MEDIA AND HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY: (DE) CONSTRUCTION AND REPRESENTATION

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Media, Sexual Identity and Society

Modern civilization enables men to prepare themselves actively and construct their masculinities within explicit social and historical settings. Diverse cultures determine what it means to be a man about "the others," such as racial minorities, sexual minorities, or women.On the other hand, each culture has a predominant paradigm, "hegemonic," while distinct characters are subordinated. Therefore "gender is invariably relational, and designs of masculinity are socially determined in contradistinction from some designs (whether actual or hypothetical) of femininity". Masculine domination can be seen through performance, status, outlook, representation, sexuality, profession, or behavior and should be examined in three proportions: local, regional, and global.

A new hegemonic form emerges whenever dominant masculinity is challenged through social processes because masculinity is not a static element implanted in a person's body or character. Masculinities are configurations of practice accomplished in social action. Even though each culture defines dominant masculinity elements, it is generally constructed within heterosexuality, marriage, power, professional and economic prosperity, ethnic dominance, physical force, and diverse social groups. However, social transformations (for example, led by feminist or gay movements) lead to new forms of masculinity such as metro sexuality, new man, laddism, etc. References also stress the importance of economic and cultural influences in a society where the media play a significant role. Thus, media conduct an ideal image of a man in a specific community suggesting how a man should look, but they also spread trends and changes in the views on desired men. Thus the image of men has changed, and male images in media have increased over time.

Media scholars seek to gain a comprehensive understanding of popular media forms, particularly print (newspapers, magazines), radio, television, film, the Internet, and gaming. Their expansion of research covers contemporary and historical outlooks, regulation, and commercialization of mass media. It also covers the impact of media on individuals and society in everyday lives. Media researchers might study individuals' work in a newsroom

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or the broader role of the commercially based media system in determining the kinds of content available. They might examine a single television program to know how it relates to larger cultural spheres or study a wide range of images to examine larger representation patterns. When it comes to audiences, media researchers might use a laboratory setting to measure the short-term impact of particular media messages, survey research to measure the longer-term effects, or use ethnographic methods to investigate and study how people use and make sense of the media in their everyday lives. They might contemplate how specific technologies, such as the television or Internet, impact the connections between individuals, politics, business, etc. No matter the particular question or method used, most media scholars agree that grasping media's cultural and social impacts requires a multifaceted approach. The media study draws from two primary research camps, a mass communication tradition and a media studies tradition. Mass communication research emerged by introducing new technologies that allowed mass dissemination of messages (e.g., radio and television) and drew primarily from the social sciences, particularly sociology and psychology. Mass communication theorists were mainly concerned with the effects of media at individual and societal levels. But, as a subset of media researchers and theorists began extracting more from political science, literary studies, and anthropology, the epithet of media studies g was growingly applied to a body of work that concerned itself with expanded attention to the cultural connotations of media. The development of new media technologies allowing for dissemination and two-way communication also has led some researchers to use the term "media" preferably in place of "mass communication" to express their field of study. A significant area of inquiry for media scholars in both camps is the relationship between media and identity. How they conceive the relationship between media and identity depends on whether they come from a social scientific mass communication tradition or a cultural studies approach found in media studies. The first way of thinking about media and identity is viewing identity as before media, that is, that identity categories are treated as generally stable, identifiable, and self-evident. This relationship is explored most commonly within the social scientific approach to the study of media. The second way of conceiving the relationship between media and identity involves thinking of media as part of constructing identity. Identity is developed as less fixed than in the social scientific approach.

From the traditional to the technologically driven media, people have been anxious about depicting sex and violence. Although "sex and violence" are often expressed as inevitably connected, the variation in the volume of research examining the media's influence on sex and violence unveils much about our cultural predispositions. Our civilization is

much more contended and values-driven about sexual expression. The cultivation theory, propounded by Gerbner and Gross (1976), suggested that media depictions of sexual behaviors are more encompassing and dominant than the little life experience of young people, cultivating approach and conjectures in young people that are more harmonious with virtual reality than with reality itself. As the young generation uses media more and more, it has been suggested that media may influence the information they obtain from their real-world peers. Ultimately, media professionals may become "super peers," engaging youths' ambitions, displaying how fictional teens believe and represent, and functioning as virtual role models for those reckoning who they are and how they function as sexual beings.

Many of the characteristics of ideal men are global and spread through imagery in the media, especially advertisements. Reference calls such masculinity based on consumption the "branded masculinity." In other words, advertisements and commercials of branded products represent a single masculinity model. However, it can be adjusted to local culture specifics (age, race, relation to women, etc.). Such presentations of men in advertisements aim to transform men into consumers by legitimizing their body beauty. Therefore, the body becomes an object manipulated, disciplined, and viewed by others, essential in creating men's identity. In such a context, men are encouraged to work on their bodies (by using unique products) to succeed in relations, work, etc.In the last some decades, society has witnessed extraordinary transformations, which have enabled different aspects of our lives to be coordinated through electronic information flows.

(De)Constructing the Culture of Hegemonic Masculinity

We reside in an environment that is ineluctably attributed to culture and, more particularly, the media's tenets to portray through their numerous cultural industries. This notion is most comprehensively inscribed by Stuart Hall, a critical paradigm theorist known as Cultural Studies (Griffin, 2011). As per Hall's work, these cultural industries include the producers of radio, newspapers, television, film, and fashion magazines. Hence, it is not unusual that the media hold such an important voice in our day-to-day affairs. "The media work as watchdogs, the guides, the informants, the messengers, the participants and, at times, the comrades" (Khunou, 2013, p.191). Some of the advantages they characterize due to all these names are the potential to educate society who deserves what and administer guides that outline our consciousness of the community (Griffin, 2011). Since the media enlighten and educate us of our cultural identities, their cultural industries are considered powerful apparatuses of social dominance that eventually produce hegemony. While it is not a deliberate design, the mass media can defend society's most potent members'

supremacy.

Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell (1987) promulgated the concept of hegemonic masculinity concerning those characteristics that numerous cultures ascribe to 'real men' and defend all men in a dominant status. On local and regional points, hegemonic masculinity manifests itself in diverse forms and is frequently growing, principal researchers to conceptualize and consider the concept of various hegemonic masculinities.On a global order, hegemonic masculinity depicts society's model of how male behavior should be. In a real sense, its function is to licit men's cultural domination and control over women in all facets of life, which is apparent in many societies globally. Hegemonic masculinity also indicates the transcendence of 'manly' men over the 'not-so-manly' men. This cultural domination is often depicted through religious customs, the mass media, professions, and government systems and models.

Hegemonic masculinity is not supposed to be in a statistical sort. Only a few men might follow it. However, it is undoubtedly normative that it represents the most crucial measure of being a man in the present circumstances. It needs all men to locate themselves and ideologically legalizes women's global subjection to men. (Connell and MesserSchmidt, 2005, p.832) A general misinterpretation of hegemonic masculinity is when the notion pertains to boys or men misbehaving or connecting to the 'alpha male.' Whereas in some circumstances, the concept relates to men's involvement in harmful activities - including physical violence - such activities are not always the defining characteristics. Cultural notions of masculinity need not correspond to actual men's characters or the certainties of men's ordinary accomplishments.

While clarifying the significance of this idea against other general languages like hyper- and hypo-masculinity, Christine Beasley (2008) accentuated it is worth mentioning that the latter beliefs correspond not so much to political legitimacy as to the extent of specific features that at anyone may be consorted with standardizing manliness. 'Therefore, it is feasible for a person or group to show what is viewed as hyper-masculinity but not to be established as a model, not to mobilize legalization.

Trujillo (1991) expanded hegemonic masculinity by classifying five significant characteristics that specified hegemonic masculinity in media practice. These characteristics are:

(1)   'when power is circumscribed in terms of physical strength and authority (particularly in the depiction of the body),

(2)   'when it is circumscribed through professional accomplishment in an industrial,

capitalistic culture,'

(3)   when it is portrayed in contexts of inherited patriarchy,

(4)   'when it is represented by the courageous, romantic backwoodsman the past and of the current outdoorsman,' and

(5)   'when heterosexually is determined' and centered on the description of the phallus (Trujillo, 1991, pp.291-2).

Harry Brod (1987) discusses that prevalent masculinity representations contain that 'real men' are physically powerful, driving, and in command of their work. However, the fundamental division between manual and subjective labor means that no one's system satisfies all these requirements. Manual workers perform duties for others at the low end of the class ambit while administration remains at a department. Hence, while the uncertainties yielded by these discrepancies are especially displeasing to men, these uncertainties also compel them to adhere more firmly to springs of masculine character validation granted by the imaging practice. 'For working-class men, with having limited access to more complex characteristics of masculinity-validating capacity, the physical build and its capability for violence give a strong means of obtaining and advancing manhood' (Brod, 1987, p.14).

Hegemony, a part of Cultural Studies, is associated with numerous smaller, more particular beliefs. The concept of hegemonic masculinity came into widespread standpoint in the 1970s. It referred to a dominant sort of masculinity that has been exalted as the most flourishing in United States tradition (Hardin, Keuhn, Jones, Genovese &Balaji, 2009). Clarkson (2005) posits that hegemonic masculinity is the incarnation of a supreme model of masculinity that can only be discerned through brave characters in fantasy. The conventional hegemonic masculine man exhibits physical power and domination, professional attainment, patriarchy, backwoodsman, and heterosexuality as the five essential elements to nurture this model. Masculinity obtains strength through these characteristics' performance; hence "performing power is performing masculinity" Hatfield, 2010, p. 528).

Even if the five principal components encompassing hegemonic masculinity perform a good work exemplifying its approach, it can be contended that this sort of masculinity is so engaging because it is situated more on excluding specific characteristics than on inclusion (Hardin et al., 2009). To be more extensive, these expressions that are ostracized by hegemonic masculinity, presenting attributes such as vulnerable and subordinate, are a matter of libel because they are acknowledged features of two out-groups: women and gay men. Anything considered as the feminine is in contrast to what hegemonic masculinity endures. This assumption can flourish as no tactile definition for heterosexual cowardice

subsists, and even when the conception is recognized, it corresponds to gay (Hatfield, 2010). Gayness has been transcribed into hegemonic masculinity's blend of all its abandoned male characteristics, and femininity is one of such characteristics (Hardin et al., 2009).

Representation of hegemonic masculinity in the media

Gray and Ginsberg (2007, p.19) posit that women's growth in leadership has generated a sense of predicament in masculinity worldwide. Particularly in acculturations where the conventional man's position as bread-winner or defender or preserver has diminished, and the machine has replaced physical force, the pursuit of muscularity has become one of the limited means men can demonstrate their masculine traits.Therefore, men have advanced strengths, not for their utility but their depiction of masculinity.

By supporting distinguish masculinity from femininity, representations of masculine aggressiveness and violence - including violence against women - bestow male youths throughout the class, race, status, and geographical boundaries a level of self-esteem and 'security within the more socially admired masculine attribute moreover, as microeconomic transformations have imparted to a declination in both employment and actual remuneration for working-class males in many professions, pictures of violent masculinity in the representative domain of media and advertising work, in part, to strengthen masculine characteristics in the temporal world (Katz, 2011, p.263).

In several corners of the world, magazines and television advertisements for men are prevalent with ads portraying violent male figures, like football players, leather-clad bikers, and big-fisted boxers. Men's sports magazines and televised sporting shows draw millions of dollars worth of military advertisements. Moreover, the preceding many years have witnessed a flourishing of ads for commodities to help men develop muscular builds- from weight training equipment to nutritional products and services to strengthen their muscles. These commercials exploit men's feelings of not being significant, intense, or strong enough to render them with the commodities that will amplify certain traits.

Male youths challenged with generational changes ubiquitously locate themselves on the receiving end of music videos composed by various male performers. They present working-class or urban 'rebel' masculinity that epitomizes all types of violent anger and discontent and demands authentication in non-compliance of prevailing social arrangements. The subcultures connected with some of these music genres - from country music to rock, heavy metal, punk, and hip-hop - espouse a boisterous kind of misogyny. Some of them have consorted with a culture of rape and other types of intimate violence against women. Still, advertisers globally have sought to use this 'young men within your face attitude' to market products to young males. While the instances differ from one country to another,

these young artists are frequently exhibited with violent gestures on their faces, wearing clothes adorned with writings and other graphics expressing a strong, aggressive, and nihilistic attitude (Katz, 2011, p.263).

Imbedded in the construction of masculinity is a culture. Culture is a broader phrase comprising every aspect of society that prepares one for a wider group. Necessarily, the media is embedded with this. The press disseminates ideas to the larger audience and creates what we usually understand, how we are expected to behave, perform, act, etc. Popular culture influences who and what is appropriate to be on the cultural map in the first site, endeavoring approaches to think and feel about something (Gamson, 2016, 394). Thus, we should recognize who is appropriate to be on the cultural map for masculinity and those who do not exist in that frame.Men's lifestyle magazines can be significant sections for inquiring about masculine practices, masculinities, and constructions (Tan et al., 2013, 238). This masculinity brand is embedded with uncertainties and self-doubt caused by organizations to get men to buy commodities they think they need to improve their representation. Such capitalistic notions in the media and commercials survive for women too, but men also enhance power and ability, indicating the masculinity most solicited in culture.

Mainly linked with the process of masculinity, it is essential to acknowledge that everything we perform, see, listen, buy, communicate, and read influences our construction. Media advertisements catered towards men prove practical situations to investigatemasculinity and evaluate how they are constructed. Western commercials have recently attempted to generate more dialogue for fairness in men's styles, especially men donning makeup. By promotingmen to take better care of themselves in commercials, mass media supports men to becustomers of what is deemed feminine (Harrison, 2008, 55). Western cultures often blend makeup and individual skincare and sanitation with femininity. While femininity is linked with these circumstances, conventional masculinity in society generally is socially constructed around self-esteem, action, dominance, self-reliance, toughness, liberty, emotional unconcern, and competitiveness (Harrison, 2008, 55). These characteristics contribute a general structure for examining commercials related to masculinity, but they also locate men into different classes.

Conclusion

According to the third-wave feminist ideologies, sexual images empower and promote sexual freedom of representation. Notwithstanding, there also exist inquiries of "who is this image for" and "who created this image?" In general, the images are produced in a patriarchal setup that directs the norms of social organizations. Marxist feminism proposes that

patriarchy comprehensively suppresses women through societal arrangements, including media (Chaftez, 1997; Gimenez& Vogel, 2005; Spitulnik, 1993). Applying Marxist feminist approaches, it may be challenging to decide whether or not the images of sexual women empower women, as the process affirms that the patriarchy dominates the social arrangements and suppresses the women within it. Though, it is crucial to consider a new movement directed at the body and representation. Now, we have more ability to correlate, interact, and entertain ourselves than ever before in antiquity. By using media to engage, interact, teach, learn, disseminate, we can concurrently learnto examine the right from the wrong and, instead ofallowing media to dominate them, dominate the mediato communicate the information, experience, and procedures that will prepare them to be healthy,accountable, cautious, and vigilant. The way gender is portrayed and interpreted in the media does impact how we comprehend gender roles. Many gender-specific characteristics can encourage the image of what a man and a woman are and how they should act and behave relating to each other.

Media content is both a demonstration and a reference of culture. Media content takes ingredients of civilization, magnifies them, expresses them, and serves them back to an audience. Media foist their interpretation in making a symbolic environment. If we assume that culture must change, readjust, and transform, media content may stimulate or decelerate this transformation (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 60). By characterizing women as homemakers, media content may magnify a kernel of honesty. Still, the vitality and ubiquity of those representations may make it more challenging for women to be accepted in non-stereotypical characters. Media content may take society's gravest features and blow them up so extensively that they are reinforced and make it more difficult to change. Although media representations may display power relations as they exist, they may also assure that no other sorts of relations are acceptable. (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 60).Media is an indispensable element of the culture when studying gender - it is where the audience perceives themselves and others' impressions and performs a critical role in forming, strengthening, and stimulating broader societal perspectives.

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