Miklós Hadas[1]
Taming the Volcano: Theoretical Foundations

Abstract

This paper is part of a project to write a book about the long-term transformations of Western masculinities. Its goal is to outline and to put into critical context the main theoretical references on which the historical analyses are based. First, the central statements of Pierre Bourdieu's Masculine Domination are presented, then the French sociologist's thesis, namely that the "structure of the gap is maintained between genders" is challenged. Next, in order to re-position Norbert Elias' Civilizing Process as the founding text of Historical Studies on Men and Masculinities, the German sociologist's work is subjected to critical scrutiny. Finally, Raewyn Connell's conceptual framework is outlined from a critical perspective. In the wake of Bourdieu, it is intended to conceive of masculinities as habituses crystallized in social practice. However, contrary to Bourdieu, it is suggested that there are different layers of the habitus, and, as argued by Norbert Elias, these layers have crystallized in the long run as part of the European civilizing process. In the wake of Connell, this long term historical transformation is conceptualized as an interplay between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculine dispositions. Finally, it is concluded that there is a strong family resemblance among these three authors, mostly, due to their relational thinking and qualitative research orientation.

Keywords: history, West, habitus, civilizing process, hegemonic and counter-hegemonic masculinities, Pierre Bourdieu, Norbert Elias, Raewyn Connell

"Our languages are constructed in such a way that we can often only express constant movement or constant change in ways which imply that it has the character of an isolated object at rest, and then, almost as an afterthought, adding a verb which expresses the fact that the thing with this character is now changing. For example, standing by a river we see the perpetual flowing of the water. But to grasp it conceptually, and communicate it to others, we do not think and say, 'Look at the perpetual flowing of the water', we say, 'Look how fast

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the river is flowing.' We say, 'The wind is blowing', as if the wind were actually a thing at rest which, at a given point of time, begins to move and blow. We speak as if the wind were separate from its blowing as if a wind could exist which did not blow."

<div align="right">(Elias, 1978: 111-112)</div>

Introduction

A spectre is haunting the realm of big-picture social historical narratives – the spectre of Historical Studies on Men and Masculinities! This paper is part of a larger work, a book provisionally entitled "*Taming the Volcano*"[2], in which I intend to take a birds-eye view on the thousand-year-long dispositional transformations of Western masculinities. The main paradox here is that the topic of masculinity usually remains hidden within social scientific analysis. As it is rightly formulated by Harry Brod:

> "While seemingly about men, traditional scholarship's treatment of generic men as the human norm in fact systematically excludes from consideration what is unique to men *qua* men. The overgeneralisation from male to generic human experience not only distorts our understanding of what, if anything, is truly generic to humanity but also precludes the study of masculinity as a *specific male* experience rather than a universal paradigm for *human* experience."

<div align="right">(Brod, 1987: 2)</div>

Although social historians are mainly preoccupied with the realms of masculine existence, they do not recognize that masculine domination can be interpreted as the model of all kinds of dominations. Despite Georges Duby being one of the exceptions who explicitly writes about the *male moyen age*, he still doesn't delve into the intricacies of masculine habitus.

The main thesis of *Taming the Volcano* is that as a result of changing structural constraints, pacified and civilized counter-hegemonic dispositions gradually build upon violent hegemonic masculine dispositions. I suggest that we cannot understand present-day societies without taking into account the historical embeddedness of the non-conscious, non-reflected masculine habituses. Following Norbert Elias who stresses that the European civilizing process is reversible and there are many de-civilizing counter-spurs within it (Elias, 1996; Mennell, 1990), I suggest that the masculine habitus is a civilized volcano which can erupt anytime if the conditions are given. (Just think of Auschwitz, the Gulag, Katyn, Srebrenica, Rwanda, or the

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2   The volcano-metaphor is used by Karl Loewenstein, a disciple of Max Weber, after his first encounter with the German sociologist: „When I took my leave I was literally drunk. I was at a turning point in my life. From that moment on I had taken the oath of fealty to him; I had become hiss vassal… It is a manly face, something elemental, at times actually titanic, emanates from him… *His volcanic temperament erupts again and again*. Max Weber was a daemonic personality. Even in routine matters, there was something incalculable, explosive about him. *You never knew when the inner volcano would erupt*." (Quoted by Bologh, 1990: 39, my italics).

Armenian genocide.)[3] However, in the long run, as a result of changing structural constraints, rational, pacified, and civilized counter-hegemonic dispositions, rooted, originally, in the clerics' existence build upon violent hegemonic dispositional patterns, originally rooted in knightly life.

Certain parts of the material for this book-project have been published during the last few years. In the first text, I concentrated on the interplay between hegemonic knightly and counter-hegemonic clerical masculine dispositions, pointing out how hegemonic patterns had been structured by the uncivilized libido dominandi, i.e. by the more or less free indulgence in physical violence. I also showed the ways in which counter-hegemonic dispositions had incorporated violence control. I argued that the borders between knightly and clerical masculinities had become blurred; consequently, as a result of the changing structural constraints, by the end of the Middle Ages hybrid masculine habituses had been formed (Hadas, 2016; 2019). In the next text I identified guild members as the agents par excellence of medieval urban masculinity. My main statement was that merchants, craftsmen and artisans, similarly to clerics, had been able to control their violent impulses and to organize their lives on the bases of rationality, professionalism, and disciplined work (Hadas, 2017a). In the third text, two forms of Renaissance masculinity were presented: the hegemonic courtier and the counter-hegemonic humanist intellectual. I argued that the former had been engaged in symbolic struggles for status and prestige within ruling (royal) courts, while the latter, by creating symbolic/artistic representations and explaining natural/scientific phenomena had been responsible for the emergence of the fields of arts and sciences (Hadas, 2017b). Next, military masculinities in Early Modernity were subjected to scrutiny. I argued that as a result of the infantry- and artillery revolutions, chivalry had evolved into cavalry: knights had been transformed into military officers and the dispositional patterns of self-discipline, sangfroid, and steadiness under fire built upon the requirements of physical strength, courage and risk-taking behavior (Hadas, 2018a). Finally, by laying out the rise of an exceptionally successful modern economy and bourgeois society in the Dutch Golden Age, the activities of the members of the painters' guilds were analyzed. I emphasized that new, psychologically sensitive, plural hegemonic masculine habituses had been crystallized from the 17th century onwards (Hadas, 2018b).

In what follows, I outline the theoretical background on which the historical analyses above have been based. Following Pierre Bourdieu, I conceive of masculinities as habituses, i.e. the incorporation of enduring behavioral patterns that govern human praxis at the non-conscious level. By being perceptible, these *structured, structural structures* are liable to social classification and differentiation. At the same time, I will argue that Bourdieu erroneously claims that "the constancy of habitus (...) is one of the most important factors in the relative constancy of the structure of the sexual division of labor" (Bourdieu, 2001: 95). Relying on Norbert Elias' pro-

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3   "Mass violence against unarmed civilians has claimed three to four times as many lives in the past century as war: one hundred million at least, and possibly many more. These large-scale killings have required the efforts of hundreds of thousands of perpetrators. Such *men* were ready to kill for many hours a day, and sometimes for months or even years. Murderous regimes created these 'killing compartments' making possible the worst abominations without moral misgiving, without a sense of personal responsibility, and without pity" (Swaan, 2015: back cover, my italics).

cess sociology and Raewyn Connell's conceptual framework I highlight the historically conditioned changeability and plurality of masculine dispositions. It should also be underlined that I treat masculine habituses in a particular place and time as ideal types in the Weberian sense: in the long run, these pure types are permanently on the move (like the wind in the motto). Furthermore, these patterns are not in an either/or but in a both/and relationship with one another: the ideal types merge into one another, build upon one another and ulterior dispositions contain elements of earlier ones. In other words: habituses are historically conditioned, relational social constructs.

Theoretical references: Bourdieu, Elias and Connell

1. Whereas masculine domination can be considered as the model of all kinds of domination (Bourdieu, 2011), social sciences do not pay due attention to its study. The most frequently referenced sociological work – with the exception of the academics specializing in Studies on Men and Masculinities – on the long-term history of masculinity has been written by Pierre Bourdieu. His *La domination masculine* (Bourdieu, 1998) was granted the privilege of becoming a sociological classic in his lifetime. It has had great success. It was published in 78 000 copies in 1998 and another 30 000 copies four years later in France; within a few years it has been translated into several languages. The English version (Bourdieu, 2001) came out three years later. Although he was an outsider to both historiography and Gender Studies (and, apparently Studies on Men and Masculinities) considering his acknowledged international prestige, his book has become the most widely known sociological narrative on masculine domination.

Pierre Bourdieu's central thesis is that masculine domination – actually the model of all kinds of domination – is a social institution deeply inculcated in the objective social and subjective mental structures over the millennia, and practically structured by the same laws in the pre-modern Kabyle society of the Mediterranean region as in London's Bloomsbury district in the early 20ᵗʰ century, in Virginia Woolf's circle. The basis for its emergence is the *libido dominandi*, i.e. the instinctive desire for domination, a sort of sense of duty based on an inner drive that a man "owes himself", acquired unconsciously in the course of socialisation. This drive, or *illusio dominandi*, is constitutive of masculinity and causes men to be socially instituted to let themselves be caught up, like children, in all the games of domination that are socially assigned to them, of which war is the form par excellence. At the same time, men also become victims – victims of their illusion.

Bourdieu ascribed salient significance to habitus, i.e. behavioral patterns fixed in enduring dispositions, which govern human praxis at the non-conscious level; being perceptible, these *structured, structural structures* are liable to social classification and differentiation. Bourdieu writes about the somatisation of power relations, and formulates the thesis according to which the socially constructed biological body is also a politicised body, or, more precisely, no less than embodied politics. He refers, among others, to elementary school education which incorporates in the dispositions of growing generations a multitude of sexually differentiated ethical,

political, or even cosmological elements – e.g. teaching pupils how to hold the (masculine) right hand, how to walk, look into someone's eyes, dress – and so on, and so forth.

In this sexually determined, *sexualized and sexualizing* social order of labor division, men are active mainly in the public spheres, while women in the non-public, private spheres are not oriented towards profit or power and mostly require unlimited time input. The latter are practically goods of exchange in the games of men based on honour and dignity, serving in this capacity the reproduction of men's symbolic capital. Women, argues the author, are disposed to generate liking. Hence it is no wonder that they spend a considerable part of their time with cosmetic work. They are mainly in charge of the ceremonies organized according to aesthetic rules (family and company feasts, literary salons, receptions, etc.), so they may fill important positions in different cultural fields and are specialized in producing and differentiating symbolic distinctions. Besides, continues Bourdieu, borrowing Virginia Woolf's metaphor, they act as "flattering mirrors" in which men can view their enlarged images. Ultimately, then, all women do enrich the wealth of men who possess them. At the same time, they have the perspicacity of the outsiders so that they can view the "most serious" games of men with amused indulgence.

Two types of empirical references support these arguments. The book's primary source is the pre-modern Kabylian community in Algeria, where women are mainly associated with negative connotations while men with positive ones. All activities connected with the concepts of *internal*, *damp*, *low* and *crooked* (not only child-rearing but also mucking out the stable) are performed by women, compared to the *external*, *official*, *straight*, *dry*, *tall* (etc.) activities of men. The act of sexual intercourse itself is deemed *normal* and *classical* in the case where the man is over the woman, while all other positions of love-making are deemed perverted and often penalized by sanctions. The other reference is Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, the protagonist of which, Mr. Ramsey incorporates modern-time masculine dispositions based on the *libido academica*, i.e. a special variation of the libido dominandi. An early 20th-century academic intellectual, Mr. Ramsey is a man of whose words are verdicts, all whose predictions are self-fulfilling, they make themselves true, and whose paternal prophecy is both a forecast of science and a prediction of wisdom, which sends the future into the past.

Aiming to demonstrate "the historical labor of dehistoricization", Bourdieu states that "the major change has doubtless been that masculine domination no longer imposes itself with the transparency of something taken for granted. Thanks, in particular, to the immense critical effort of the feminist movement" (Bourdieu, 2001: 88). By referring to the increased access to secondary and higher education, waged work, public sphere, the degree of distancing from domestic tasks and reproductive functions, he also mentions "the substantive transformations seen in the conditions of women, especially in the most advantaged social categories" (Bourdieu, 2001: 88). However, the book's main statement is that "the changes visible in conditions, in fact, conceal permanent features in the relative positions: the levelling-out of the chances of access and rates of representation should not be allowed to mask the inequalities which persist in the distribution of boys and girls among the various types of schooling and therefore among possible careers" (Bourdieu, 2001: 90).

He uses the term "permanence in and through change" (Bourdieu, 2001: 91) and contends that "whatever their position in the social space, women have in common the fact that they are

separated from men by a negative symbolic coefficient which, like skin colour for blacks, or any other sign of membership of a stigmatized group, negatively affects everything that they are and do, and which is the source of a systematic set of homologous differences". Consequently, "the structure of the gaps is maintained" (Bourdieu, 2001: 91) because "girls internalise, in the form of schemes of perception and appreciation not readily accessible to consciousness, the principles of the dominant vision" (Bourdieu, 2001: 95). In other words: "the constancy of habitus (...) is one of the most important factors in the relative constancy of the structure of the sexual division of labour" (Bourdieu, 2001: 95).

He defines the study of social institutions (church, state, school, family) sustaining continuity as the primary task of the approach to "the history of women":

> "In fact, it is clear that the eternal, in history, cannot be anything other than the product of a historical labour of externalisation. It follows that, in order to escape completely from essentialism, one should not try to deny the permanences and the invariants, which are indisputably part of historical reality, but, rather, one must reconstruct the history of the historical labour of dehistoricization, or, to put it another way, the history of the continuous (re)creation of the objective and subjective structures of masculine domination. (...) Historical research cannot limit itself to describing the transformations over time of the conditions of women, or even the relationship between the sexes in the different epoch. It must aim to establish, for each period, the state of system of agents and institutions – family, church, state, educational system, etc., which, with different weights and different means at different times, have helped to remove the relations of masculine more or less completely from history" (Bourdieu, 2001: 82-83).

Even if we accept the unacceptable that, structurally speaking, at the end of the twentieth century masculine domination remained unchanged in the Western world as far as the church and the state are concerned (disregarding the differences between the Protestant and Catholic Churches, and, say, the Portuguese and British state bureaucracies) the degree of Bourdieu's essentialist over-generalization appears untenable for both the school and the family. In *Masculine Domination* he also ignores perhaps the most momentous change in gender relations in the 20th century: the transformation of intimacy (Giddens, 1992). Hence, when he discusses "the constancy of habitus" or the "strength of the structure", and states that "the structure of the gaps is maintained" between genders, he extends his theory, elaborated in his masterpiece, *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1994), about the displacement of the social structure to the displacement of the relationship between men and women, which is none other than a strategically motivated paradigm-expansion.

Several critical remarks have been formulated since the publication of *Masculine Domination*. Most of them find the book wanting in providing adequate empirical grounds for the statements (Moi, 1991; Wallace, 2003; Witz, 2004). Some say that Bourdieu is particularly defective in the analysis of changes in the period of capitalist modernity (Fowler, 2003), while others charge him with determinism, pessimism, hyper-functionalist, extreme structuralism (Joas & Knöbl, 2011) that overemphasizes order and structure (Skeggs, 2004), and even rules out social change (Perrot, Sintomer, Krais, & Duru-Bellat, 1999; Chambers, 2005). Some

critics think that the struggles of women today are not reflected at all in Bourdieu's text, and his picture of a gender order is so completely doxic and closed that it seems almost totalitarian (Krais, 2006). Several feminist scholars argue that the author fails to refer to the literature on gender studies (Wallace, 2003).

It can be added that *Masculine Domination* also ignores the representatives of Studies on Men and Masculinities. Bourdieu, who is apparently an outsider to both historiography and gender studies, not only clads his work in the (straight)jacket of his conceptual framework, but also formulates propositions which contradict the conclusions elaborated by Studies on Men and Masculinities. Namely, Bourdieu does not attempt to ascribe any importance to the plurality of masculinities, nor is he interested in looking at forms of masculine bonding, i.e. in different forms of connection and cooperation between men (religious orders, pubs, sport clubs, the army, etc.). Then, it is not surprising, that contemporary studies focusing on the plurality and historical variability of masculinities take a path which is the opposite of Bourdieu. It is characteristic that hardly any scholar of prominence references him within the field of Studies on Men and Masculinities.

2. Besides Bourdieu, my most important reference is the process sociology[4] of Norbert Elias. His opus magnum, *The Civilizing Process* (Elias, 2000), appeared in German in 1939, but was only released in English some thirty years later, after which it was translated into dozens of languages. One of my main objectives is to try to re-interpret his masterpiece as *the* founding text of Historical Studies on Men and Masculinities. By analyzing the long-term transformations in the behaviour of the secular upper classes in the West, Elias constructs a big-picture narrative about Europe as a whole. The core of his argument is that faced with external social pressures, people develop self-control mechanisms that suppress 'uncivilized', animal-like behavioral elements based on violence. These suppressions function as feelings of shame, confusion and embarrassment. Hence, these feelings are not natural endowments but the internalized products of social-historical circumstances (Dunning & Hughes, 2013; Mennell, 1989; 1992). Elias explores the permanently changing interdependencies between phenomena (such as spitting, defecating, behaviour in the bedroom, living standards, shame and repugnance, etc.) that seemingly are not linked to one another. His use of secondary qualitative sources is understandable as there were no quantitative historical data available on various forms of violence at his disposal yet. His perspicacity is attested to by the fact that, in the past few decades, investigations on the history of homicides have convincingly verified his statements (Eisner, 2003; Hadas, 2017).

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4   If we would like to understand the kernel of the process (or figurational) sociology, it is advisable to bear in mind the stream- and wind-metaphor of this article's motto. If we take it seriously and wish to apply it, we must recognise that we have to break radically with our routine, for – as Elias notes – our language forces us to try and grasp the analyzed subject with the help of static notions. One of the fundamental specificities of process sociology that it thinks relationally, and wishes to grasp the studied phenomena as they *move* and *change*. For example, the concept of power does not denote static and rigid dichotomies (oppressor/oppressed, lord/servant, etc.) but lays emphasis on motion, change, and transition, i.e. always refers to *changing balances of powers* (Elias, 1978).

He characterizes the everyday activity of a knight and his wife in the following way:

> " 'He spends his life', we read of a knight, 'in plundering, destroying churches, falling upon pilgrims, oppressing widows and orphans. He takes particular pleasure in mutilating the innocent. In a single monastery, that of the black monks of Sarlat, there are 150 men and women whose hands he has cut off or whose eyes he has put out. And his wife is just as cruel. She helps him with his executions. It even gives her pleasure to torture the poor women. She had their breasts hacked off or their nails torn off so that they were incapable of work' " (Elias, 2000: 163).

It is easy to understand the central thesis of *The Civilizing Process* if we reflect on the feelings and sentiments that overcome us while reading the above lines. No doubt, there is hardly any 21st century reader in whom the acts described in these sentences do not cause a feeling of embarrassment, confusion, puzzlement, abhorrence or shame. In other words, we have internalized violence control, which, according to Elias, is the decisive indicator of the civilizing process.[5] Violence control is to be traced, first of all, to the emerging state monopoly on violence and taxation:

> "Everyday life is freer of sudden reversals of fortune. Physical violence is confined to barracks, and from this store-house, it breaks out only in extreme cases, in times of war or social upheaval, into individual life. (…) When a monopoly is formed, pacified social spaces are created which are normally free from acts of violence" (Elias, 2000: 369-372).

In much of the world, *The Civilizing Process* is now considered one of the most important sociological books written during the 20th century.[6] Around the 1960s he even wrote a book on the transformation of the relationship between men and women, which was almost ready in 1971 when – to the greatest dismay of posterity – it perished due to the neglect of the cleaning personnel (Mennell, 1989). It can only be partially reconstructed what he would have written on the subject. Fortunately, we have a study (Elias, 1987) which is rightly presumed to contain parts of the destroyed book. Here he argues that a civilizing process took place in the Roman Empire over the centuries. By way of illustration, he refers to Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*

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5   After this description, he adds the following comment: "Such affective outbursts may still occur as unusual phenomena, as 'pathological' degeneration, in later phases of social development. But here no punitive social power existed. The only threat, the only danger that could instill fear was that of being overpowered in battle by a stronger opponent. Leaving aside a small elite, raping, pillage, and murder were standard practice in the warrior society of this time. (…) Outbursts of cruelty did not exclude one from social life. They were not outlawed. The pleasure in killing and torturing others was great, and it was a socially permitted pleasure. To a certain extent, the social structure even pushed its members in this direction, making it seem necessary and practically advantageous to behave in this way" (Elias, 2000: 163).

6   This statement does not refer to the USA: Steven Pinker, the eminent American public social scientist wrote in 2011 that Elias is "the most important thinker you have never heard of" (Pinker, 2011: 59).

which he finds to exemplify the increasingly refined and self-controlled interpersonal relations in sexual behavior, art and social life in general: people communicate with increasing sensitivity, sophistication and empathy with each other. As can be seen, the reasoning of this late work is substantially identical with that of his masterpiece: he repeats what he expounded earlier, carrying out a kind of paradigm expansion: he applies his theory of civilization to different social-cultural circumstances.

However, as in the case of Bourdieu, Elias' ideas are not beyond criticism. Although he explored vital elements of the civilizing process, he didn't ascribe due importance to specific decisive factors. Indeed, he had interesting and original thoughts on the transformation of the relationship between men and women. However, he failed to examine to what extent and in what way the dynamics of these relations within the intimate sphere had contributed to the civilization of violence in the long run. Nor did he adopt, between the 1960s and 1980s, the conceptual framework of the emerging Gender Studies. It would be excusable that in *The Civilizing Process*, written in the 1930s, the concept of gender was not included. However, it is less acceptable that as late as in 1987, when the gender-term was already in use in social sciences, he preferred to choose the *sex*-concept in the title of the article on the ancient Roman Empire ("*The Changing Balance of Power between the* Sexes"). To put it sharply, Elias failed to differentiate between gender, sex and sexuality, and he did not deal in an appropriate way with the transformation of the intimate sphere.

He did not take into account that – with the decrease in family size and the increase in the importance of the child-rearing modern motherhood – the centre of family life moved from patriarchal authority to maternal affection (Ryan, 1981). It is symptomatic that, when writing about the emerging importance of women who attract poets, singers and learned clerics in the pacified feudal courts, he did not delve deeper into the analysis of the changing power relations between genders but concentrated on how the poetry of these troubadours and minnesingers surrounding the high-born ladies with devotion and love poems promoted the advance of the civilizing process. Namely, he failed to explore what further changes had been generated by the transformation of the intimate sphere, concerning, first of all, the long-term transformation of gender(ed) habituses.

I also agree with those critical views (Taylor, 1989; Jarrick & Södeberg, 1993; Dülmen, 1996) that admonish him for not ascribing due importance to the churches and religion, first of all, Protestantism in his analysis of the Western civilizing process. I also accept the critique that he has underplayed the role of the lower social groups in the civilizing process. Hence, if we take seriously the Eliasian thesis according to which "the rise in the division of functions also brings more and more people, larger and larger populated areas, into dependence on one another; it requires and instills greater restraint in the individual, more exact control of his or her affects and conduct, it demands a stricter regulation of drives and – from a particular stage on – more *even* self-restraint"(Elias, 2000: 429; italics in the original), it is justifiable to regard the shift of the power balance between genders as a key explanatory factor of the civilizing process.

3. My third reference is Raewyn Connell, the most important researcher within the field of Studies on Men and Masculinities. As is well-known, the novelty of her approach is that since

the late 1970s, she has concentrated on the plurality and changeability of masculinities. As a pro-feminist scholar, she intends to grasp gender relations as power relations. Connell sees masculinity "not as an isolated object, but as an aspect of a larger structure" (Connell, 1995: 67), and defines it as "simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture" (Connell, 1995: 71). Her central question is how the social structure determines masculine existence, i.e. how patriarchy is reproduced. This is undoubtedly an original and legitimate postulation – particularly when one keeps in mind that the broadly defined problem of masculinity was outside the scope of social scientists until the last third of the 20th century.

Her most often referenced term is "hegemonic masculinity", i.e. "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Connell, 1995: 77). The concept of hegemony, derived from Gramsci's analysis of class relations, "is a historically mobile relation" and "likely to be established only if there are some correspondences between cultural ideal and institutional power, collective if not individual" (Connell, 1995: 77). She also points out that there are "specific relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men" (Connell, 1995: 78): first of all, the "dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men"; furthermore, we should also recognize "the relationship of complicity with the hegemonic project" (Connell, 1995: 79).

Nevertheless, her approach has also certain weaknesses. First, she does not offer a full-fledged analysis of the long-term transformation of masculinities. She covers the "history of masculinity" between 1450 and the end of the 20th century, in less than 20 pages: from the Protestant Reformation and the philosophy of Descartes, she passes via the issues of colonization, the growth of cities, gentry masculinity, the Boy Scouts of America, Bengalis in India to the "global gender order" of our time (Connell, 1995: 185-203). Prior to offering this historical overview, sensing that her argument might not be sophisticated enough, s/he remarks: "What follows is, inevitably, only a sketch of a vastly complex history. It seems important to get even rough bearings on a history so charged with significance for our current situation" (Connell, 1995: 186). Just like Bourdieu, Connell also tends to ignore relations among masculinities that are not based on struggle or domination, but on co-operation and solidarity. Consequently, several decisive bonds within all-male communities (friendship; fandom; solidarity between soldiers, monks, classmates, members of subcultures, etc.) cannot be grasped through her conceptual framework. Next, by referring to the "*cultural dynamic* by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life" (Connell, 1995: 77; my italics), the use of the concept of hegemonic masculinity contributes to the underestimation, even oversight of the pre-modern situation, when power relations were based on the monopoly of *physical violence*. Another problem is that, emphasizing the "dynamic character of Gramsci's concept of hegemony", namely that "Gramsci always had in mind a social *struggle* for leadership in historical change (Connell, 1995: 249, my italics) her approach, similarly to Bourdieu, tends to ignore relations among masculinities.

A further debatable element of her theorizing is that the concept of hegemony is used, consistently, in the singular. In an article written with Messerschmidt (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) they acknowledge that although in different societies and cultures it is logically possible to define a 'thousand and one' variations of masculinity', they proclaim that there is a *single* hegemonic form in every relation, even if it is incessantly changing. By referring to Messner's book on masculinity politics in the United States (Messner, 1997), according to which "most of these movements with contrasting agendas (…) present a claim to be *the* way for men to think and live", Connell and Messerschmidt conclude that "whatever the empirical diversity of masculinities, the contestation for hegemony implies that *gender hierarchy does not have multiple niches at the top*" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005: 845, my italics).

This position concerning the singularity of hegemonic masculinity is debatable even if we exclude social relations structured by solidarity and co-operation and remain within the framework of the Connellian approach and accept that hegemonic masculinity is a configuration of gender practice based on the dynamics of a cultural struggle. Admittedly, examples can be found at any time in support of using hegemony in the singular and argue, for instance, that the mythopoetic men's movement represents a single desirable masculinity model that crystallizes at a particular time and place. However, many other situations and relations can also be found where a comparably lasting balance evolves among competitive alternatives, that is, no single model can acquire (and even claim) hegemony. Just think of western-type parliamentary democracies in which identical groups of citizens may be drawn for decades to one or the other political force representing different values, ideologies, and, implicitly, more or less hidden masculinity codes and masculinity politics.. No sociologist would think – provided that s/he wishes to interpret the social processes underlying the political changes on the surface – that the ascent of any rival political party to power would result in the masculinity forms the winner represents becoming hegemonic overnight, while those associated with the loser becoming subordinated, marginalized (or, what is more, accomplices of the hegemonic model).[7]

Another source for the vulnerability of this conceptual framework is that it is based on a naïve theory of reflection, which does not reckon with the complexity of the process of representation and interpretation. According to this position, "hegemony works in part through the production of exemplars of masculinity (e.g., professional sports stars), symbols that have authority even though most men and boys do not fully live up to them" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005: 846). Connell and Messerschmidt fail to provide a theoretical explanation here of exactly *who* represents *what* and – more importantly – through which transmitting and interpreting mechanisms do these connotations get into masculinity practices. What they do provide are no more than some brief and underdeveloped references. For example, they devote a mere two sentences to the "admired masculinity conduct" represented by the Soviet regime's celebration of the Stakhanovite industrial worker, noting that "such models refer to, but also in various ways distort, the everyday realities of social practice" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005: 838).

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7   As it was intended to be shown by my empirical historical analyses mentioned in the introduction, the transformation of masculine habituses can be grasped as a process during which hegemonic and counter-hegemonic dispositions react to each other, and produce new, hybrid (hegemonic) forms in the long run.

Unfortunately, they do not deal either with the specific connotations of this "distorted" masculinity model or with the distinguishing qualities of distortion as a form of specific representation. They handle this "ambivalent" and "distorted" model as the indicator of Soviet-type hegemonic masculinity without further argumentation. In doing so, they invalidate the Gramscian depth of the concept and reduce the phenomenon of hegemony to pure ideology or propaganda. Nor do they ponder, although this aspect should not be eschewed in a subtle analysis, that a model offered by the propaganda might be interpreted in innumerable forms by the "oppressed": e.g. turning it upside down, putting it into quotation marks or giving it a critical reading. Hence, if a researcher is satisfied with the exploration of the propagandistic model when searching for masculinity patterns in a Soviet-type system, s/he forgoes the possibility of studying the much more interesting further (hegemonic) masculinity patterns.

Finally, the quality of her theory can also be zriticized: the price she pays for her attractive conceptual framework is the involvement of sometimes confusing simplifications and conceptual inaccuracies. When in a book of two to three hundred pages, instead of a detailed analysis there is only one or even half a page to discuss, let us say, the logic of the gendered accumulation process in industrial capitalism, the power relations of empire or subordination (Connell, 1995); one to three pages on power relations, production relations, emotional relations or symbolic relations (Connell, 2002); it does not seem to be completely unfounded to label the author's approach as "reductionist" (Whitehead, 2002: 93), or even a "schematic oversimplification" (Tosh, 2004: 56).

Conclusion

One of my main objectives was to question the key statements of Bourdieu's *Masculine Domination*. Nevertheless, I don't want to throw the baby out with the bathwater. To put it shortly and sharply, in the wake of Bourdieu, I conceive of masculinities (and of course femininities) as habituses conditioned in social practice. Following Elias, I assume that masculine habituses are crystallized in the long run, as part of the Western civilizing process. My interpretation differs from the Bourdieuisan approach inasmuch as I aim to take the structurally conditioned plurality of dispositions into account. Unlike Elias, I intend to ascribe greater emphasis to the study of non-secular (i.e. clerical) patterns. Compared to Connell, the novelty of my analysis lies in the fact that it tries to grasp the historical dynamics of both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic masculinities.

Fortunately, however, these three eminent authors have a common denominator: there is an intellectual kinship, a kind of familiarity among them, the essential component of which is their qualitative and cultural(ist) orientation on the one hand, and their relational thinking, on the other. Besides, both Bourdieu and Connell are embedded in Marxism and conflict theory; accordingly, Connell's masculinity-definition is not far from Bourdieu's definition of habitus. Furthermore, the habitus-term has a place in the Eliasian process sociology, too: Elias draws a parallel between the parliamentarization of the squire and the sportisation of leisure-time, arguing that the people who sent the deputies to the parliament and pursued sports in eachother's company were motivated by similar *habitus* components irrespective of their political

orientation (Elias & Dunning, 1986). His argument also warns that it would be ill-advised to take parliamentarianism as the cause and sporting customs as the effect, because both phenomena are conditioned by the same structural specificities of 18ᵗʰ century English society. Bourdieu formulates the same kind of relations when he states that various existential conditions produce different habituses, which can be simply transferred to diverse areas of practice (Bourdieu, 1984).

All in all, the conceptual framework outlined above might have several dividends for the Studies on Men and Masculinities. The Bourdieusian paradigm can comfortably coexist with both Eliasian process sociology and the theory of hegemonic masculinity – without erasing the Gramscian reminiscences of the Connellian approach. As a result of this family resemblance, we can get a consistent and coherent, theoretically embedded terminology with a lot of free valences on the basis of which there is a good chance to grasp complex social processes and to open new perspectives for the study of the long term transformations of Western masculinities.

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