this duality in the creation of individuals who are intersex, of course. But the larger point is that in the face of something viewed as wholly secular (gender theory) the patriarchal structure of the Catholic Church (and many other churches) dismisses out of hand the relevance of such thinking to a perceived sacred sphere of belief. The work of a Masculinities Studies that takes religion seriously (for reasons other than to dismiss it out of hand as so much superstition) would be to engage very explicitly in how we might use gender theory, and particularly masculinities studies at the intersection of theology precisely to complicate such atomistic thinking.

Such work would mean, of course, addressing the hegemony of patriarchy through Connell (1995) noting that “the struggle for hegemony

in the gender order...use[s]...culture for...disciplinary purposes” thus producing, in a religious patriarchal hegemony “exemplary masculinities” (p. 214) for the ends of politics and the maintenance of the status quo. Further, though, it would mean drawing on critiques of passive theology that “inculcates a resigned attitude toward the way things are” where there “is little motivation to change the social order” (Johnson, 2007, p. 73). This activist theology, that seeks to change the social order (not to say vaporizing it in a mushroom cloud) flags the “philosophical ‘myth’ of gender dualism” and seeks to actively “reorient the imagination” of and about God and religion at a “basic level” (p. 109) using the tools of religion turned in on itself. It would mean turning to a history that reads the early Christian movement for its gender equality (Wills, 2006) and taking seriously the “first 30 years of the movement” where “women were not restricted in the leadership roles they could assume” (DeConick, 2011, p. 73). That means, of course, wading through two millennia of detritus but what is queer and gender work if not anthropology; genealogy? This work would explicitly engage the notion that “what is striking is that any particular tradition’s internal understanding of sexuality and gender might have developed differently had there been some variation in particular circumstances” (Farley, 2006, p. 104). Masculinities can do the work of rethinking religion and patriarchy and it can do this work without making war with faith. That takes, however, careful engagement with the seriousness of theological tools, in conversation with gender theory. My hope is that some of this work has been begun here.

Concluding

This is, in essence, a call to resacralize Masculinities Studies. A movement in that direction would require accepting the notion that “secularization should no longer be the assumed position for theorists” (Davie, as cited in Wexler, 2013, p. 5) in the social sciences for it misses the ways in which religion and theological understandings of the world have always already existed in the supposed secular. A facile sense that the secular is ever the constitutive outside to the sacred tends to be rooted in an historical analysis that sees the Enlightenment as a shift from superstition to scientism, as it were. That narrative, however, misses the fact that the “Enlightenment was

always also religious” (p. 23) and fails to account for the difficulty of understanding “our perceptions of the world, our philosophical conception of the soul, of immortality, of life, if one does not know the religious beliefs which are their primordial forms” (Durkheim, as cited in Wexler, 2013, p. 76). To better understand the possibilities and commitments of Masculinities Studies one must grapple with the fact that “sociocultural knowledge has its basis in religious traditions, at the core of which is religious experience” (p. 82).

Resacralization, then, would mean turning to the very religious traditions that most flailingly perpetuate the kinds of hegemonic masculinist and positivist salvific narratives and engaging them on their own terms. Certainly traditionalists within a given church, and here Catholicism, will be able to lean on the dual rails of accepted dogma and more conservative theologians. But that will have always been the case anyways; the only way toward conversation, and perhaps change, is thinking through how theology gives us the chance to speak in a language that is seen as authoritative (not to say authoritarian) to the very audience we seek to challenge and redirect. In that regard, then, we leave here noting that “scripture, then, and traditional theological, doctrinal formulations are the result of reflexive, critical, human construal and have to be, therefore, as sociohiostircally conditioned as its contruers themselves” (Salzman & Lawler, 2008, p. 13). Ultimately, the authors conclude, theology must be in dialog with human experience. I would suggest here that this dialog, and the experiences it might explain, challenge, and support, would be greatly served by being taken up in Masculinities Studies much more robustly.

Notes

¹ One particular example might be a recent report from the Vatican that, after three years of investigations into the Leadership Conference of Women Religious from the doctrinal watchdog within the Catholic Church, the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, the religious sisters represented by the LCWR have been, colloquially, let off the hook. That the investigation for dogmatic irregularities was initiated under the prior pope (especially for the nuns’ lack of zeal in publicly and constantly affirming Church teachings around abortion specifically and women’s issues generally) has not been lost on observers of the Church.

² Religionandgender.org

³ <http://www.jmmsweb.org/>

⁴ There aren't currently any Catholic versions of fight church, though Catholic schools have long promoted boxing as a charitable as well as inherently masculine pursuit, in service of the missions and Christ (e.g. <http://bengalbouts.nd.edu/>); Basketball, however, long a part of Catholic Youth Organizations seems a ready corollary, perhaps best instantiated in this diocesan recruiting video:

http://www.heroicpriesthood.com/?utm_source=Copy+of+Heroic+Priesthood&utm_campaign=Relaunch+of+topical+Study+programs&utm_medium=email

⁵ <http://www.newemangelization.com/the-new-emangelization-project-2/>

⁶ <http://www.newemangelization.com/uncategorized/cardinal-raymond-leo-burke-on-the-catholic-man-crisis-and-what-to-do-about-it/>

⁷ <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/>

⁸ <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1303303.htm>

⁹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-21443313>

¹⁰ <http://ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/had-it-catholics>

¹¹ Given that the teachings of the Church create something of a taxonomy here, one can quickly fritter the distinction to absurdity merely by suggesting that if one is ontologically 'gay' as the Church suggests, then any act committed (sexual or not) is thus homosexual and morally licit making the very existence of a gay person verboten in Church teaching.

¹² <http://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/hamilton-county/cincinnati/archdiocese-of-cincinnati-catholic-teacher-contract-edit-to-clarify>

¹³ <http://www.ncea.org/data-information/catholic-school-data>

¹⁴ <http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/francis-strongly-criticizes-gender-theory-comparing-nuclear-arms>

¹⁵ <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/blog/gender-theory-nuclear-war-and-nazis-0>

¹⁶ <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/pope-francis-warns-west-over-ideological-colonization>

¹⁷ <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/blog/gender-theory-nuclear-war-and-nazis-0>

References

Alison, J. (2001). *Faith beyond resentment: Fragments Catholic and gay*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Group.

Alison, J. (2003). *On being liked*. New York: Herder & Herder.

Armstrong, K. (2015). *Fields of blood: Religion and the history of violence*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Burke, K. J. (2011). *Masculinity and other hopeless causes at an all-boys catholic school*. New York: Peter Lang.

Burke, K. J. (2012). A space apart: Kairos and masculine possibility in retreats of adolescents. *Journal of Men, Masculinities and*

- Spirituality*, 6(2), 77-93. Retrieved from <http://www.jmmsweb.org/issues/volume6/number2/pp77-93?page=2>
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2008). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2010). *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* New York: Verso.
- Cahill, L. S. (1996). *Sex, gender & Christian ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Connell, R. W. (1982). *Making the difference: School, families and social division*. Sydney: George Allen and Unwin.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Connell, R. W. (2002). *Gender*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Daly, M. (1973). *Beyond god the father: Toward a philosophy of women's liberation*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- DeConick, A. D. (2011). *Holy misogyny: Why the sex and gender conflicts in the early church still matter*. New York: Continuum.
- Farley, M. A. (2006). *A framework for Christian sexual ethics*. New York: Continuum.
- Foucault, M. (1988). *The care of the self: The history of sexuality* (R. Hurley, Trans. Vol. 3). New York: Vintage Books.
- Gelfer, J. (2013). Meat and masculinity in men's ministries. *Journal of Men's Studies*, 21(1), 78-91. doi: 10.3149/jms.2101.78
- Halberstam, J. (1998). *Female masculinity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Hall, S. (1992). Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies. In L. Grossberg, C. Nelson, & P. Treichler (Eds.), *Cultural Studies* (pp. 277-294). New York: Routledge.
- Harris, I. M. (1995). *Messages men hear: Constructing masculinities*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Johnson, E. A. (2011). *Quest for the living God: mapping frontiers in the theology of God*. New York: Continuum.
- Kimmel, M. S. (2011). *Manhood in America: A cultural history* (3 ed.): Oxford University Press, USA.
- Korte, A.-M. (2011). Openings: A genealogical introduction to religion and gender. *Religion & Gender*, 1(1), 1-17. Retrieved from <http://www.religionandgender.org/index.php/rg/article/view/31>

- Krondorfer, B. (2010). *Male confessions: Intimate revelations and the religious imagination*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Longhurst, R. (2001). Trim, taut, terrific, and pregnant. In D. Bell, J. Binnie, R. Holliday, R. Longhurst, & R. Peace (Eds.), *Pleasure zones: Bodies, cities, spaces* (pp. 1-28). Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Mac an Ghaill, M. (1994). *The making of men: Masculinities, sexualities and schooling*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Madigan, P. (2011). *Women and fundamentalism in Islam and Catholicism: Negotiating modernity in a globalized world*. Bern: Peter Lang.
- McCormack, M. (2012). *The declining significance of homophobia: How teenage boys are redefining masculinity and heterosexuality*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nord, W., & Haynes, C. C. (1998). *Taking religion seriously across the curriculum*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Pascoe, C. J. (2007). *Dude, you're a fag: Masculinity and sexuality in high school*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Pope Benedict, XVI. (2010). *Light of the World: The Pope, the Church, and the Signs of the Times. A Conversation with Peter Seewald*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.
- Salzman, T. A., & Lawler, M. G. (2008). *The sexual person: Toward a renewed catholic anthropology*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Thorne, B. (1993). *Gender play: Girls and boys in school*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Tornielli, A., & Galeazzi, G. (2015). *This economy kills: Pope Francis on capitalism and social justice*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press.
- Wexler, P. (2013). *Mystical sociology: Toward a cosmic social theory*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Wills, G. (2000). *Papal sin: Structures of deceit*. New York: Image Books.
- Wills, G. (2006). *What Paul meant*. New York: Viking Adult.

Kevin Burke is an Assistant Professor of English Education at the University of Georgia, United States.

Contact Address: Direct correspondence to Kevin Burke, Aderhold Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, GA. 30605, email:

burkekq@uga.edu

Instructions for authors, subscriptions and further details:

<http://mcs.hipatiapress.com>

Crossing Gender Boundaries or Challenging Masculinities? Female Combatants in the Kenya Defence Forces' (KDF) War against Al-Shabaab Militants

Mokua Ombati¹

1) Moi University, Kenya

Date of publication: June 21st, 2015

Edition period: June 2015-October 2015

To cite this article: Mokua, O. (2015). Crossing Gender Boundaries or Challenging Masculinities? Female Combatants in the Kenya Defence Forces' (KDF) War against Al-Shabaab Militants. *Masculinities and Social Change*, 4(2), 163-185. doi: 10.17583/MCS.2015.1510

To link this article: <http://doi.org/10.17583/MCS.2015.1510>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

The terms and conditions of use are related to the Open Journal System and to [Creative Commons Attribution License](#) (CC-BY).

Crossing Gender Boundaries or Challenging Masculinities? Female Combatants in the Kenya Defence Forces' (KDF) War against Al-Shabaab Militants

Mokua Ombati
Moi University, Kenya

Abstract

Few institutions have historically presented more defined gender boundaries than the military. This study examines gender and war through the lens of military combat roles. Military combat roles have traditionally relied on and manipulated ideas about masculinity and femininity. Women arrive in the army with different types of capital and bring with them a shared cultural 'tool kit' (womanhood). Following the military's labour allocation process, they are assigned combat roles, which is at variance to their gendered character. Assignment in non-traditional feminine roles means crossing gender boundaries. Ethnographic studies of the Kenya Defence Forces operations in Somalia reveal the different gendered characteristics of the military roles as reflected in the women's soldiery experiences. The encounter with military power and authority challenges the women soldiers to redefine their feminine capital, to interpret the military reality via a gendered lens and, therefore, to critically (re)examine the patriarchal order. Grounded on the twin theoretical frameworks of socio-cultural capitals and cultural scripts, and framed on a gendered structure of women's roles, the study illustrates the complex and contradictory realities of women in the military. The study unpacks the relationship between masculinity and femininity, and, war and the military. It underpins the value of the female soldier as a figurative illustration of the complex interrelations between the gendered politics of masculinity and femininity. It considers what the acts, practices and performances constitutive of female combatants reveal about particular modes of governance, regulation and politics that arise from the sacrifices of females in the military.

Keywords: women combatants, war, femininity, masculinity

¿Cruzar las Fronteras del Género o Masculinidades Desafiantes? Las Combatientes Femeninas en la Guerra de las Fuerzas de Defensa de Kenia (KDF) contra los Militantes de Al-Shabaab

Mokua Ombati

Moi University, Kenya

Resumen

Pocas instituciones han presentado históricamente límites de género más definidos que la militar. Este estudio examina el género y la guerra a partir de los roles de combate militar. Las funciones de combate militares han dependido tradicionalmente de ideas sobre la masculinidad y la feminidad. Las mujeres llegan al ejército con diferentes tipos de capital y traen consigo una 'caja de herramientas' compartida culturalmente. Siguiendo el proceso de asignación de trabajo de los militares, se les asigna funciones de combate que es contraria a su carácter de género. La asignación de roles femeninos no tradicionales implican unas fronteras de género cruzadas. Los estudios etnográficos de las Fuerzas de Defensa de Kenia en Somalia revelan las diferentes características de género de los roles militares como se refleja en las experiencias de la tropa de las mujeres. El encuentro con el poder militar y autoridad desafía a las mujeres soldados para redefinir su capital femenino, para interpretar la realidad militar a través de un lente de género y, por tanto, (re) examinar el orden patriarcal. Fundamentada en los marcos teóricos del capital socio-cultural y estructurado en un encuadre de género de las funciones militares de las mujeres, el estudio pone de manifiesto las realidades complejas y contradictorias de las mujeres en el ejército. El estudio descomprime la relación entre la masculinidad y la feminidad, y, la guerra y los militares. Se basa el valor de la mujer soldado como una ilustración figurativa de las complejas interrelaciones entre la política de género de la masculinidad y la feminidad. Considera lo que los actos, prácticas y actuaciones constitutivas de soldado de sexo femenino revelan acerca de los modos particulares de gobierno y la regulación y la política que se derivan de los sacrificios de los soldados en combate.

Palabras clave: mujeres combatientes, guerra, feminidad, masculinidad



The military is a significant institution. Together with operating national security functions it performs other important functions including as a symbol of nationhood and source of national identity. Additionally, it occupies a special place in the public realm, somehow more intimately bound to patriotism, to the fate and dignity of the nation than other public monuments. However, the military remains fundamentally gendered as mainly masculine. It is the strongest vestige of the gendered conception of citizenship. The military contributes to national and cultural definitions of what it means to be a man by furthering a 'cult of masculinity,' as defined by the warrior hero. This 'cult of masculinity' includes constructions of acceptable gender roles, embedded within a 'combat, masculine-warrior paradigm' (Wright, 2014; Dunivin, 1994; Lorber, 1990).

Masculinity, Femininity and Militarism

In spite of the integration of women into the military, soldiering, violence and wars typify masculinity (Faludi, 1994; Melissa, 1998; Snyder, 1999). The military and militarism provide the moral, legal and even metaphysical justification, freedom and symbolism for the expression of masculinization par excellence or that, which is distinctly and uniquely masculine. Notions of masculinity are powerful tools in the process of making soldiers (Cock, 1991; Mama, 1998). Military formations are constructed around a particular form of masculinity that idealise raw power, strength, lethal force, aggression, competitiveness, censure of emotional expression and the creation and dehumanisation of the 'enemy' (Braudy, 2005; Dudink et.al., 2004; Enloe, 2000; Higate, 2003; Hopton, 2003). Militarism feeds into ideologies of masculinity through the eroticization of stoicism, risk-taking, physical toughness, boldness and endurance. Militarization is also variously expressed in such masculine attributes as self-discipline, professionalism, sociability, overt heterosexual desire, protection and decisiveness, individualism, rationality and practicality, courage and semblance of comradeship, cruelty, mindlessness, blind obedience and clannishness (Ekiyor, 2002; Esuruku, 2011; Yaliwe, 2008).

In addition, traditional and cultural African understandings of masculinity and femininity, grant agency to male soldiers, regardless of

their military role, by normalising the image of the combative soldier as man and ensuring that infantry women remain liminal to the military's violent and primary function. Femininity is thus constructed in opposition to that of the combatant soldier. This ultimately defines the social being of women. No matter their contribution to the military, the embodiment of femininity means that women are excluded from these essentially male and masculine formations. Women's soldiering in the frames of violence and war, is a worthy, albeit culturally anomalous sacrifice.

Equally, military values, ideologies and patterns of behaviour symbolize patriarchy. Ideologies of idealized masculinity valorise and epitomise that which is manly, thus creating an iconic male figure. Being a soldier is purposefully linked to being a 'real man'. The values, attitudes, actions, thinking and modes of behaviour which are most appreciated within the military are connected to stereotypical construction of male and female relations. They are built on a gender division of labour. The military taps on masculine assets of soldiering by contrasting them with images of femininity (Enloe, 2000). Traditional African gender notions of patriarchy entrench women as appendages of males. Women are characterized in relation to their traditional/cultural roles of mothers, sisters, wives, daughters, and therefore nurturers, carers, homemakers, and life-givers, in contrast to reference of their professional abilities and training. While these roles are important in themselves, they are seen as only relevant in relation to the male roles of providers, leaders and decision-makers. Femininity is thus equated with weakness, vulnerability and feebleness (Ekiyor, 2002; Esuruku, 2011; Yaliwe, 2008).

Gendered Perceptions and Integration in the Military

Women were recruited into the post-colonial Kenya military for the first time in 1972, but they belonged to the women's only military unit: the Women Service Corps (WSC). It is only after the December 1999 declaration that disbanded WSC, that women were co-opted into the main arms of the defence forces. Previously, the unit operated as a single entity, and women were prohibited from a majority of roles and operations such as combat and infantry that require a higher level of physical performance. Women had 'special terms and conditions' which took into account their

‘special needs’. Some of these conditions included unwritten policies that women soldiers were not allowed to marry, become pregnant or have children while in service. They were not even supposed to be seen to be romantically involved with their male colleagues, or even with men outside the military (Daily Nation, 2011c).

Today, the winds of change have blown away the discriminatory rules, giving Kenyan women the latitude to muscle it out with men in the military. Women are subject to the same selection and training procedures and no ranks are exclusively reserved for men. They can now marry, become pregnant (even when single) and carry out soldiery duties alongside their male counterparts in any of the departments in the Kenya Army, Airforce or Navy (Daily Nation, 2013). In addition to the traditional support musterings, all frontline musterings such as ground combat, infantry, tank and commando units have been opened up for women to compete with their male colleagues. Although their number is still small compared with their male counterparts, women are joining the military in increasing numbers. For example, although as late as 2001, there were no women officers in the Kenya Navy, by the end of 2011, the highest-ranking woman officer in the Navy had risen to a Lieutenant Colonel. Kenya Navy had 10 female officers and 115 service women by the close of 2011 (Mathangani, 2011).

The integration of women into the military is part of the Kenya governments’ action plan to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (hereafter: UNSCR 1325), which commits member states to an increased participation of women in peacekeeping operations and military structures (including civilian police). Further, military recruitment in Kenya is guided by the one third-gender rule in the Constitution (CoK, 2010), which states that no more than two-thirds of members of public bodies shall be of the same gender. These foundations are grounded on the need to see women as key actors and agents for change in society. However, a gender analysis of the military demonstrates that even with a substantive increase of women into the military structures, they tend to take on masculine roles resulting in an entrenchment, rather than transformation of traditional sexist ideologies (Juma & Makina, 2008; Barno, 2014; Daily Nation, 2011b).

KDF Liberating Somalia

National security is the primary concern of any state, and the use of force and militarism are generally accepted as legitimate ways to protect state sovereignty. It is on this strength that in the last quarter of 2011, Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) assembled along the border with war-torn Somalia, in preparation for assaults on Al-Shabaab militia forces behind several kidnappings of foreigners from beach resorts, dealing a major blow to Kenya's tourism industry ([Daily Nation, 2011a](#)). Somalia has had no effective government ever since it plunged into repeated rounds of civil wars beginning in 1991, allowing a flourishing of militia armies, extremist rebels and piracy. One month after the KDF incursion, the Kenya government agreed to re-hat its forces under the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The Kenyan troops were later formally integrated into AMISOM after the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2036 (hereafter: UNSCR 2036). Christened *Operation Linda Nchi* (literary translated to Operation Protect the Country/State) the KDF assignment, initially involved pushing the Al-Shabaab rebels far inside Somalia away from the common border. The intention was to create a buffer zone from the hostile rebels. After several field successes the new mission, was to 'mop up' what was left of Al-Shabaab—that is, to end the Islamist insurgency for good.

KDF backed by soldiers from the Somali National Army and local anti-Al Shabaab and pro-government militia groups, quickly overran Somalia's southern axis, which spans the country's lower Juba and Gedo provinces. The capture of the port city of Kismayu, just 180 miles from the Kenya-Somalia border, had all along been viewed as the endgame, at least of the military phase of the mission. The victory over Kismayu was not just a significant win against Islamist political extremism, but a symbolic victory in the battle for the world's most dysfunctional country. The city was Al-Shabaab's central base and the port its economic engine, providing an estimated US \$35 million to US \$50 million a year to the group (Verini, 29/12/2012).

The assault on Kismayu was well choreographed. The operation was coordinated, directed, overseen, supervised and undertaken by a contingent of soldiers comprised of women combatants. News of KDF overrunning

and liberating Kismayu, other towns and villages across southern Somalia were soon transmitted (Verini, 2012). Though initially, Kenyans were overjoyed with the successes achieved at the battlefield, the news that female soldiers were at the frontlines of the operation was received with surprised joy, shock, disbelief and amazement. Lead media stories focused on the surprising, unbelievable and even inappropriate nature of the event (Daily Nation, 2011a; Mathangani, 2011; Muiruri, 2009). How would KDF deploy women soldiers to battle the Al-Shabaab? Many Kenyans would not reconcile the image of the soldier, as a life-taker, with the statuses of women as romantic, affective, peacemakers and life-bearers (mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters). This phenomenon is anomalous (Esuruku, 2011).

Secondly, with no effective government, Somalia is one of the world's most dangerous places to operate. In addition, the lack of a clear front and rear exposes the combatants to hostile fire. The terms 'front' and 'rear' are regularly used in military discourse. The 'front' refers to the field, the area where fighting with the enemy takes place (or, often, practice fighting). The 'rear' is responsible for providing for the needs of the fighters at the front. It thus took a lot of courage to challenge Al-Shabaab militants in a terrain they are well versed in and which is largely unknown to Kenyans.

The public reactions to the KDF 'Somalia operation', raise pertinent questions on the core assumptions about the nature and dominant dissertations of African femininity and mothering at one level, and masculinity, militarism, soldiering and warfare at another level. The military being the most masculine of all state institutions, what are the socio-cultural attitudes about women in the armed forces? Is soldiering incompatible to mothering? Do women's presence in the frontlines challenge the 'heroines' subjectivity and femininity? How do women's soldiering and ability challenge the very nature of the armed forces and militarism? How do women's soldiering, femininity and ability contribute to strategic military objectives? Are women combatants in the military the exception? The role of the armed forces as an employer is also brought to bear to allow the military latitude and controls on female hiring and deployment. Consequently, this study explores the interplay of the contradictory dynamics of gender in the military through the lens of Kenyan women combatants in the war against the Al-Shabaab insurgents.

Theoretical Frameworks

A study of the military and warfare in Africa is basically a study of the radical reproduction of traditional gender relations, concepts and division of labour. Lorber (1994, p. 1) describes “gender as an institution that establishes patterns of expectations for individuals, orders the social processes of everyday life, is built into the major social organizations of society, such as the economy, ideology, the family, and politics, and is also an entity in and of itself.” Scott ([1988] 1999, p. 42) contends that, “gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between sexes,” and “is a primary way of signifying relationships of power.” Changes in the organization of social relationships always correspond to changes in representations of power, but the direction of change is not necessarily one way.

Ridgeway (2011) highlights how gender framing founded on stereotypical gender rules in society, shape behaviour and judgments in ways that create systematic patterns of inequalities. These patterns of inequality influence work norms and job matching. On the one hand, Sewell (1992, p. 7) posits that structures comprise simultaneously of cultural schemas (which are “key conventions, recipes, scenarios, principles of action and habits of speech and gesture”) and resources (which can be human, such as physical strength, knowledge, dexterity, emotional commitment, or nonhuman, such as land and factories). For Sewell (1992, p. 18), structures are “dynamic because they are multiple and intersecting, because schemas are transposable, and because resources are polysemic and accumulate unpredictably.” The military can thus, be understood as a structure whose resources (e.g., division of labour) are the effects of schemas (e.g., femininity and masculinity, soldiering and motherhood), just as the schemas are the effects of resources. This conceptualization understands the gender structure as both stable and undergoing dynamic changes.

There are two dominant and intersecting cultural schemas in women’s enlistment into military combats: the gender schema and the military schema. The gender schema constructs a binary order based on perceived differences between the sexes, and is a primary way of signifying relationships of power. Since the military is culturally defined as masculine, the evaluative bias in favour of men is stronger. Hegemonic gender beliefs,

“help maintain the gender system by modestly, but systematically and repeatedly, biasing men’s and women’s behaviours and evaluations in ways that re-enact and confirm beliefs about men’s greater status and competence” (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004, p. 521).

The military schema is based on the gender schema. Thus, the military schema creates hierarchies of those who do not fit (physically or emotionally) the imperative of warrior masculinity, those who serve in non-combat roles, and those who resist the warrior ethos altogether. The intersection of the binary gender schema and the military schema shapes the construction of militarized identities, the military’s daily practices, social stratification and the link between military service and citizenship.

On the dimension of resources, the military is a male-dominated territory where masculinity is the norm. Women, comprise a small percentage of the army and are easily exempt from certain tasks on grounds of their gender. These structural and organizational differences, together with a patriarchal culture, limits the range of military roles to which women are positioned and constitute a barrier to women’s advancement. However, when women are enlisted into combat roles, this gender integration signifies a shift from a gendered structure to a professional-based structure, which may bring about a change in perceptions of femininity and masculinity.

On the other hand, Bourdieu (1986) postulates that social actors’ chances of succeeding in different fields of action are dependent on the various types of capital (economic, cultural, social and symbolic)—that they hold and acquire throughout their lives. He emphasizes the connections and flows between the different types of capital: stocks held in one type of capital might influence the accumulation of others, and agents are able to convert and exchange types of capital over time and from one field to another. The cluster of the different types of capital at any given moment represents the array of obstacles and possibilities in relation to the social action of social groups to which one belongs or wishes to belong. Accordingly, the kinds of capital that women accumulate, the fields of action accessible to them, and their ability to convert the types of capital they hold are all different from those among men.

The conceptualization of types of capital and their convertibility highlight the fact that each individual arrives at the military with different

clusters of capital. Moreover, the various types of capital are gendered. At the same time, the military as a social field creates an assortment of new types of capital. Masculinity and femininity are themselves crucial categories of capital, thereby constructing the meaning of male and female capital (Huppatz, 2009) and reproducing women's inferiority (Enloe, 2000). This is so because feminine capital is the possession of behavioural skills and personal characteristics that accord with the cultural definition of stereotypical femininity (Huppatz, 2009).

The concept of cultural scripts or cultural schemas stresses the place of social actors in shaping their world. The concept exposes the dynamisms of the ways in which capital is deployed and converted over time; how social agents interpret the cultural script in various social contexts and how actors play with these cultural models, alter them, and replace them (Ortner, 2003). Cultural schemas motivate action and provide templates for socially 'worthy' lives. They are behavioural strategies that offer criteria with which social actors evaluate their current situation and direct their action in the future. As such, they serve as strategies for organizing patterns.

Consequently, gender integration to military service is a key scenario taking on different forms in accordance with the social actor's gender (Sasson-Levy, 2006). Military service determines access to differential social, economic and political resources. The significance of military service in shaping women's life courses is thus tied to other cultural scripts (such as seeking fulfilment in being a wife, a mother, a daughter, and a sister) that are accessible to them and the opportunities that open or close depending on their rank position. The interplay between the various types of capital acquired or altered during military service and the various cultural scripts shape the meanings women give to military service.

Methodology

Data on the military and its activities is highly classified. The representation of female combatants in the military is a sensitive issue. Consequently, this necessitated use of a combination of several ethnographic techniques including non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, informal interactions and content analysis. These approaches place the social agent at the centre, and are attentive to detailed ethnographies that illustrate the complex and contradictory realities of women in the military.

Female Combatants Crossing Gender Boundaries or Challenging Masculinities?

The KDF overrun and liberation of several towns and cities in Somalia offered a more stately and majestic vision of war, as it inspired pride and patriotism, as well as glorified combat. Among the KDF soldiers were scores of women combatants deployed alongside men in the campaign to dislodge the Al-Shabaab militants. The media was awash with images, pictures and articles of female soldiers in martial action, expertly preparing for and participating in combat, drilling proudly in military jungle uniform, carrying weapons, jumping out of warplanes, riding tanks, and executing amphibian navy attacks (Daily Nation, 2011a; Mwaniki, 2012). Particularly, the Daily Nation (2013) reported that women “are driving huge rigs down treacherous roads, frisking the militant group Al Shabaab from dangerous dungeons, handling gun turrets, personnel carriers, and providing cover for other soldiers.” Equally, the media showed pictures of some KDF members in peaceful interactions with appreciative Somalia civilians, celebrating the victory (Karanja, 2014; Mathangani, 2011). Going after and subduing Al-Shabaab militants marked the pinnacle of the soldiers’ careers.

The media reports confirmed the public’ ‘fears’ that KDF female soldiers serve in soldiery units (pilots, tank drivers, anti-aircraft operators, naval commandos, infantry, armour and field artillery) that ‘co-locate’ with combat troops. While serving in these units expand women’s roles and, in particular, women’s exposure to and participation in combat, it further affirms that combat is no longer the exclusive province of men. Consequently, the military’s ability to make use of the ties between military service and masculinity seem compromised. Equally, the operation disapproves the perception among the public that Kenya’s peacetime army spends a lot of time training and not fighting. “We feel we need to show Kenyans that the army is for real and that we don’t spend all our time training and devising strategies,” said Sergeant Mwilitsa, one of the female combatants in the operation.

In confirming the participation of females against the Al-Shabaab militants, the KDF spokesperson said, “Yes, military women are among Kenya’s gallant soldiers called on duty to defend the nation from the Al-Shabaab. There are women on the frontlines and they are even driving

armoured vehicles.” Armoured vehicles have thick, metal bodies. Different types are used for actual fighting as well as ferrying personnel. They usually have a hull from where a shooter or two operate. They are also mounted with huge guns. The brave KDF women form the core of the Kenya Army, Kenya Air Force and the Kenya Navy ranks. They serve in important roles such as combatants, clerks, communication technicians, pilots, military police, instructors and attorneys. Others serve as drivers, aircrew, engineers, doctors, nurses, logisticians and air traffic controllers. Those who serve in infantry and armour units, form the core of a land-based confrontation. Infantry divisions comprise soldiers on foot, who face some of the most challenging situations in the battlefield. They carry out important roles because they are able to penetrate areas that would otherwise be inaccessible with vehicles ([Daily Nation, 2011a](#)).

Kenya being mainly a patriarchal society, many wondered if military standards had been lowered to accommodate women into combat. Patriarchal conceptions of masculinity valorise domination. Patriarchal gender norms afford men power and privilege over women. They also put men and women under pressure to conform to prevailing masculine and feminine ideals. Masculinity and femininity are usually seen not as something which individuals automatically possess, but as something to be achieved by acting in accordance with these ideals.

“How possible is it that women can be combat soldiers? Are women subjected to similar standards, similar treatment, and similar physical requirements as males? We thought women as natural carers are fit for non-combatant tasks such as cooking for and preparing male colleagues for war?” the 40-year-old Ms. Nyaboke, a member of the public wondered aloud. “I have always understood women soldiers to be restricted to prescribed gender roles as nurses, cooks, secretaries and officers in personnel units,” reasoned 60-year-old Mr. Mayayyo, another member of the public. Mrs. Kababbo, another member of the public expressed her misgivings:

“I have known women to form part of the defence force of the African traditional societies. In traditional Africa, they were part and parcel of the ferocious warriors that went to war for their people. However, I have never imagined that they would be involved in the modern warfront, doing the actual fighting with the enemy. So women are also trained how to kill? Why should women be masculinised? I thought

their roles remain in supporting male combatants by keeping the supplies alive! Which principle is that, gender equality or what?"

An awed, 30-year-old Mr. Otwenga commented, "What I can say is that I am clearly amazed at the work of our women soldiers in KDF. They form a group of my heroines."

Some members of the public, however, borrowed from history and seemed to know and understand that women in traditional Africa were successful warriors. They gave the classic example of Kenya's Mau Mau liberation army, which had many women fighters. "My grandmother told me that she was a Mau Mau freedom fighter. She even showed me gunshot scars sustained because of her involvement in the freedom struggle. But I sincerely dread the idea of women fighting at the battlefield," opined 28-year-old Ms. Grace Mwema.

"Women are fragile objects. We should not allow our women to deadly warfronts like Somalia. I guess we have enough men soldiers to do the battle. Women soldiers can work from the military base but not in the war field," fumed Mrs. Otieno Snago, a 50-year-old grandmother.

Nonetheless, in affirming the presence of women in its ranks, the KDF spokesperson said that the highest-ranking woman in the military is a colonel. He explained, "In the military, a colonel is a senior commissioned officer, and usually the highest or second-highest field rank." He added that Kenya's "women in the military are highly disciplined," and confirmed of their being "as good as the men." He allayed fears that women were less suited and qualified for combat:

Mission success in the military is the number one priority. We want the best and most qualified defending our freedoms and way of life. It doesn't matter if they are pretty, ugly, male, female, tall, or short, as long as they are the best physically, mentally, and emotionally to accomplish the mission of defending our nation. KDF must maintain the most lethal and elite military by meeting a mission standard, not a gender standard. It does not matter if you are a man or a woman. And the mission isn't any less demanding because women accomplish it. Female conscripts have a growing range of duties. Many combat units are dependent on the services of female soldiers.

Military training is often a tightly choreographed process aimed at breaking down individuality and building official military conduct and group loyalty. This process of socialisation is intimately gendered, as being a soldier is purposefully linked to being a ‘real man’. Accounts of training within the KDF, show how particular forms of masculinity are cultivated among the troops which seek to instil courage, control of emotions, and willingness to take risks and endure hardships, as well as physical toughness. The ability to suppress fear enables soldiers to engage in combat at great risk to their own safety, while the ability to suppress compassion and empathy enables them to enact violence against others. Shame and humiliation by the use of misogynistic and homophobic slurs, are often used to enforce these masculine norms. Masculine ideals of toughness, dominance and heroism are held in high esteem. In affirming why patriarchal ideology is a useful element in the making of a soldier, the KDF spokesperson said:

Military training plays a special role in the ideological creation of soldiers and the notion of combat plays such a central role in the construction of ‘manhood’. In the armed forces, there is a deliberate cultivation of masculinity. Trainees are not born soldiers they are made into soldiers. Becoming a soldier means learning to control fears and domestic longings that are explicitly labelled feminine. Militarists use the myth of war’s manliness to define soldierly behaviour and reward soldiers. Trainees are goaded into turning on and grinding down whatever in themselves is ‘womanly.’ Combat is not just as an important part of being a soldier, it is also an important part of being a man; therefore “to allow women into the central core of the military–combat–is to invite women to the central core of manliness, male identity and thus claims to masculine privilege.

Why do the Kenya public want to see women in the military practise traditional female roles and positions? To fully understand the motivation for such, the KDF spokesperson clarified; “The military is dependent on traditional gender role definitions for its very functioning. The women in the army, in a way, ‘raise the morale’ of their male colleagues and make the army a home away from home. Thus, as male soldiers leave to fight in combat, female soldiers make it feel as much as possible like a home.” This

aspect is more aptly captured by using a family model as Enloe (1993) explains:

‘Morale’ preoccupies officers, and a good commander is one who can create ‘good morale’ in the ranks. To portray the soldier’s regiment as a ‘family’ which cares for him and to whom he owes loyalty is one solution. But without women, this is a difficult enterprise. If women can be made to play the role of wives, daughters, mothers, and ‘sweethearts’, waving their men off to war...then women can be an invaluable resource to commanders.

The women soldiers maintain degrees of both femininity and perceptions of masculinity. However, despite assuming masculinity, they nevertheless endeavour to maintain what may be regarded as the last vestige of their femininity. They keep a demeanour of well-manicured nails and beautiful facials, as if to say, being a soldier is so masculine that the only way to remain feminine is through physical appearance. Even so, they cannot be too feminine as to disrupt a female soldier identity, which is more masculine than that of a civilian woman.

Technology and Warfare

The changing nature of technology of warfare and the tactics involved for its accomplishment is, perhaps, registered by, a female soldier fixated unto a laptop, with her helmet strapped on tightly, and a semi-automatic rifle leaning against her chair. She ploughs up PowerPoint presentations with series of slides outlining the obstacles facing KDF in Somalia. In one of the slides titled, “Demography,” she points out that, in Somalia, “Loyalty revolves around clan” and “Clan is a unifying and divisive factor.” Under “Challenges in Local Areas,” she lists “non-existent government structures” and “vastness of sector.” The use of modern day warfare technological innovations imply that the military is able to penetrate enemy defences and act with precision, thus, reducing the chances for collateral casualties, injury to non-combatant civilians and damage to property. The ability of the military to create active offensive operations using, for example, mapping survey information and geospatial systems as its ‘weapons’, removes the

warfront from the fields to the realms of science, research, data and intelligence.

KDF Military Women' Profiles

For the proud KDF females, nothing compares to the liberating feeling of working within the military and watching their careers take off alongside those of their male colleagues. A glimpse profile of a few of the gallant military women is manifestation enough of their high qualifications:

Happily married with children, soft-spoken but firm Captain Mbaluka explains that she “is an aircraft technician, whose day-to-day work entails ensuring planes are in good condition. It is great to work here. The discipline and the upward mobility for those who want to study is motivating.”

Lieutenant Wairimu, a single mother, discloses that she “is the only female combatant diver in East and Central Africa. I joined the diving department of Kenya Navy, hitherto an all-men affair, and have risen the ranks from a servicewoman to the current position of lieutenant. I survived the rigorous physical training involved when other trainees ‘dropped-out’ on request when the going got tough.”

Single, dating and hoping to marry, Major Amulyoto divulges that she “is a graduate of veterinary medicine and the first veterinary officer in the military. I am credited with setting up the military’s pioneer canine regiment. There was no precedence in what I was supposed to do. The dogs I found here were just guard dogs but I constructed a way of incorporating them in military work. The dogs are classified as sniffer, tracker, search-and-rescue and guard, and then there are those for infantry patrol. I give clinical services to the dogs and train soldiers how to care for them and give them first aid when they are in the field.”

A mother and submissive wife who finds time for her family, Major Kikech says her “portfolio includes being in charge of administration of technicians and logisticians. I studied helicopter recovery in the field and later took a ground maintenance course. Of all, I really love the Puma maintenance.”

The ‘greasy twins’ as Senior Private Kimathi and Corporal Koskei are fondly identified, confess “of thoroughly loving our job and we aspire to become full engineers someday.” The two naval ship technicians are always

in their blue overalls with spanners and greasy hands, sweating the day out in the ‘furnace’ of navy military ships.

Major Koech confides of “having the honour of being the first female pilot with the Kenya Airforce. I joined the Flying School and graduated in the rank of Second Lieutenant, but have since moved up the ranks. I have flown the bulldog aircraft but I now pilot the Y-12 plane, a China-made aircraft.”

Captain Mutisya discloses that, “with a Bachelor of Science in Survey Engineering, I joined the mapping department of KDF. I work in the Engineering Army Corps as a Survey Engineer. My job entails preparing maps and other Geographical Information Systems (GIS), which the military use for briefings, operations and training.” Sensitive to every minute detail, she acknowledges her slow but sure way of doing things: “You make a small mistake and you disorganise everyone.” She has seen it all on the frontlines, “Oh, the land mines and what they cause to innocent people is horrendous.” According to her, the professionalism of Kenya’s armed forces is rated very highly and she feels satisfied to be part of all this, “We hold our heads high when we are on assignment. I am ready to defend this country anytime.” She would want to see the mapping department respond fully to modern military needs.

An auditor with the Kenya Army, Major Makau exhibits a motherly demeanour. She reveals that, “with more than 20 years of service, I am one of the most experienced female officers. I joined the military as an education instructor, after a two-year stint as a teacher. My job profile entails monitoring how various units utilise resources and make reports. I also visit various military bases to audit their accounts.”

From their profiles, it is apparent that each of the women in KDF service sacrifice social and gender role responsibilities to be able to discharge their soldiery tasks. Their young and beautiful faces, military fatigues, hair dos and facial expressions reveal very little about the ‘fire beneath their profession.’ Being women and at the military, keeps them away from their boyfriends, husbands, children and families for lengthy periods. Despite these enormous challenges, the women seem acutely aware and prepared for their military roles, and are pragmatic about the nature of their job. The reality is that without exception, they understand that not only are they

180 *Mokua Ombati – Crossing Gender Boundaries*

required to carry that soldiery burden, but that the military has every right to expect it of them. They understand the dangers involved.

When asked why she was here in the bush instead of the comfort of her home, Sergeant Mwilitsa, a mother of one, retorted:

I always wanted to join the army. I swore to protect my country and I knew that one day, one time, I would have the opportunity to do what I love and have been trained in military college. When you are handed your gun and your ammunition, that means you are prepared. When I joined the military back then, it was hard to imagine this would come to pass but it has and we have to do our job.

The young and beautiful Corporal Ali confided to “my daily assignment requires I operate behind sandbags, observation posts and man roadblocks, in addition to carrying heavy rifles wherever I go. I left my husband and three-year-old son for the warfront where I lug around a nine-kilogramme rifle. I however love the huge long-range guns I operate. I feel different because this is the stuff I am trained to carry but not the theoretical training.”

However, not all the women get to go to the warfront—some remain at the army base for one reason or another function.

It is clear from the foregoing that, not only must the numerical domination of males in the military be challenged, but also the patriarchal ideological control. As women’s participation in the military increases, gender stereotyping will decrease. Captain Mutisya, the military survey engineer notes:

If women are to be found bearing arms alongside men, the easy distinction of active warrior men and passive women disappears. A basic distinction between armed men and polite women will no longer be applied. The attribution of effeminacy to all male non-combatants will disappear to apparent logical conclusiveness. Military units will become more representative, and correspondingly, less patriarchal.

Major Koech, the Airforce pilot suggests that:

As long as the military is viewed as the domain of men, women will be outsiders and their participation challenged. Thus, a cycle of male

dominance is perpetuated... This cycle can only be broken if we challenge cultural constructions of sex/gender. Secondly, we should challenge institutional arrangements which allow the perpetuation of distinctions on the basis of sex and gender category. That is, reduce the importance of being feminine or masculine and female or male.

Lastly, breaking the masculine/feminine gender paradigms will not be accomplished by simply having more women serve the military, but also have women move into all combat positions and do so in equal proportions to men. This will ultimately, have great gender equity and equality consequences for both the military and Kenyan society as a whole.

Conclusion

The study comes to a similar conclusion as Cilliers et al. (1997) that despite formal policy provisions stipulating that women have an open career path in the military, there still appears popular resistance to women serving in combat roles in Kenya. This reservation often rests on the perceived unsuitability of women for 'masculine roles.' Such perceptions are revealed by questions such as: War involves the risk of death and are women not more vulnerable to attacks? What will happen to women soldiers if they are captured by the enemy? Women have to deal with certain physical and biological realities and does this not hinder their performance in combats?

Based on extreme sexual division of labour, women in the military are expected to (re)enact stereotypically feminine behaviours such as expressing feminine emotions such as nurture, support, empathy and care, while at the same time suppressing these emotions as they face the enemy in combat. They are at one time expected to exhibit masculinity traits such as bravery, aggression and anger, even as they suppress (or even repress) feminine emotions like concern, fear and pain. Thus, the feminized gender roles expectations for women are in direct conflict with the masculine-warrior culture of the military. Women are called to combine their femininity with the combative masculine stance of the warrior in the military. This puts them slightly apart as colleagues in the military, as it conflicts with their person, identity and personality.

Also, as underscored by Juma and Makina (2008) most African countries, Kenya included, are yet to prepare for the integration of women

into their militaries. They do not have operational equipments that are suitable for women. Items as basic as bullet proof vests are not designed for large-breasted women and, in addition, some fighter jet seats do not accommodate large-hipped women.

Adjustments in policy, budget and technology as well as clearly defined career paths and equal salaries are necessary to put women soldiers at the same level as their male colleagues. With new emphasis on data, science, research, strategy and technology, the 'front' and 'rear' have receded significantly with less dependency on physical force and presence in the battlefields. Women military personnel do not therefore have to take part in direct combat. Those with the most appropriate knowledge and technical competence can still be part and parcel of this new system of warfare. African governments do not have to continually rely on the physical forms of defence and low technology, which relegate women to subordinating men. In conclusion, while military service is a central mechanism for the reproduction of gender relations, for women soldiers it also creates potentiating spaces for transformation and social change.

References

- Barno, A. (2014, May 1). Gender equality? A double standard for women in the military. *The Daily Caller*. Retrieved from <http://dailycaller.com/2014/01/05/gender-equality-a-double-standard-for-women-in-the-military/>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). *The forms of capital*. In J. Richardson, (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). New-York: Greenwood Press.
- Braudy, L. (2005). *From chivalry to terrorism: War and the changing nature of masculinity*. New York: Vintage.
- Cilliers J., Schutte, C., Heineken, L., Liebenberg, I., & Sass, B. (1997). Public attitudes regarding women in the security forces and language usage in the SANDF. *African Security Review*, 6(3), 3-14. doi:10.1080/10246029.1997.9627717
- Cock, J. (1991) *Colonels and cadres: War and gender in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

- Constitution of Kenya (CoK) (2010). National Council for Law Reporting with the Authority of the Attorney General. Retrieved from <http://www.kenyaconstitution.org/docs/03cd/005/html>.
- Daily Nation. (2011a, October). Kenyan troops enter Somalia to attack rebels. *Daily Nation Kenya*.
- Daily Nation (2011b, November 11). Tough girls take aim at Al-Shabaab militia. *Daily Nation Kenya*
- Daily Nation (2011c, November 20). Who sent our female soldiers to Somalia? *Daily Nation Kenya*
- Daily Nation (2013, December). Girl power soars high in military after abolition of Service Corps. *Daily Nation Kenya*
- Dudink, S., Karen, H., & Josh, T. (Ed.) (2004). *Masculinities in politics and war: Gendering modern history*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Dunivin, K. O. (1994). Military culture: Change and continuity. *Armed Forces & Society*, 20, 531-547. doi:10.1177/0095327X9402000403
- Ekiyor, T. (2002). Female Combatants in West Africa: Progress or Regress? *WANEP*. Retrieved from http://www.wanep.org/wanep/attachments/article/104/tp_female_combatant_in_wa.pdf
- Enloe, C. (2000). *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Enloe, C. (1993). *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Esuruku, R. S. (2011). Beyond Masculinity: Gender, Conflict and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Northern Uganda. *Journal of Science & Sustainable Development*, 4 (25), 25-40. Retrieved from <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/jssd/article/view/89528>
- Faludi, S. (1994, September 5). The Naked Citadel. *The New Yorker*, 62-81. Retrieved from <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1994/09/05/the-naked-citadel>
- Higate, P. R. (2003). "Soft Clerks" and "Hard Civvies": Pluralizing Military Masculinities. In Paul R. Higate, (Ed.). *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State*. (pp. 27–43). Westport, CT: Praeger.

- Hopton, J. (2003). The State and Military Masculinity. In Paul R. Higate, (Ed.), *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State*. (pp. 111–125). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Huppatz, K. (2009). Reworking Bourdieu's 'Capital': Feminine and Female Capitals in the Field of Paid Caring Work. *Sociology*, 43(1), 45-66. doi: 10.1177/0038038508099097
- Karanja, S. (2014, April 27). The place of women in military combat. *Daily Nation Kenya*.
- Juma, M., & Makina, A. (2008, September 4). Time for African female soldiers to do more than secretarial work. *Daily Nation Kenya*.
- Lorber, J. (1994). *Paradoxes of Gender*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lorber, J. (1990). From the Editor. *Gender & Society*, 4(2), 133-138. doi:10.1177/089124390004002001
- Mama, A. (1998). Khaki in the Family: Gender Discourses and Militarism in Nigeria. *African Studies Review*, 41(2), 1-17. doi:10.2307/524824
- Mathangani, P. (2011, April 25). Kenyan women soldiers at the warfront. *Standard Digital News*, Kenya. Retrieved from <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/article/2000045523/kenyan-women-soldiers-at-the-warfront>
- Melissa, H. S. (1998). *Camouflage isn't Only for Combat: Gender, Sexuality, and Women in the Military*. New York: New York University Press.
- Muiruri, B. (2009, April 3). Our girls in uniform. *Daily Nation Kenya*.
- Mwaniki, C. (2012, October 14). Soldiers showcase skills as they mark KDF Day. *Daily Nation Kenya*.
- Ortner, S. B. (2003). *New Jersey Dreaming – Capital, Culture and the Class of '58*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Ridgeway, C. (2011). *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ridgeway, C., & Correll, S. (2004). Unpacking the Gender System: A Theoretical Perspective on Gender Beliefs and Social Relations. *Gender and Society*, 18(4), 510-531. doi:10.1177/0891243204265269

- Sasson-Levy, O. (2006). *Identities in Uniform: Masculinities and Femininities in the Israeli Military*. Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv: Magnes Press.
- Scott, J. W. ([1988] 1999) *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sewell, W. H. (1992). A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation. *American Journal of Sociology*, 98(1), 1-29. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2781191>
- Snyder, R. C. (1999). *Citizen-Soldiers and Manly Warriors: Military Service and Gender in the Civic Republican Tradition*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- United Nations Security Council (UNSC). (2000). *Resolution 1325*. S/RES/1325
- Verini, J. (2012, December 29). KDF breathe new life into Kismayu. *Daily Nation Kenya*.
- Wright, H. (2014). *Masculinities, conflict and peacebuilding: Perspectives on men through a gender lens*. London: Saferworld
- Yaliwe, C. (2008). Security Sector Reform in Africa: A Lost Opportunity to Deconstruct Militarised Masculinities? *Feminist Africa Issue 10*, 49-66. Retrieved from http://agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/security_sector_reform_in_africa-_a_lost_opportunity_to_deconstruct_militarised_masculinities-_yaliwe_clarke.pdf

Mokua Ombati, Researcher at Moi University, Kenya

Contact address: Direct correspondence to Mokua Ombati, Anthropology and Human Ecology Department, Moi University. P.O. Box 3900-30100, Eldoret (Kenya) e-mail: keombe@gmail.com

Instructions for authors, subscriptions and further details:

<http://mcs.hipatiapress.com>

Building a Public Policy Agenda Gender of Men in Mexico: Prolegomenon

Juan Carlos Ramírez Rodríguez, Norma Celina Gutiérrez de la Torre,
Lizett Guadalupe Cázares Hernández¹

1) Universidad de Guadalajara, Mexico

Date of publication: June 21st, 2015

Edition period: June 2015-October 2015

To cite this article: Ramirez, J.C., Gutiérrez, N.C., Cázares, L.G. (2015).
Building a Public Policy Agenda Gender of Men in Mexico: Prolegomenon.
Masculinities and Social Change,4(2),186-210. doi:
10.17583/MCS.2015.1514

To link this article: <http://doi.org/10.17583/MCS.2015.1514>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

The terms and conditions of use are related to the Open Journal System and
to [Creative Commons Attribution License](#) (CC-BY).

Building a Public Policy Agenda Gender of Men in Mexico: Prolegomenon¹

Juan Carlos Ramírez Rodríguez, Norma Celina Gutiérrez de la Torre, Lizett Guadalupe Cázares Hernández
Universidad de Guadalajara, Mexico

Abstract

Building a public policy agenda that promotes equality and gender equity from the perspective of gender of men, involves the recognition of certain sociocultural gender problems. The aim of this paper is to show the results of the first stage of a larger project, which is an input for the creation of a public policy agenda built by stakeholders (research, services, government) in various problems experienced by the men as subjects of gender in Mexico and considered are feasible transformation through the implementation of public policies. The results of a survey of which the main issues-problems that have implications for public policies identified are presented, the agencies involved in finding solutions; the stakeholders; alliances and / or established and / or necessary to promote the establishment of the agenda and proposed public policy coalitions.

Keywords: gender of men, masculinities, public policies, Mexico

La Construcción de una Agenda de Políticas Públicas de Género de los Hombres en México: Prolegómenos¹

Juan Carlos Ramírez Rodríguez, Norma Celina Gutiérrez de la Torre, Lizett Guadalupe Cázares Hernández
Universidad de Guadalajara, México

Resumen

La construcción de una agenda de políticas públicas que promueva la igualdad y equidad entre los géneros desde la perspectiva de género de los hombres, implica el reconocimiento social de cierta problemática sociogenérica. El objetivo de esta comunicación es mostrar los resultados de la primera etapa de un proyecto más amplio, que es un insumo para la conformación de una agenda de políticas públicas construida por actores involucrados (investigación, servicios, instituciones gubernamentales) en diversos problemas vividos por los hombres como sujetos de género en México y que se considera son factibles de transformación mediante la implantación de políticas públicas. Se presentan los resultados de una encuesta en la que se identificaron los principales temas-problema que tienen implicaciones en las políticas públicas, las instancias involucradas en su solución; las y los actores involucrados; alianzas y/o coaliciones establecidas y/o necesarias para impulsar la conformación de la agenda y la propuesta de políticas públicas.

Palabras clave: género de los hombres, masculinidades, políticas públicas, México

El presente es un ejercicio que apunta hacia la construcción de una agenda de políticas públicas que involucre a los hombres en el proceso de transformación de las relaciones de género en México. El proceso de construcción de esta agenda contempla tres momentos: a) Aplicación de una encuesta en línea a manera de diagnóstico de los temas –problemas que los hombres enfrentan como sujetos genéricos. b) Entrevistas a actores clave que participan en distintos espacios sociales y con amplia trayectoria en la temática de género de los hombres en México. c) Encuentro entre actores para definir los resolutiveos de la agenda colectiva. En este trabajo se muestra parte de los resultados obtenidos en la aplicación de la encuesta. En la primera parte se presentan algunos planteamientos sobre las implicaciones en la construcción de la agenda y luego una mención sobre la presencia de los hombres en las agendas de género elaboradas en distintos momentos. Enseguida se hace una descripción de la metodología adoptada para este ejercicio. A continuación se muestran los resultados. Para finalizar se hacen algunos señalamientos para continuar desarrollando estos apuntes que desemboquen en la elaboración de una agenda construida utilizando una vía externa y de manera colectiva.

La agenda de políticas públicas

La versión del ciclo de las políticas públicas denominado “Modelo Ludo” (Ortíz de Zárate, 2012) resalta cuatro componentes básicos a lo largo de todo el proceso: 1. Establecer la agenda, que consiste; en tomar evidencias, identificar problemas, priorizarlos, identificar quiénes participan; 2. Formular políticas, esto es, debatir soluciones, debatir y redactar propuestas, identificar quiénes participan 3. Implantar políticas, que se traduce en cambiar conductas, hacer acciones colaborativas, ganar respaldo e identificar quiénes colaboran y, 4. Evaluar políticas, como la monitorización, *feedback*, análisis de datos, transparencia y control ciudadano.

La conformación de la agenda de política pública se constituye como el punto de arranque para la generación de cualquier política pública, es en ese primer momento que situaciones y fenómenos determinados que afectan desfavorablemente a ciertos sectores de la población se problematizan y

pasan a ser considerados como problemas públicos que deben ser atendidos y resueltos a través de la formulación y posterior instrumentación de políticas públicas (Moro & Desse, 2010).

La agenda puede construirse por dos vías, una interna en que los propios actores del sistema político la definen; otra es una vía externa en que son actores de la sociedad civil organizada quienes la proponen. La agenda se constituye en un indicador del peso de los agentes internos y externos. A diferencia de la construcción de la agenda por los propios actores del sistema político, cuando se construye externamente enfrenta tres condiciones: a) tiene que convertir el problema en tema; b) problematizarlo como tema público, esto es exponerlo a la opinión pública para que sea reconocido y encuentre respaldo social; c) convertirlo en tema político, de manera que se incorpore como parte de la agenda política gubernamental.

Existen varios tipos de agendas: Sistémicas: que son problemas presentes en la sociedad y/o en parte de ella impulsada por actores específicos que responden a intereses de ciertos grupos; Agendas Institucionales: que responden al interés inmediato de actores estatales con poder de decisión. La definición de las agendas, sean estas institucionales o sistémicas se constituyen en la fuente básica para la determinación de las políticas públicas, porque expresan: a) demandas externas de actores no gubernamentales, b) el conocimiento sobre un fenómeno, c) razones de estado. Estas tres no son excluyentes y pueden ser o no convergentes.

Las acciones que nutren el proceso de construcción de la agenda y la definición de políticas públicas son: acciones reflexivas, aportes intelectuales y científicos, aporte de soluciones, acciones de visibilización / reclamo / demanda / exigencia, concientización de la población afectada. Cada uno o combinado permite posicionarlo en el debate público. Otras fuentes de las políticas públicas son: resultados de proceso políticos como los electorales, cambios de administración, encuestas de opinión pública. También están los compromisos internacionales, la conflictiva potencial o real de un problema, el alcance y rango de los espacios y territorios afectados, el trato dado en los medios de comunicación.

La entrada en la agenda institucional depende de: a) La habilidad y recursos técnicos y materiales para la incidencia, b) Los mecanismos y oportunidades de interlocución y participación, c) Los liderazgos de quienes

presentan las propuestas, d) La capacidad de proyección a la opinión pública (Aguilar Villanueva, 1993; García Prince, 2008).

Los hombres han sido incorporados parcialmente en políticas públicas que buscan la equidad y la igualdad entre mujeres y hombres como parte de agendas sistémicas y externas. A lo largo del tiempo se han realizado algunos esfuerzos en ese sentido, como se muestra a continuación.

Las políticas públicas y los hombres

Las políticas públicas orientadas a los hombres con perspectiva de género tienen como antecedente el impulso e instrumentación de políticas públicas promovidas por las mujeres desde los años setenta del siglo XX. Destacan particularmente: Mujeres en el Desarrollo (MED), Género y Desarrollo (GED) (Kabeer, 1998) que han tenido un estrecho vínculo con las resoluciones a las que se llegaron en las distintas Conferencias Mundiales de la Mujer (México, Copenhague, Nairobi y Beijing) así como en la Conferencia de Población de El Cairo. Por otra parte destacan dos Convenciones que tienen estatuto vinculante con los Estados signatarios: la Convención sobre la Eliminación de todas las formas de Discriminación contra la Mujer (1979), ampliamente conocida como CEDAW (por sus siglas en inglés) (Fondo de Desarrollo de las Naciones Unidas para la Mujer / Oficina Regional, s/f) y la Convención Interamericana para Prevenir, Sancionar y Erradicar la Violencia contra la Mujer, conocida como la Convención de Belém Do Pará (1994) (Convención de Belém Do Pará, s/f).

Estos instrumentos han sido decisivos en la conformación de la agenda de política pública impulsada por la sociedad civil en México. En ellos, los hombres aparecen como

- a) parámetro de igualdad respecto de las mujeres e implícitamente como los ejecutores de prácticas discriminatorias y violentas que atentan contra la seguridad e integridad de las mujeres en todas las etapas de su vida (Fondo de Desarrollo de las Naciones Unidas para la Mujer / Oficina Regional, s/f);
- b) blanco de acciones educativas para modificar patrones socioculturales que legitiman o exacerban la violencia contra las

mujeres y como agresores (Comité de America Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer (CLADEM), 1994).

- c) Aliados movilizados contra la violencia basada en el género;
- d) funcionarios públicos que requieren capacitación y también como objeto de sanción por incumplimiento de sus funciones;
- e) como responsables de la aplicación de políticas públicas (Naciones Unidas, 1995).

En la “Declaración de Rio de Janeiro” 2009 (Simposio Global Involucrando a Hombres y Niños en la Equidad de Género, 2011) quedó de manifiesto lo que en los acuerdos internacionales pasados había ido adquiriendo progresiva pero relativa relevancia: la inclusión de los niños y los hombres en los esfuerzos llevados a cabo para enfrentar la problemática de la violencia contra las mujeres en el mundo, en tanto que son la otra parte del problema y por consiguiente, parte de la solución, lo que se ratificó en la “Declaración de Nueva Delhi” en 2014 (2nd MenEngage Global Symposium, 2014).

Se han hecho esfuerzos por discutir el vínculo entre políticas públicas y masculinidad en la región (América Latina) (Aguayo & Sadler, 2011; Barker & Aguayo, 2012; Barker et al., s/f; Ramírez Rodríguez & Cervantes Ríos, 2013a). En México, la Asociación Género y Desarrollo (GENDES) durante la coyuntura del llamado a participar en el Plan Nacional de Desarrollo a principios de 2013, elaboró una propuesta de políticas públicas que intituló: “Las políticas de igualdad de género... Elementos críticos para activar la responsabilidad masculina” (GENDES, 2013). Propusieron cuatro módulos: Seguridad Pública y Prevención del Delito; Salud; Educación; Conciliación de vida familiar y laboral. Se parte de un breve diagnóstico y se presentan propuestas programáticas y acciones específicas así como las instituciones gubernamentales que por sus atribuciones les corresponde cierta responsabilidad. Su enfoque privilegia a las instancias de nivel federal.

Notas metodológicas

La metodología seguida para la construcción de esta agenda, actualmente en desarrollo, tiene tres momentos: A) Aplicación de una encuesta en línea

en la que se identificaron problemas que enfrentan los hombres como sujetos genéricos. B) Realización de entrevistas a actores clave que participan en distintos espacios sociales y con amplia trayectoria en la temática de género de los hombres en México. C) Organización de un Encuentro entre actores participantes en los primeros dos momentos del proceso para definir los resolutivos de la agenda colectiva. Aquí nos limitamos a presentar parte de los resultados obtenidos en la encuesta efectuada entre Octubre de 2014 y Enero de 2015. Incluyó tres apartados: A) Datos generales, experiencia en el tema de las masculinidades y, la identificación de los dos temas/problemas más relevantes que, a juicio de cada persona encuestada, enfrentan los hombres en México. B) Sobre cada tema-problema mencionado, se identificaron las organizaciones que lo atienden, las soluciones implantadas, los actores involucrados y/o que se requieren involucrar, las alianzas / coaliciones que son pertinentes conformar para enfrentar dicho problema y otras posibles soluciones a las existentes. C) Sobre la continuidad del proyecto, participación en las siguientes etapas. En total el cuestionario tiene 24 preguntas con diferentes opciones de respuesta (cerradas y abiertas).

El directorio de participantes se construyó con información proveniente de diferentes fuentes: la membresía de la Academia Mexicana de Estudios de Género de los Hombres (AMEGH, A.C.) y de Cómplices por la Equidad / *MenEngage* México; del directorio del programa de radio “Varones en la intimidad” y de contactos en redes sociales. Se obtuvo información de contacto de 149 individuos que contenía: nombre, institución laboral, teléfono y correo electrónico. 28 no se localizaron después de tres intentos de comunicación (en diferente día y horario. Por teléfono 20 y por correo electrónico 8). Se estableció contacto telefónico con 121 personas a las que les invitó a participar en el proyecto y se les explicó su objetivo. Todas aceptaron participar contestando la encuesta en línea. Se estableció un plazo de 7 días para el llenado. Previa autorización se hizo un recordatorio a quienes no lo llenaron en el plazo acordado. Se obtuvieron 55 cuestionarios completos.

La encuesta se diseñó en Google Drive y se procesó en una hoja electrónica de Excel y en el programa *Atlas.ti*.

Primer acercamiento para construir una posible agenda.

55 personas respondieron el cuestionario, 33 hombres y 22 mujeres. El mayor número de participantes (32) tiene más de 10 años de experiencia trabajando el tema de género de los hombres, el resto (23) tiene menos de 10 años. Los espacios laborales en que han desarrollado actividades vinculadas con el tema de masculinidad no son únicas ni exclusivas, de manera que una misma persona pudo haber pasado de un espacio laboral a otro, o bien desarrollar simultáneamente algunos de ellos, de ahí que el número de personas en los distintos espacios sea superior al total de participantes. En los últimos cinco años 51 participantes dijeron haberse desempeñado en el ámbito académico, 21 en Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil y 11 han sido servidores públicos en alguna área de gobierno (tabla 1).

Tabla 1

Características generales de participantes.

Participantes	(n)
Hombres	33
Mujeres	22
Años de experiencia en el tema de género de los hombres	(n)
Hasta 4 años	13
5 – 9	10
10 – 14	15
15 – 19	15
20 y >	2
Ámbito laboral en los últimos 5 años	(n)
Academia – Investigación	51
Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil	21
Función Pública	11

Fuente: Encuesta.

La experiencia acumulada por el total de participantes es muy importante y abarca temáticas diversas. En la tabla 2 se enlistan dichas temáticas y el número de personas que las han trabajado, ya sea como parte

de actividades académicas - investigación, en la prestación de servicios dentro de las Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil y/o en instancias gubernamentales. No se identificó la actividad específica desarrollada, la duración, profundidad y resultado obtenido, sólo se solicitó que identificaran las temáticas que a su juicio ha trabajado. Llama la atención por una parte la amplitud temática. El mayor número de personas tiene experiencias en temáticas que han sido recurrentes en los estudios de género con hombres, como es la violencia, la paternidad, identidad, familia y homofobia. Nos llama la atención que la frecuencia más elevada sea el de emociones/sentimientos, porque no ha tenido un lugar preponderante en la literatura como tema central sino como elemento adyacente, aunque dentro del trabajo directo con poblaciones de hombres sí tiene un sitio de importancia. El tema de la corporalidad que está vinculado con los Derechos Sexuales, la Salud Sexual y Reproductiva, la Salud-Enfermedad-Atención. También ha recibido atención el ámbito de las denominadas “Nuevas Masculinidades” como formas de expresión de una configuración de género de los hombres alterna a aquella dominante asociada a estructuras patriarcales. Un tema que en la academia ha tenido una particular relevancia ha sido el de las representaciones sociales, las subjetividades de los hombres. Existe mención de otros temas no de menor importancia, pero que fueron mencionados con menor frecuencia como son las cuestiones laborales y la migración, ésta última generalmente asociada con el trabajo y la manutención familiar. Por otra parte la sexualidad y la globalización. Finalmente temas que se podrían considerar como emergentes como son la historia, el arte, los movimientos sociales de hombres, la religiosidad, la etnicidad.

Tabla 2

Temáticas trabajadas por los/as participantes.

Tema	(n)	Tema	(n)
Emociones/sentimientos	36	Salud-Enfermedad-Atención	12
Violencia (entre pares, de género, inseguridad)	32	Homosocialidad	11
Paternidades	29	Trabajo asalariado / empleo	9
Identidad	28	Trabajo doméstico	9
Nuevas masculinidades	27	Vulnerabilidad	8
Familia	23	Globalización	6
Homofobia	20	Migración	6
Hombres y feminismo	18	Sexualidad / migración transgénerica	6
Cuerpo	17	Etnicidad	4
Derechos Humanos	17	Deporte/ocio	3
Derechos Sexuales	17	Historia	3
Representaciones/imaginarios/ideología/subjetividades	17	Movimientos sociales de hombres	3
Salud Sexual y Reproductiva	15	Arte	2
Educación	14	Religiosidad	2

Fuente: Encuesta.

La experiencia acumulada por las personas dentro del subcampo de género de los hombres, ya sea en la academia, el activismo o la función pública consideramos que es rica y diversa, que concuerda con la producción científica publicada². Apelando a un juicio valorativo que sopesara las diversas problemáticas que se enfrentan por parte de los hombres en México, se les solicitó a las personas participantes que anotaran los dos temas-problema que consideraban más relevantes en términos de políticas públicas y expusieran sus razones. Para esta comunicación sólo hemos elegido el primer tema-problema propuesto por cada participante. En la [tabla 3](#) se muestran los mismos y se identifican el número de personas que así lo consideraron.

Tabla 3

Temas-Problema identificados como objeto de políticas públicas.

Tema	(n=)	Tema	(n=)
Violencia	15	Empleo	1
Cultura de género	9	Equidad de género	1
Paternidad	7	Espacios para hombres	1
Desigualdad de género	6	Estructura económica	1
Homofobia/transfobia	2	Enseñanza/Investigación con perspectiva de género	1
Salud Reproductiva	2	Migración	1
Identidad	2	Políticas públicas de igualdad	1
Conciliación trabajo familia	1	Salud-Enfermedad	1
Derechos sexuales y reproductivos	1	Salud Sexual y reproductiva	1
Discriminación	1	Transversalidad	1

Fuente: Encuesta.

El tema-problema más significativo para las políticas públicas fue la violencia que ejercen los hombres en contra de las mujeres en distintos espacios y relaciones que establecen, también la violencia social en que están involucrados los hombres en el marco de inseguridad que se vive desde hace años en el país y que se ha ido agudizando. El segundo fue un tema-problema muy amplio y complejo que definimos como cultura de género, entendida como un sistema que produce, reproduce y transmite contenidos sexistas, procesos de descalificación de configuraciones de inferioridad de mujeres frente a los hombres y de los hombres entre sí, legitimando la dominación-subordinación por medio de valores, de creencias, elementos simbólicos que regulan las relaciones que se establecen en distintos espacios. El tercero es la paternidad en que el énfasis, como se verá más adelante, está puesto en las regulaciones normativas que facilitan o entorpecen la relación padre-hijo/a. La desigualdad, la homofobia, la salud reproductiva y elementos de la conformación de la identidad también fueron mencionados entre los que más significación tiene para las políticas públicas. Además se encuentra una lista amplia de temas-problema que recibieron una sola mención.

Nos referiremos a los tres primeros temas-problema identificados por las/os participantes de la encuesta considerando las instancias gubernamentales o sociales que atienden ese problema; cuáles son, a juicio de los/as participantes, las instancias gubernamentales responsables de atenderlos; las OSC y académicas involucradas en la solución de los mismos; los actores clave que pueden contribuir en la solución del problema y, las alianzas o coaliciones que serían pertinentes construir para avanzar en la solución de los problemas.

Un tema central de la agenda de políticas públicas impulsado por las organizaciones de mujeres y feministas del país ha sido la violencia de género. Desde los años ochenta del siglo pasado formaba parte de la agenda de reivindicaciones y ha tenido un impacto notable, aunque los retos que se enfrentan siguen siendo mayúsculos. No es casual que tal inercia haya impactado, por su importancia, la consideración de que es el problema de política pública más importante que debe afrontarse. Llama la atención el nivel de generalidad con que se menciona a las instituciones que vienen desarrollando acciones para atender el problema, teniendo como eje central a los hombres (tabla 4). No es extraño que se aluda de manera sistemática a los Mecanismos de las Mujeres como instancias recurrentes en los distintos órdenes de gobierno, quienes son responsables de la operación de la Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia a nivel Federal (Cámara de Diputados del Honorable Congreso de la Unión, 2011), así como sus correlatos de las leyes Estatales y las disposiciones a nivel Municipal. El acento está puesto en la reeducación de los hombres agresores. En tal sentido otras dependencias han jugado un papel importante como la Secretaría de Salud con el Programa de Reeducción de Agresores que opera en distintos Estados de la República desde hace algunos años. Otras instituciones desarrollan acciones de sensibilización y capacitación pero no fueron detallados por los participantes de la encuesta.

Tabla 4

Instancias, actores, alianzas y coaliciones para impulsar una agenda de políticas públicas relacionadas con el tema de la violencia ejercida por hombres. México, 2014.

Instituciones que trabajan la temática

Federal: Instancias de Salud, Asistencia y Desarrollo Social; Procuración de Justicia; Educación; Derechos Humanos; INMUJERES*. Estatal: Se repiten las instancias mencionadas a nivel federal; Modelos de reducción para hombres que ejercen violencia. Municipal: Mecanismos de las Mujeres; Modelos de reeducación.

Instancias que deberían estar involucradas en la temática y acciones

Federal: Secretaría de Seguridad Pública: prevenir violencia masculina en diferentes espacios; capacitación de policías, mandos medios y altos; Secretaría de Educación: diseño curricular no sexista y con PEG*; INMUJERES*: articulador de acciones gubernamentales; Poder Legislativo: diseñar leyes contra delitos de violencia; Poder Judicial: garantizar la justicia a las víctimas.

OSC y Académicas

ONG's* que trabajan con modelos de atención de hombres perpetradores, en general del Distrito Federal (*vgr.* GENDES*, MHORESVI*, etc.) y los menos en capitales de los Estados como Xalapa y Mérida. OSC*: Cómplices por la Equidad en la sensibilización. Académicas: AMEGH* como espacio de interlocución de investigación sobre violencia; IES*: ANUIES*, UNAM*, UADY*, El Colegio de San Luis, UAM*, UA de Coahuila* impulso de iniciativas de ley.

Actores Clave

Federal: Poder Legislativo y Judicial. Estatal: Funcionarios de dependencia gubernamentales. Ámbito educativo IES*. OSC* reconocidas por su trayectoria en modelos de atención en violencia, salud; colectivos feministas, LGBTTTI*, ambientalistas, de derechos humanos, culturales, políticos; Cómplices por la Equidad/*MenEngage*. Empresarios.

Alianzas / Coaliciones

Federal: con dependencias de salud, desarrollo y asistencia social; seguridad, centros de readaptación social y el ejército; procuración de justicia y derechos humanos. Estatal: con dependencias de educación, seguridad pública y procuraduría de justicia, salud y mecanismos de la mujer. Con el ámbito legislativo. Con OSC* la formación de una red nacional de instituciones que trabajan la temática para compartir experiencias, la vinculación con sindicatos, asociación de padres de familia, colectivos de la diversidad sexual. Con IES (UNAM*, UADY*, El Colegio de San Luis) por el aporte al conocimiento del fenómeno.

Fuente: Encuesta.

Notas: *

AMEGH Academia Mexicana de Estudios de Género de los Hombres.

ANUIES Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior.

GENDES Género y Desarrollo A.C.

IES Instituciones de Educación Superior

INMUJERES Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres.

LGBTTTI Lésbica, gay, bisexual, transexual, transgénero, travestí e intersexual.

MHORESVI Movimiento de Hombres por relaciones equitativas y sin violencia A.C.

ONG's Organismos no gubernamentales

OSC Organismos de la Sociedad Civil

PEG Perspectiva de género

UA de Coahuila Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila

UADY Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán

UAM Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana

UNAM Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

Respecto a las instancias que deberían involucrarse como responsables de atender la violencia ejercida por hombres trabajando con hombres, prácticamente se mantienen la mención de las mismas instituciones y se añaden el aparato legislativo para mejorar las normas para atender de mejor manera la problemática. Un aspecto relevante es la identificación del Poder Judicial para garantizar la justicia a las víctimas y atender el problema de la impunidad que sigue siendo un lastre de difícil solución por las redes de corrupción que impregnan a las instituciones y en que está involucrada parte de la sociedad.

Las Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil (OSC) y las Instituciones de Educación Superior (IES) que vienen trabajando con una perspectiva de género (PEG) con hombres son claramente identificadas y enlistadas. Estas han sido promotoras, apoyo y punto de presión para que las instituciones públicas incorporen como parte de su trabajo a los hombres y no se limiten exclusivamente al trabajo y atención de las mujeres.

La identificación de actores clave para atender la violencia es un aspecto relevante en tanto son potenciales palancas para impulsar una agenda de políticas públicas con PEG que involucre a los hombres como agentes de cambio tendiente a la construcción de la igualdad y la equidad. Si bien se anotan a algunas instancias gubernamentales del nivel federal y estatal, el énfasis está puesto en las OSC que trabajan directamente la problemática de violencia, pero también otras que de manera tangencial tocan esta temática como los colectivos de la diversidad sexual, derechos humanos y ambientalistas. Llama la atención que se haya anotado a empresarios.

Existe una perspectiva un tanto vaga sobre las Alianzas y Coaliciones. Si bien por una parte hay una mención de una buena cantidad de instituciones públicas, OSC y de las IES, no existen planteamientos específicos de qué personajes son los sujetos clave. Con ello no nos referimos a nombres y apellidos, sino a perfiles que se consideran los idóneos para impulsar el trabajo de dichas alianzas y coaliciones y que forman parte de las entidades mencionadas.

Como hemos anotado previamente, la cultura de género la entendemos como un sistema que produce, reproduce y transmite contenidos sexistas, jerarquías que favorecen la instauración de mecanismos de inferioridad de mujeres frente a los hombres y de los hombres entre sí, legitima la dominación-subordinación por medio de valores, de creencias, de elementos simbólicos que regulan las relaciones que se establecen entre los individuos sexuados en los distintos espacios (comunitarios, institucionales, familiares, redes sociales, entre otros) en que desarrollan su vida cotidiana. Por un lado se encuentran elementos de orden estructural y por otro los de orden subjetivo que se influyen mutuamente. Este ámbito complejo fue identificado como el segundo tema-problema de política pública que involucra directamente a los hombres en México. A diferencia de la violencia las instancias gubernamentales que se encuentran trabajando en el cambio de la cultura de género es más limitado en los tres niveles de

gobierno (tabla 5). El foco está puesto en los Mecanismos de las Mujeres, en aquellas que atienden los Derechos Humanos y de Desarrollo Social con tareas de sensibilización.

Tabla 5

Instancias, actores, alianzas y coaliciones para impulsar una agenda de políticas públicas relacionadas con el tema de la cultura de género. México, 2014.

Instituciones que trabajan la temática

Federal: INMUJERES*, Secretaría de Salud y la Secretaría de Desarrollo Social. A nivel Estatal: los Mecanismos de las Mujeres, Comisiones Estatales de Derechos Humanos y delegaciones del Instituto de Desarrollo Social que desarrollan acciones de sensibilización. Municipal: los Mecanismos de las Mujeres.

Instancias que deberían estar involucradas en la temática y acciones

Federal: INMUJERES* debe diseñar estrategias para el desarrollo de capacidades de la PEG* de los hombres; en educación incluir la temática en libros de texto. Procuración de justicia y derechos humanos; de desarrollo y asistencia social; la secretaría del trabajo y el Instituto Mexicano de la Juventud. Cámara de diputados y senadores y partidos políticos. Estatal: Congresos locales y partidos políticos; dependencias de educación, trabajo, desarrollo y asistencia social, salud y de la juventud. Municipios: aluden a los bandos de policía.

OSC* y Académicas

Se especifica puntualmente algunas IES* de distintos Estados (Tlaxcala, Guanajuato, Guadalajara, DF). Las OSC*: colectivos de varios Estados y ONG's* con reconocimiento en la sensibilización y capacitación (Salud y Género; GENDES*).

Actores Clave

Funcionarios de algunas dependencias federales. A nivel estatal: la Comisión de Derechos Humanos. De manera genérica se anotan Instituciones de educación superior, colectivos de la sociedad civil, empresarios y grupos políticos, ambientalistas, culturales y artísticos.

Alianzas / Coaliciones

Federal: con dependencias educativas, de salud, seguridad pública, asistencia social y el INMUJERES*. Partidos Políticos y Congresos en particular las Comisiones de Equidad de Género. En los Estados: con los Congresos locales, los mecanismos de las mujeres y las dependencias de educación. Municipal: con los mecanismos de las mujeres. Con OSC*, los movimientos feministas, líderes empresariales, sociales y medios de comunicación; el movimiento del Lazo Blanco, *MenEngage* y GOJoven México. De manera genérica se alude a las IES* públicas y privadas.

Fuente: Encuesta.

Notas: *

GENDES Género y Desarrollo A.C.

IES Instituciones de Educación Superior

INMUJERES Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres.

ONG's Organismos no gubernamentales

OSC Organismos de la Sociedad Civil

PEG Perspectiva de género

Las instancias que deben involucrarse se amplían de manera considerable y además de los mencionados en el punto previo se anotan las dependencias educativas, de procuración de justicia, del trabajo, las que atienden a la juventud, así como los partidos políticos. No es gratuito el señalamiento de la necesidad de involucrar a más instituciones gubernamentales y del ámbito político y legislativo porque el reto del cambio cultural es de dimensiones gigantescas y de largo plazo. Hasta ahora los esfuerzos se han venido dando en la sensibilización, en hacer visibles a los hombres como sujetos genéricos, en los llamados a involucrarse en la construcción de la igualdad y la equidad, que para una gran mayoría de hombres puede resultar un tanto extraño.

La mención de OSC y de IES involucradas en proceso de sensibilización y capacitación desarrollan un trabajo “hormiga” relevante, porque son las instancias, al igual que en el tema de la violencia, habilitan a funcionarios públicos para que incorporen la PEG de los hombres en sus tareas institucionales. Eso no significa que se traduzcan necesariamente y de forma inmediata en estrategias, programas y acciones en tal dirección, ya que en todo caso deben enfrentar la maquinaria institucional existente, que en términos generales, presenta grandes resistencias a adoptar la PEG por

una parte, y por otra, que los hombres tienen un papel central en ello y que no es “asunto de mujeres”.

Al igual que en el problema de violencia, no existe una idea clara sobre los actores clave y se hace una mención genérica de instituciones o figuras públicas que potencialmente podrían fungir como dinamizadores de los procesos de cambio cultural. No obstante son puntualizaciones sobre los que se puede ir trabajando para perfilar con mayor precisión a dichos actores clave y las instancias en que se pueden localizar. De hecho en las propuestas de alianzas y coaliciones queda clara la identificación de OSC que están ya jugando un papel de liderazgo en el cambio cultural de las relaciones de género, aunque con un nivel de impacto todavía muy modesto: el movimiento del “Lazo Blanco” que involucra a los hombres en la promoción de la no violencia contra las mujeres, Cómplices por la Equidad que es el capítulo mexicano de la alianza internacional *MenEngage*.

Como lo menciona uno de los encuestados “Creo que existe un puñado de personas que estamos hartos de las masculinidades hegemónicas, pero nos encontramos aislados; en el mejor de los casos trabajando en el tema hasta donde nuestro perímetro individual alcanza. De ahí la importancia de una convocatoria a encuentros regionales o nacionales para tejer una red que potencie lo que hoy hacemos.”

El tercer tema-problema es la paternidad (Tabla 6) que ha probando tener un gran potencial en la transformación, ya que si bien se centra en el cuidado y crianza de los/as hijos/as, involucra un proceso de acompañamiento que integra las decisiones de pareja sobre la sexualidad y la reproducción biológica y social, el autocuidado de la salud, el trabajo y las implicaciones de la conciliación con la familia, el juego con los hijos, el acompañamiento escolar, la afectividad y emocionalidad, entre otros. Así se coloca la problemática de la paternidad como una pieza clave para el trabajo del padre con su descendencia, y que tiene como premisa el trabajo personal y de pareja. Es una temática integradora y que por otra parte no genera confrontación social, sino que potencialmente puede sumar intereses, voluntades y recursos.

Tabla 6

Instancias, actores, alianzas y coaliciones para impulsar una agenda de políticas públicas relacionadas con el tema de la paternidad. México, 2014.

Instituciones que trabajan la temática

Federal: La Ley Federal del Trabajo ha incorporado la Licencia de Paternidad como una prestación para los trabajadores algunas dependencias la han promovido; en el ámbito educativo el programa Escuela para Padres; Derechos Humanos. En el espacio judicial ha habido intentos para considerar a los hombres separados para obtener la custodia de los hijos. También acceso a guarderías de los hijos de hombres que no tienen cónyuge.

Instancias que deberían estar involucradas en la temática y acciones

Se identifican a instancias de asistencia social como responsables de promover la paternidad responsable. Procuración de justicia y de desarrollo social y del trabajo porque les compete las prestaciones sociales laborales y de custodia y patria potestad de los hijos/as. El espacio legislativo por modificaciones a las normas vigentes.

OSC* y Académicas

OSC* que trabajan sobre paternidad y acompañamiento en casos de gestión de custodia compartida de hijos/as. IES* que trabajan en sensibilización de género y otras que han implantado la licencia de paternidad con programas de sensibilización y capacitación.

Actores Clave

Aparato legislativo y regidurías municipales; académicos, ONG's* y grupos feministas.

Alianzas / Coaliciones

Con legisladores y funcionarios del aparato judicial (jueces y secretarios); Instancias gubernamentales de educación y salud a nivel estatal y municipal (profesorado de los distintos niveles educativos); los mecanismos de las mujeres en los Estados y Municipios. Representes de OSC* y líderes comunitarios; académicos; diversas IES*.

Fuente: Encuesta.

Notas: *

IES Instituciones de Educación Superior

ONG's Organismos no gubernamentales

OSC Organismos de la Sociedad Civil

La atención de las instituciones ha estado centrada en los elementos normativos de la Licencia de Paternidad, constituida en una prestación social en la legislación laboral mexicana. Este ha sido un logro de muchos años de lucha por parte de ciertas OSC y también de la voluntad política de legisladores/as. También está una faceta conflictiva, de las varias que tiene la paternidad, relacionada con la separación de los padres y la lucha por la custodia de las/os hijas/os. Además el limitado acceso de servicios de guardería para los padres que lo requieren.

Las instancias que deberían involucrarse en la temática de paternidad son las de asistencia y desarrollo social, de procuración e impartición de justicia, y las del trabajo. También continúan teniendo una participación preponderante las normativas para continuar mejorando las disposiciones legales que faciliten el ejercicio de la paternidad.

Las OSC y las IES han hecho un trabajo fundamental de sensibilización y gestión para lograr la modificación normativa (Licencia de Paternidad) y se constituyen en actores clave junto con grupos feministas así como legisladores/as. Sigue pendiente, al igual que en los problemas anteriores la definición de los perfiles de los actores, pero además, la identificación de otras instancias y actores que pueden contribuir en la definición de una agenda de políticas públicas. Algunos de ellos (instancias y actores) se empiezan a prefigurar con las alianzas y coaliciones sugeridas por las personas encuestadas, instancias educativas y el profesorado, jueces y secretarios en los juzgados del aparato judicial.

Notas para un cierre provisional

Para finalizar, queremos hacer algunas puntualizaciones sobre este primer ejercicio de identificación de elementos para una propuesta de agenda de políticas públicas que involucre a los hombres en la transformación de las relaciones de género. Los esfuerzos y trabajos que involucran a los hombres como aliados en este proceso de cambio son, en general, dispersos y con frecuencia aislados. No existen los mecanismos que articulen de manera sostenida y sistemática los esfuerzos realizados por algunos profesionales que se encuentran en la función pública, en la academia o en la OSC. Esfuerzos que merecen un reconocimiento por la tenacidad y espíritu transformador y comprometido por un mundo igualitario y equitativo entre

mujeres y hombres y entre hombres. Los logros, aunque modestos, son un incentivo para continuar un trabajo de largo plazo. Hasta ahora no existe una idea clara sobre una agenda de políticas públicas que articule todos estos esfuerzos, no obstante existen algunas propuestas como la de GENDES, que requieren mayor difusión y articulación con otras instancias de la sociedad civil, de la academia y de potenciales aliados en el aparato gubernamental.

Salta a la vista la concentración, el centralismo institucional tanto a nivel gubernamental como académico y de las OSC que trabajan la PEG de los hombres. Lo que se ha logrado identificar es, en parte, el aislamiento en que desarrollan sus actividades una proporción importante de interesados/as en este proceso de cambio social. También que existe un relativo consenso en la identificación de ciertos temas-problema que pueden aglutinar el esfuerzo y compromiso por construir una agenda de políticas públicas que involucre a los hombres en la transformación de las relaciones de género.

Como se ha mostrado, existe un potencial para el desarrollo de la agenda externa, tanto por la experiencia de quienes han participado en la encuesta, como por la diversidad temática que trabajan y que tiene un correlato en la creciente documentación que se viene haciendo de los problemas sociogenéricos de los hombres en el país. Violencia, cultura de género y paternidad son apenas un asomo a la riqueza de posibilidades para incidir en la transformación. Las coaliciones y alianzas que se han establecido han generado logros (licencia de paternidad es un ejemplo). Se necesita documentar tales experiencias para nutrir la misma agenda y difundir los logros, pero también los errores, dificultades y las ventanas de oportunidad que se aprovecharon para impulsar puntuales acciones de cambio.

Nos interesa discutir estos hallazgos iniciales que apuntan a la construcción de una agenda de políticas públicas. Como se ha mencionado es apenas un primer ejercicio de sistematización de una encuesta (que forma parte de un proceso más amplio) que involucra otras problemáticas que es necesario continuar sistematizando, en tal sentido la metodología que estamos utilizando es otro punto sobre el que es necesario realizar una reflexión particular, que dejamos para otro momento. Las experiencias de los movimientos de mujeres y feministas en la generación de sus agendas políticas nos inspiran y nos nutren y necesitamos un diálogo abierto y constructivo con ellas, para identificar aciertos y errores, así como

prevenciones que deben tomarse para evitar desgastes inútiles y facilitar los procesos de convergencia y sinergias.

Notas

¹ Una versión preliminar fue presentada como ponencia en el V Congreso Internacional de Estudios sobre Varones y Masculinidades. Patriarcado en el Siglo XXI: Cambios y Resistencias. Santiago de Chile. 14-16 enero de 2015.

² Desde fines de los años noventa del siglo pasado y en lo que va de éste, el número de publicaciones se ha incrementado en libros de autor, compilaciones, artículos, tesis. Algunos ejemplos son: (Amuchástegui & Szasz, 2007; Figueroa, Jiménez, & Tena, 2006; Jiménez Guzmán & Tena Guerrero, 2007; Montesinos, 2005; Ramírez Rodríguez & Cervantes Ríos, 2013b; Ramírez Rodríguez & Uribe Vázquez, 2008).

Referencias

- 2nd MenEngage Global Symposium. (2014). Declaración de Delhi y llamado a la acción. Hombres y niños por la justicia de género. Retrieved from http://www.menengagedilli2014.net/uploads/2/4/5/3/24534141/delhi_declaration_and_call_to_action_spanish_final.pdf
- Aguayo, F., & Sadler, M. (Eds.). (2011). *Masculinidades políticas públicas. Involucrando hombres en la equidad de género*. Santiago de Chile: Universidad de Chile - Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Departamento de Antropología.
- Aguilar, L. F. (1993). Estudio introductorio. En L. F. Aguilar Villanueva (Ed.), *Problemas públicos y agenda de gobierno* (pp. 15-72). México: Miguel Ángel Porrúa.
- Amuchástegui, A., & Szasz, I. (Eds.). (2007). *Sucede que me canso de ser hombre... Relatos y reflexiones sobre hombres y masculinidades en México*. México: El Colegio de México.
- Barker, G., & Aguayo, F. (Eds.). (2012). *Masculinidades y políticas de equidad de género: reflexiones a partir de la encuesta IMAGES y una revisión de políticas en Brasil, Chile y México*. Río de Janeiro, Brasil: PROMUNDO.
- Barker, G., Greene, M. E., Siegel, E. G., Nascimento, M., Segundo, M., Ricardo, C., Pawlak, P. (s/f). *What men have to do with it. Public*

- Policies to Promote Gender Equality*. Washington / Rio de Janeiro: ICRW / Instituto Promundo
- Comité de America Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer (CLADEM). (1994). *Convención interamericana para prevenir, sancionar y erradicar la violencia contra la mujer. "convencion de belem do para"*. Lima, Peru.
- Convención de Belém Do Pará. (s/f). *Convención Interamericana para Prevenir, Sancionar y Erradicar la Violencia contra la Mujer. "Convención de Belém Do Pará"* (pp. 157-163).
- Figueroa, J. G., Jiménez, L., & Tena, O. (Eds.). (2006). *Ser padres, esposos e hijos: prácticas y valoraciones de varones mexicanos* México, D. F.: El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Demográficos, Urbanos y Ambientales, Programa Salud Reproductiva y Sociedad.
- Fondo de Desarrollo de las Naciones Unidas para la Mujer / Oficina Regional. (s/f). *Convención sobre la eliminación de todas las formas de discriminación contra la mujer (CEDAW)*. Retrieved from <http://www.undp.org/cu/documentos/genero/CEDAW.pdf>
- García, E. (2008). *Políticas de igualdad, equidad y gender mainstreaming. ¿De qué estamos hablando? Marco conceptual*. San Salvador: PNUD "América Latina Genera: Gestión del Conocimiento para la Equidad de Género en Latinoamérica y El Caribe".
- GENDES. (2013). *Las políticas de igualdad de género... Elementos críticos para activar la responsabilidad masculina*. México, D F.: GENDES, A. C.
- Jiménez, M. L., & Tena, O. (Eds.). (2007). *Reflexiones sobre masculinidades y empleo*. Cuernavaca, México: UNAM, Centro Regional de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias.
- Kabeer, N. (1998). *Realidades trastocadas. Las jerarquías de género en el pensamiento del desarrollo*. México: Paidós / UNAM / PUEG / IIE.
- Montesinos, R. (Ed.). (2005). *Masculinidades emergentes*. México: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana - Unidad Iztapalapa.
- Moro, J., & Desse, J. (2010). *La Nueva Agenda de Política Pública*. México, D. F.: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales.

- Naciones Unidas. (1995). *Informe de la Conferencia Internacional sobre la Población y el Desarrollo. El Cairo, 5 a 13 de septiembre de 1994*. Nueva York: Naciones Unidas.
- Ortíz de Zárate, A. (2012). Modelo LUDO: el gobierno abierto desde la perspectiva del ciclo de las políticas públicas. *GIGAPP Estudios/Working Papers. Grupo de Investigación en Gobierno, Administración y Políticas Públicas* (pp. 25): Instituto Universitario de Investigación Ortega y Gasset.
- Ramírez, J. C., & Cervantes, J. C. (2013a). Estudios sobre la masculinidad y políticas públicas en México. Apuntes para una discusión. En J. C. Ramírez Rodríguez & J. C. Cervantes Ríos (Eds.), *Los hombres en México: veredas recorridas y por andar. Una mirada a los estudios de género de los hombres, las masculinidades* (pp. 201-221). Guadalajara, México: Universidad de Guadalajara / AMEGH / Página Seis.
- Ramírez, J. C., & Cervantes, J. C. (Eds.). (2013b). *Los hombres en México: veredas recorridas y por andar. Una mirada a los estudios de género de los hombres, las masculinidades*. Guadalajara, México: Universidad de Guadalajara / AMEGH / Página Seis.
- Ramírez, J. C., & Uribe, G. (Eds.). (2008). *Masculinidades: el juego de género de los hombres en el que participan las mujeres*. México: Plaza y Valdés / Universidad de Guadalajara / UNFPA / AMEGH / AJC.
- Simposio Global Involucrando a Hombres y Niños en la Equidad de Género. (2011). Declaración de Río de Janeiro. Simposio Global Involucrando a Hombres y Niños en la Equidad de Género. En F. Aguayo & M. Sadler (Eds.), *Masculinidades políticas públicas. Involucrando hombres en la equidad de género* (pp. 176-187). Santiago de Chile: Universidad de Chile - Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Departamento de Antropología.

Juan Carlos Ramírez Rodríguez es profesor Investigador en el Programa Interdisciplinario de Estudios de Género (PIEGE). Departamento de Estudios Regionales - INESER. CUCEA. Universidad de Guadalajara, México

Norma Celina Gutiérrez de la Torre es Directora del Centro de Estudios de Población. Departamento de Estudios Regionales - INESER. CUCEA: Universidad de Guadalajara, México

Lizett Guadalupe Cázares Hernández es becaria del programa Interdisciplinario de Estudios de Género (PIEGE). Departamento de Estudios Regionales - INESER. CUCEA. Universidad de Guadalajara, México

Contact Address: Correspondencia a Juan Carlos Ramírez Rodríguez, Departamento de Estudios Regionales - INESER. CUCEA. Universidad de Guadalajara, Periférico Norte N° 799, Núcleo Universitario Los Belenes, C.P. 45100, Zapopan, Jalisco, México, email: jucarlosra@gmail.com

Instructions for authors, subscriptions and further details:

<http://mcs.hipatiapress.com>

Alternative Masculinities for a Changing World

Liviu Catalin Mara¹

1) Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Spain

Date of publication: June 21th, 2015

Edition period: June 2015-October 2015

To cite this article: Mara L. (2015). Alternative masculinities for a changing world [Review of the book]. *Masculinities and Social Change*, 4(2), 211-212. doi: 10.17583/MCS.2015.1583

To link this article: <http://doi.org/10.17583/MCS.2015.1583>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

The terms and conditions of use are related to the Open Journal System and to [Creative Commons Attribution License \(CC-BY\)](#).

Reviews (I)

Carabí, À., & Armengol, J. M. (Eds.). (2014). *Alternative Masculinities for a Changing World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN: 978-1-137-46255-8

Este libro es una compilación de ensayos cuyo objetivo es el de posicionarse en contra de los comportamientos propios de la masculinidad hegemónica y del patriarcado para así preparar y contribuir al surgimiento de masculinidades nuevas o alternativas. Por masculinidades alternativas, los autores entienden aquellas masculinidades que: “cuestionan el comportamiento de la masculinidad hegemónica y dominante y que personifican formas más igualitarias de masculinidad. Estas masculinidades alternativas se caracterizan por no ser sexistas, ni racistas, ni homófobas, ni clasistas, etc.”. (trad. propia, p. 219)

Para conseguir el objetivo principal de fomentar estas masculinidades alternativas, el libro se adentra en el estudio de comportamientos y prácticas masculinas alternativas y en la exploración de las tendencias más equitativas en cuanto a género, al mismo tiempo que presta atención a los contextos sociales y culturales en los que se desarrollan estas actitudes dentro de la literatura americana contemporánea. El resultado que se pretende es ofrecer a los hombres de todas las edades modelos de comportamiento alternativos al modelo hegemónico y dominante. De esta manera, se pretende ofrecer a los hombres la posibilidad de transformación o una construcción de masculinidad diferente para las generaciones venideras a través de la reflexión y exposición a unos procesos de socialización diferentes.

Tal vez uno de los aspectos más novedosos que aporta el libro a la vasta literatura existente en torno a las masculinidades es su estructura original en la que queda reflejada su interdisciplinariedad. El libro tiene tres partes principales. La primera parte ofrece las aportaciones teóricas a los estudios de la masculinidad desde varias disciplinas de las Ciencias Sociales, y también de las Humanidades, como Trabajo Social, Sociología, Psicología,

Antropología y Literatura. La segunda parte consiste en la aplicación de dichos conceptos teóricos en el análisis de los modelos de masculinidad alternativos construidos en la literatura americana contemporánea. Por último, en la tercera parte del libro se reproduce una entrevista extensa sobre las masculinidades alternativas, entre los autores que impulsaron la elaboración de este libro y Victor J. Seidler, que se dedicó, entre otras, al estudio de la masculinidad.

En el recorrido que se hace en la segunda parte del libro por la literatura americana contemporánea, los autores exploran diferentes aspectos de la paternidad como constituyentes de un posible modelo alternativo; modelos de masculinidad no violentos; los modelos de masculinidad chicano/latino y los modelos de masculinidad alternativos en la población afro-americana. Para esto último analizan tres obras de Toni Morrison, Premio Pulitzer y Premio Nobel de Literatura. Por otro lado, también se exploran prácticas alternativas de género, cómo la construcción de prácticas transformadoras de la masculinidad a raíz de la crisis económica del 2008, o la reconstrucción de las masculinidades en el caso de los inmigrantes con el foco puesto en los árabes de los Estados Unidos de América.

Este libro aporta un enfoque novedoso en el estudio de las masculinidades a través del análisis de diferentes modelos de masculinidades construidos dentro de una literatura determinada, con el propósito de ampliar a nivel teórico el debate sobre los diferentes modelos de masculinidad. Tal vez hubiera sido interesante que los autores del libro plantearan como se puede llegar a contrarrestar en la práctica el modelo de la masculinidad hegemónica por las alternativas que presentan en este estudio. Sin embargo, desde el principio se avisa a los lectores que este libro “no pretende cuestionar (si fuera posible) la hegemonía masculina ni se pretende cuestionar la hegemonía de unos hombres sobre otros hombres” sino que pretende demostrar que dicha hegemonía no es universal ni inmutable, y que contiene muchas contradicciones internas a nivel global.

Liviu Catalin Mara, Universitat Rovira i Virgili
liviucatalin.mara@urv.cat

Instructions for authors, subscriptions and further details:

<http://mcs.hipatiapress.com>

Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages

Miguel Ángel Pulido¹

1) Universitat Ramon Llull, Spain

Date of publication: June 21th, 2015

Edition period: June 2015-October 2015

To cite this article: Pulido, M. (2015). Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages [Review of the book]. *Masculinities and Social Change*, 4(2), 213-214. doi: 10.17583/MCS.2015.1584

To link this article: <http://doi.org/10.17583/MCS.2015.1584>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

The terms and conditions of use are related to the Open Journal System and to [Creative Commons Attribution License \(CC-BY\)](#).

Reviews (II)

Cullum, P.H.; & Lewis, K.J. (2013). *Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages*. New York: Boydell Press. ISSSN: 1742-870X. ISBN: 978-1-84383-863-0

Que la masculinidad se vive de muy diferentes maneras es algo que, especialmente en la cultura académica occidental, se ha empezado a estudiar con creciente rigurosidad en los últimos 50 años. Pero la preocupación por la identidad masculina, viene de mucho más lejos. Libros como el que presentamos en este escrito nos ayuda entender la dimensión histórica del concepto de masculinidad. En este caso y de manera muy concreta, sobre la identidad masculina en los hombres religiosos de la Edad Media.

Once son los capítulos en los que los editores de este breve e intenso libro, han ubicado el conocimiento sobre este campo. Once capítulos que nos permite tanto conocer la realidad de las razones que podían llevar a los hombres de la Edad Media a renunciar a lo que para ellos era lo más adecuado a nivel social (tener una familia, un negocio y participar en las diferentes justas y guerras que sus señores lidiaban) para entrar a formar parte de un mundo paralelo a ese más formal. Un aspecto más que interesante de la orientación del libro es que se centra en eso para abordar aspectos tan distantes como las razones de poder que habitaban en algunas de las más conocidas figuras de la jerarquía eclesiástica de esta época histórica, como en la opción de vida religiosa y su implicación en la identidad masculina del hombre. Y todo a través de la mirada analítica sobre el concepto y la vivencia que, en este pedazo de la historia, los hombres tenía de su masculinidad y su vivencia desde la confrontación de ésta con la vida religiosa. De qué manera la opción religiosa y sus valores modelaban la masculinidad, y de qué manera los roles sociales que se otorgaban a la hombría de entonces, colonizaban o no, cuestionaban o no, la vida religiosa.

Los editores han intentado recoger esa amplia y significativa diversidad a través de los siguientes títulos: (a) De la esclavitud al arma: estudio de la Torah, masculinidad y el Talmud Babilónico, (b) Género y jerarquía: el Arzobispo de Reims Hincmar visto como un hombre religioso, (c) La defensa del matrimonio clerical: la identidad religiosa y la masculinidad en los escritos de los clérigos Anglo-normandos, (d) Los escritos sobre masculinidad e identidad religiosa en Henry de Huntingdon, (e) “La calidad de su ‘virtus’ lo muestran a él como un hombre perfecto” Hereward “the Wake” y la representación de la masculinidad laica, (f) Autoridad de los obispos y género en las narrativas de la primera cruzada, (g) ‘¿Qué tipo de hombre eres tú?’: Piedad y masculinidad en la vida de un artesano de Siena y un noble de Provenza, (h) “Imitad, también, a este rey en su virtud, que podría haber hecho mal, y no lo hizo”: Santidad laical y la reescritura de la hombría de Enrique VI, (i) Prior mitrado y modelo de vida mixta, (j) ¿Por qué los hombres se hacían monjes en la baja Edad Media de Inglaterra, i (k) Festejando no ayuno: la devoción de los hombres hacia la Eucaristía en la última Edad Media.

A través de estos capítulos entramos en la diversidad de manifestaciones de la masculinidad en clave religiosa dentro de la Edad Media. Desde esa mirada, entre los diferentes capítulos y autores, en pinceladas breves pero directas, se nos brinda la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre cuáles de estas dinámicas que se daban hace ya mil años, continúan afectando (para bien o para mal) a la identidad masculina de nuestro tiempo. Que debates de hoy se representan en la historia que nos presentan estos autores. Cuáles están superados y en cuales sería necesario ya poner el acento para abordarlos de manera rigurosa, tanto en lo que representa la representación y vivencia de la identidad masculina en la vida religiosa como en la laica, espiritual o no.

Miguel Ángel Pulido-Rodríguez, Universitat Ramon Llull
mapulido@peretarres.url.edu