

CALL FOR PAPERS

Still fit for Purpose?

Conceptualising (Emerging) Masculinities of the Current Moment

5-7 December 2024

Venue:

RPTU Kaiserslautern-Landau

Campus Landau

Germany

Despite its diversification, application in a vast number of academic disciplines as well as its consideration of globalisation effects, Masculinity Studies tends to remain largely characterized by a small cluster of theoretical paradigms and approaches. However, we suggest that global challenges of the present moment might not be adequately captured by this theoretical frame. For this reason, we consider it imperative to (re)examine, question and potentially expand the theoretical foundations of the field in order to be able to appropriately address the complexities and transformations of new and evolving masculinities of the current moment.

This conference aims to discuss how practices, theories, and concepts of masculinities are newly emerging, being reformulated, or becoming exhausted or obsolete in light of the most pressing contemporary challenges. While current pan-national issues like the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and digitalisation contribute to ever wider tendencies of social fragmentation and polarisation, or the crisis of (liberal) democracies, they also impact upon practices, performances, structures, narratives, and altogether understandings of masculinity. Thus, we ask, do these phenomena require new or revised theoretical and conceptual approaches? Is there an added value, for instance, of concepts such as ‘toxic masculinity’ (Karner 1996, Kupers 2001), ‘inclusive masculinity’ (Anderson 2009), ‘hybrid masculinity’ (Bridges and Pascoe 2014), ‘sticky masculinity’ (Berggren 2014), or ‘petro-masculinity’ (Dagget 2018)? How do we theorise ‘global masculinities’ in the context of pan-national challenges and developments while still taking into account local, regional, and cultural factors that circumscribe these as well as avoiding Western-centric theoretical dominance (Balaji & Jackson 2011)?

We are interested in contributions which explore if and how long-established, more recent, or hitherto marginal(ised) theoretical concepts in the study of men and masculinities prove (still) productive when applied to the following three current key global issues of climate change, the recent pandemic, and our increasingly digitalised world.

1. Masculinities and climate change: e.g.

- Environmental attitudes, climate change denial/relativism and ideologies
- New environmental activism such as Stop Oil, Fridays for Future, The Last Generation, Extinction Rebellion, etc.
- Sustainability and ‘green lifestyles’:
 - Food choices
 - Sustainable consumption
 - Transportation and mobility
- Issues of climate migration, displacement and legal issues
- Communication of climate change and sustainability/sustainable lifestyles

2. Masculinities and the COVID-19 pandemic: e.g.

- Attitudes to protective measures
- Representation and experience of physical or mental health and death and grieving
- Care work
- Discourses surrounding the “essential workforce”, exempt from measures
- Public health communication

3. Masculinities and the digitalised world: e.g.

- Gendered dimensions of artificial intelligence
- Social media, shit storms, trolling, hate crimes, cancel culture, etc.
- Digital identities and digital worlds (e.g. Metaverse)
- Digital activism and movements
- Backlash to gender equality movements
- Discourses of and in the ‘manosphere’ (Alt Right, white nationalists, pickup artists, men’s rights advocates & fathers’ rights, INCELS)
- (Safe) online (LGBTQI+) spaces, increased visibility, identities beyond current concepts of masculinities?

Thus, we invite proposals from all academic disciplines that engage with one of the key topics outlined above and:

- Illustrate the suitability or obsolescence of established concepts in the field of Masculinity Studies in specific case studies. This may also encompass papers that use established concepts to demonstrate their shortcomings and how they are not/no longer suitable to provide an apt approach to challenges of the present moment.

or

- Provide a theoretical reflection; that is, enquire into whether these current key issues require new concepts or the modification of established concepts.

Please send an abstract of max. 300 words and a short biographical note of max. 100 words to the conference organisers via

k.starck@rptu.de

or

silvia.gerlsbeck@rptu.de

Deadline: Wednesday, 8 November 2023.

There will be a conference fee of ca. 100€, with a reduced fee for students and PhD students. Moreover, we provide the option of presenting papers online. Please note in your proposal if you would like to make use of this option.

Details about registration etc. to be announced soon.