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Introduction

The signs of a transition in the global gender order appear, in part, to be linked to the conjunctural shift in the global capitalist accumulation process. The main observation is that men's traditional roles in the workplace, at home and in school have been eroding with the shift towards a knowledge-based and services world-economy. However, the transition in the gender order is more than merely a matter of economic adjustment and industrial re-specialization. The transition has much to do with the impact of the anti-systemic movements and changes in the politics of identity such as the rise of feminism and the women's movement, the feminization of both male consumption culture and the workplace, the gay rights movement and the resistance to empire and racialized masculinities (Nurse 2004). These trends have evoked a counter-movement and a counter-discourse on male marginalization, demasculinization and the feminization of masculinity in core countries (Bly 1990) as well as in peripheral areas (Miller 1991). The erosion of the male superiority myth has specifically affected the hegemonic status of the white male subject. For example, Johan Galtung argues that

> The faith in male, Western, white innate superiority has now been badly shaken by the struggles for liberation by women, non-Western peoples (such as the Japanese economic success over the West), and colored people inside Western societies. (Galtung 1996: 203)

The backlash to all of this has been exhortations to rediscover "lost masculinity" as embodied in the male marginalization thesis, the mythopoetic men's movement and the white supremacist discourse (Ferber 2000; Harper 1994). These sentiments were dramatically expressed in the US in the 1990s in the "Million Man March" organized by Louis Farrakan of the Nation of Islam. The historic march to reclaim black manhood was followed a year or so later by the "Promise Keepers" march which was targeted at reclaiming white manhood. On the opposite side, a discourse has emerged which argues that men pose a growing social problem because an increasing number of them are uneducated, unemployed and unmarried (*Economist* 1996). The problem with these responses is that they tend either to construct men as victims of the women's or feminist movement or to pathologize them as under-achievers, deviants and dangerous.

The "man question" in the global gender order is largely based upon the hegemonic masculinity stereotype of "male-as-power-broker" rather than incorporating male oppression and the multiplicity of male identities (Connell 1995; Hooper 1998; Jones 1996). A suggested explanation is that many in the feminist movement fear the dilution of the discourse of "women as an oppressed group" and "men as the oppressor" (Hooper 1998: 30). An alternative view is to see female and male oppression not as a zero-sum game but as "complementary in their functioning – the practices of each contribute to the reproduction of the other" (New 2001: 730). However, this is not to lose sight of the gender regimes that sustain male privilege and female subordination as exemplified by the fact that women account for the majority of the global poor as a consequences of practices such as unequal wages,

gender-segregated jobs and physical and cultural violence against women in which men are implicated. The point is to incorporate into the analysis an understanding of how "the very practices which construct men's capacity to oppress women and interest in doing so, work by systematically harming men" (New 2001: 730).

Methodology

This paper is built on the premise that masculinism is a gendered ideology that is socially constructed and therefore not static or immutable but shaped by the historical and cultural context (Connell 1995; Peterson 1997). This view contrasts with a male sex role theory, which deems gender differences in the biological – the "natural" – to be essential, and makes invisible the structural and systemic bases of power in gender relations (Bly 1990; Gorman 1992).

Also, the paper operates with the concept of multiple masculinities (as well as multiple femininities) rather than a single masculinity, because the norms and traits associated with dominant or elite males are generally extrapolated as universal, which legitimizes and normalizes hegemonic masculinity and marginalizes subordinate or subaltern masculinities. The concept of multiple masculinities incorporates the intersection between gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, nation and empire (Connell 1995; Hooper 1998).

In addition, the paper views masculinism as "deeply entrenched in the longue durée of human history" but "historical, contingent and mutable" (Peterson 1997). Thus, contemporary masculinism is viewed as having its epistemological roots in modern western thought (e.g. the Newtonian–Cartesian world-view) which dichotomizes, differentiates and hierarchizes cultural values in binary opposites. In the dominant masculinist discourse, the "feminine" is conceptualized and actualized as the ontological "Other" to be mastered and controlled; the masculine values, on the other hand, are taken as the prototype for human behaviour (Persram 1994; Peterson 1997). For example, sexism is one of the key elements of the geoculture of the capitalist world system:

> Sexism was the relegation of women to the realm of non-productive labour, doubly humiliating in that the actual labour required of them was if anything intensified, and in that productive labour became in the capitalist world-economy, for the first time in human history, the basis of the legitimation of privilege. (Wallerstein 1983: 103)

The key point being made here is that masculinism has constructed an elaborate method of legitimation of privilege through its association with other aspects of modern capitalist geoculture such as scientism. Feminists, for instance, have argued that "science's claims of rationality and objectivity are masculinist" (Peterson and True 1998: 19). From this perspective sexism is "more than the dominant position of men over women" (Wallerstein 1983: 103). Thus, it can be argued that the real problem is that "there are few systematic attempts to integrate gender into a coherent explanation of large-

scale economic and social change" (Fernandez-Kelly 2000: 8). From this perspective Fernandez-Kelly argues that

> Decoupling gender from an exclusive focus on women allows for two formulations critical to world system analysis. One is the recognition of gender as a principal vector in the allocation of power and resources. The second is the awareness that the subordination of women is part and parcel of larger processes aimed at securing the compliance of both women and subaltern men. (2000: 10)

The paper examines the impact of global restructuring on the role and practices of men and women and argues that there is an increased incidence of poverty among men, especially subaltern men, and that this is associated with the shifting sexual division of labour (Mies 1986; Connell 1995). This is premised on the observation that changes in the world economy have resulted in the erosion of the work and life prospects for an increasing share of the male population in both core and peripheral regions of the world economy. In this regard, the paper argues that the growth of male poverty as a global phenomenon is a function of the shift in the gendered division of labour and illustrates the intersection between changes in the international division of labour and transformations in the sexual and racial division of labour.

The term "masculinization of poverty" is used here to exemplify this transition in the global gender order. The use of the term the "masculinization of poverty" is not to be seen in competition with the "feminization of poverty" and thus attempts to evade the criticism of competing victimhood.

Gender and Global Restructuring

The global economy has gone through a dramatic process of transformation and restructuring in the past two decades. These changes are explained by the cyclical downturn in the world economy from the late 1960s–early 1970s. The downturn is exemplified by a shift in the techno-economic paradigm towards knowledge-based production, services and the digital economy, the rationalization and concentration of the major industries, and the further marginalization of developing economies through declining terms of trade and an eroding share of global added value. In tandem, there has been further globalization and liberalization of national markets under the rubric of regional trade blocs, structural adjustment programmes and neoliberal ideology. The economic and political benefits of this process have been uneven with increasing inequality across and within countries exemplified by greater class stratification and gender inequity. However, the picture is far more complex and differentiated than this. This is particularly notable in the rise in concern about men, boys, maleness and masculinity as a result of the changes in the world economy.

In the developed market economies, especially those where there is a sizable multicultural community such as the US, the UK and France, there is increasing concern that "white men" are becoming a minority in the new knowledge-intensive growth sectors and are failing at school and university

relative to white females and ethnic minorities. It is also argued that there is growing resentment and frustration by white men about the adoption of diversity policies (e.g. affirmative action) that they feel discriminate against them in favour of women, Blacks, Hispanics and Asians. These views have moved from the margins of white supremacist discourse to the mainstream of national politics as exemplified by the growth of anti-immigrant sentiments and the electoral gains by right-wing political parties (Ferber 2000; Harper 1994).

What is interesting to note is that so-called "white male fear" (Gates 1993) is coming just at the time when middle-class women and minority groups have made some economic, social and political inroads. However, what these arguments ignore is the fact that most women and minority men are still subordinate to white men in most spheres of activity. They also do not take into account the fact that the problem of white males is essentially a class problem because the failing boys come from the bottom of the social and economic ladder. Additionally, men are more likely to gain on-the-job training and access to informal training that are in some cases more appropriate for the fast changing techno-economic environment.

For men in minority communities or subordinated masculinities the problem looms even larger in the changing world order. In the United States, for instance, studies on the impact of de-industrialization and economic restructuring show that employment opportunities for Afro-Americans, especially men, have declined significantly. Afro-American male joblessness is estimated to be two to three times higher than that for white men. The mismatch between the location of Afro-Americans (disproportionately concentrated in metropolitan areas) and the location of jobs is generally posited as one of the possible explanations. However, when this is taken into account it has been found that "the jobless rate for Black males in the *economically prosperous* metropolitan areas are nearly double the rates for their white counterparts in the *economically declining* metropolitan areas" (Johnson and Oliver 1992: 16).

In Britain, "Afro-Caribbean boys are three times as likely to be excluded from school as whites; they are also twice as likely as other boys to leave school unemployed, leaving about half of all Afro-Caribbean men under the age of 25 on the dole". Afro-Caribbean girls, on the other hand, "perform as well as white girls and better than white boys" (Younge 1996: 13). One can conclude, therefore, that male minority groups in the West appear to be at greater risk in the evolving gender order than their white counterparts. This should not be a surprising conclusion given the historical experience of colonialism and white-male supremacy. What is critical to note, though, is that white men, particularly working-class men, are beginning to experience many of the same problems that others have lived with for centuries. This suggests that the emerging problem of men is related more to global social class issues rather than to race or gender (Noguera 1998). The argument is that what is being observed relates to the trend towards greater polarization of income in the world economy in the past three decades as exemplified by the widening of inequality and the crisis of distributive justice in most countries.

The experience of the transition economies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union helps to illustrate the argument. This region has suffered from both the collapse of socialism and the failure of neoliberal economic policies. The impact of these transformations on men is exemplified by the emergence of the term “missing men” to describe the declining survival rates among men. However, the position is more complex than this. For example, in Russia, men from elite and powerful groups, such as entrepreneurs, senior public officials, professionals and Mafia bosses, have expanded their share of income and economic opportunity and are considered to constitute the majority of the winners from the transformation process. On the other hand, what is surprising, according to analysts, is that men are estimated to form the majority of the worst victims and the new poor. Men now account for the largest share of the homeless, destitute adults and street children because of unemployment, marriage breakup, alcoholism, and child abuse (Ellman 2000: 136).

The situation described here is also evident in middle-income developing economies such as the English-speaking Caribbean. For example, in terms of education, girls have been outnumbering boys at the secondary level for at least two decades, a trend that is now evident in tertiary education. In addition, the rise in the participation of women in the manufacturing and the services sectors and the attendant decline of male employment is often used as an indicator to argue that “men are at risk” (Miller 1991). The underperformance of young males is indicated by the high rate of joblessness, crime, drug abuse, family breakups, and school dropouts.

The impact of global restructuring on masculinities is not easy to ascertain but the evidence points towards this trend. There is limited information on shifts in the techno-economic paradigm in relation to gendered division of labour. For example, the following quotation refers to the changing labour market in the Caribbean but does not specifically mention its gender parameters:

> Caribbean labour markets continued to be dominated by service workers and shop and market sales employees, craft and related workers, skilled agricultural and fishery workers and those involved in what is officially called “elementary occupations”. This pattern over the last five years has led to the increasing informality of these economies, with many of these workers now found within micro-enterprises, or categorized as individual traders. The prevalence of suitcase traders and sidewalk vendors became more pronounced as the formal sector failed to substantially accommodate the growth of the overall labour force, and those displaced by structural adjustment. The situation was further exacerbated by the deliberate reduction of the public sector wage bill, which initially had a negative impact upon employment in the modern sector in the early to mid 1990s. (ILO 1999: 7)

However, our general understanding of the Caribbean economy suggests that the above quotation tells a wider story. In most of the growth areas mentioned women predominate, especially in the service jobs and suitcase traders, the exception being skilled agricultural and fishery workers. Throughout the

Anglophone Caribbean the male share in the labour force continues to outnumber that for women, even in the youth category. What is still to be established is whether there is declining employment of men in absolute terms. What is evident is that men and women are differentially placed in the labour market: women are disproportionately located in the services sector whereas men are more evenly located in agriculture, industry and services. The following table illustrates this pattern of employment among the economically active population by activity for Latin America and the Caribbean from the 1970s to the 1990s.

Table 1
Structure of the Economically Active Population, by Gender and Economic Activity, 1970, 1980, 1990
(percentage of total economically active population)

	Agriculture			Industry			Services		
	1970	1980	1990	1970	1980	1990	1970	1980	1990
Male Participation	47.1	38.2	…	24.1	27.8	…	28.8	34.0	…
Female Participation	18.1	14.8	…	19.7	20.0	…	62.1	65.2	…

Source: UNECLAC (1998), *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean, 1997*, Santiago, Chile.

Masculinities and Global Restructuring

Contemporary male identity is very bound up with work. Men's masculinity and perception of self-worth is most often defined in terms of their work and their ability to be providers for their family. Male breadwinners are portrayed as *real men*. Having a job and earning a good income are essential for men to gain power and prestige, maintain a family as well as attract women. The role of the breadwinner is an important source of authority for men within the context of patriarchy. A decline in this role – for example, through unemployment – has been reflected in the loss of self-esteem among many men and associated with problems such as marital and domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse and reduced sexual potency (Miles 1992: 98; Kimmel 1996).

Analysts argue that male status and privilege – for example, access to women – is determined and measured by the length of a man's "CV" rather than the length of his penis (Kimmel 1996). The argument is that men are valued as "success objects" in much the same way that women are valued as "sex objects" (Sampath 1997). This is no surprise given the long tradition of women ranking a man's income as the main attraction while men are known to be fixated on physical beauty. A new development is the value that men now place on a woman's economic status. This trend suggests that relationships and sexuality are being affected by transformations in the economic sphere

such as the emergence of the two-income family, the decline of male wages and the rise in income among middle-class women.

In the feminist literature the breadwinner model is seen as the main source for patriarchy in the household and by extension the workplace and state policy (Walby 1990; Tickner 1992). An alternative view would be to see the role of breadwinner as a mechanism of patriarchal oppression of men, which is then directed at women. According to Pleck (1992: 22), patriarchy encourages men to pride themselves on the "hard work and personal sacrifice they are making to be breadwinners for their families"; it also trains men "to accept payment for work in feelings of masculinity rather than in feelings of satisfaction": consequently "men accept unemployment as their personal failing as males" . The social construction of the male breadwinner role is therefore an important mechanism by which men are ensnared into their own oppression. And because it is mythologized – taken out of historical context and made natural and eternal – it becomes an invisible force, especially to men. This leads Pleck (1992: 23) to the conclusion that the "false consciousness of privilege men get from sexism plays a critical role in reconciling men to their subordination in the larger political economy".

Recent transformations in the world of work and the global capitalist accumulation process have altered the sexual division of labour and exacted a huge toll on traditional conceptions of masculinity. The microelectronics and the information technology revolution have automated (through labour-saving technologies) several aspects of the work practice such that there has been the de-skilling of working-class jobs in manufacturing and services. Along with the process of de-skilling, these jobs have been made more flexible and responsive to the demands of the new technologies and shifts in the marketplace, as is evident in the growth of subcontracting and part-time labour practices. Most of these new jobs have seen rapid growth in women's participation in occupations that were formerly dominated by men (Joekes 1982; Nurse 1995). For example, women predominate in low-wage, low-skill jobs in free zones or export-processing zones that are to be found in many Asian and South American economies. This has resulted in what is referred to as "female-led industrialization" and the "global feminization" of manufacturing and services (Standing 1989).

The de-materialization of production, with the introduction of synthetic products, has resulted in the deterioration of jobs in the resource-based industries where male brawn and affinity to outdoor and physically risky work were valued and rewarded. The rise of the service economy has also dealt a critical blow to male employment. Service jobs tend to reward so-called "feminine" traits such as empathy, co-operation and strong inter-personal skills. Consequently, women predominate in growth occupations such as tourism, computer and data processing, health services, business and financial services, childcare and residential services. In contrast, men dominate in the five fastest declining sectors (footwear, ammunition-making, shipbuilding, leather-working and photographic supplies) (Economist 1996: 24). In addition, many of the new service jobs that have been created in the past two decades are low-paying as well as part-time. High-paying jobs are

very knowledge-intensive and require at least a university degree, an area where men are under-achieving.

These shifts in global production structures have had a dramatic impact on the economic situation in most developing regions. There have been increasing levels of structural and technological unemployment in male-oriented jobs (Safa 1995). This has occurred in a context of export marginalization in traditional sectors and massive reductions in public-sector employment under the banner of structural adjustment programmes. Industrial strategies such as export-oriented manufacturing have exacerbated the tendencies inherent in externally propelled economies rather than expanding or deepening the industrial and export base (Nurse 1995). Migrant contract work, once a survival option for men, has declined and been replaced by the demand for service jobs and female labour, hence the phenomenon referred to as the "feminization of migration" (UNECLAC 2002). In countries such as the Philippines and the Dominican Republic, women migrant workers (for example, in tourism, education, healthcare, domestic work or sex work) outnumber men as a consequence of the new economic sectors and the changed sexual division of labour in the developed economies (Sanchez Taylor 2001). These tendencies in the world economy suggest that the prospects for new and expanding job opportunities for working-class men in developing areas, especially Latin America and the Caribbean, are limited at best.

Male identity has been reconfigured from another direction within the capitalist accumulation process. Men's image has become objectified in the consumer market very much like its female counterpart. The "New Man" is portrayed as fit and fashion-conscious, and consumption style has emerged as an important signifier of status in replacement of, or alongside, a job in a post-Fordist context (Rutherford 1988). The rise of the male model – one of the few professions where men earn less than women – is indicative of this trend. Another example is that the growth in sales of male toiletries. It is men who are doing the bulk of the purchasing rather than women, who were the main buyers of men's cosmetics in the past. Men are also proving to be just as susceptible to a loss of self-esteem and dissatisfaction with their body image (Edwards 1997). Young men have begun to develop eating disorders that are generally associated with young women. The range of new lifestyle magazines, exercise machines, vitamin supplements and sexual potency drugs is aimed at mobilizing male anxiety about sexuality, aging, impotence and penis size. The "medicalization of the penis" has come in for some criticism recently. David Friedman, in his book on the cultural history of the penis, argues: "the erection industry has reconfigured the organ, replacing the finicky original with a more reliable model" (quoted in Twisselmann 2002).

The objectification of men's bodies and the emergence of a new consumer ethic that incorporates men are relatively new phenomena. Men have long held the power of "the gaze" over women's bodies. Now, men are being subjected to "the look" of both women and men. Their film and media images are increasingly sexualized, eroticized and hence feminized. One of the expanding employment areas for men in regions such as the Caribbean is

that of sex work (for example, beach boys) in the tourist economy (Sanchez Taylor 2001). In many ways this trend is tied in to the revolution in femininity where women because of rising incomes and travel opportunities are able to adopt the subject-position of the “rich tourist”.

Conclusion

These global trends suggest that there have been significant gains made by some women as a result of the changes in the sexual division of labour in the global economy. The gains have been most prominent among young middle-class women in developed and middle-income economies. They have outpaced their male counterparts in tertiary education and the professions and have increased their share of household income. Young women have also shown characteristics previously considered typically male, such as a willingness to take risks, a desire for adventure in sport or to undertake foreign travel, and a much greater interest in sexuality (Bunting 1994). However, it must be noted that the rise of women to constitute a greater share of the global middle class does not signal that all is well with the plight of women. Indeed, women still account for the majority of the world’s disadvantaged, and poverty continues to be feminized through discriminatory institutions and work practices.

What the above analysis suggests is that what is emerging is a four-tiered global society and economy with an entrepreneurial, bureaucratic and technological elite at the top; in the middle stratum, a cadre of highly educated and globally mobile professionals; in the lower stratum a reserve army of service and industrial workers, some of whose incomes place them among the working poor; and, at the bottom, a permanent underclass of underemployed, unemployed and in many cases unemployable labour. Men have traditionally dominated in the top category and all indicators suggest that they will continue to do so for some time to come. There are still very few women in the top decision-making levels in business and government. The real problem for men is in the middle and lower strata. Many are slipping out of the middle stratum to join the lower ranks, with the increased competition for these jobs coming from women and the demands of a globalized knowledge-based production system. Men in the lower stratum are even more vulnerable to these processes given that these jobs are easier to relocate and feminize. The global underclass of men is thus faced with conditions in which it is almost impossible to fulfill the traditional masculine role of breadwinner.

This paper argues that what we are witnessing is the “masculinization of poverty”. Unlike the feminization of poverty, which is much larger in size, it is evident that men resort to more dangerous anti-social behaviour largely because of male socialization that encourages and rewards violence. It is also that society’s expectations of men (such as the breadwinner role) and men’s adherence to traditional conceptions of masculinity are sadly out of step with the new gendered reality. As men become more vulnerable and frustrated, male poverty is likely to become a greater threat to society. The growing concern among government policy makers and the corporate elite needs to be shifted from defending some mythical notion of masculinity towards

embracing an alternative where more diverse social roles for men are validated.

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