

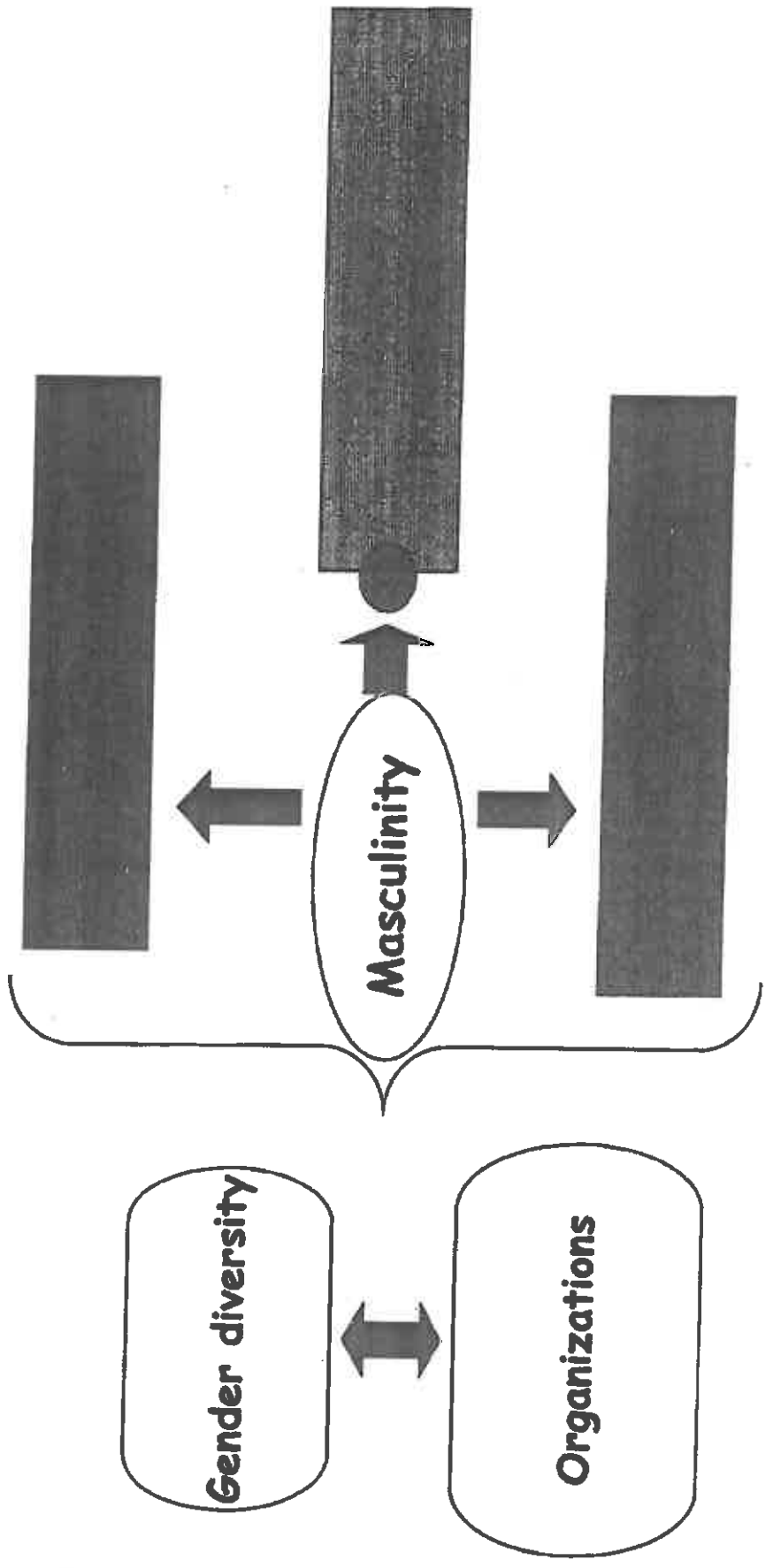
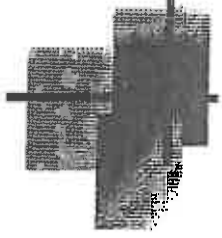
**MULTICULTURAL AND HUMAN
RIGHTS FOR INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS - SU**

**MASCULINITY, THE
BODY & POWER
RELATIONS**

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HISTO RESEARCH OUTPUT

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Defining gender- a summary

- In the past gender and sex were understood to be the same thing
- Classic current definition:
 - sex = biological relationship to reproduction (male/female), *fixed* physical, genetic, hormonal differences
 - Gender = cultural, socially constructed (and therefore *changeable*) attributes and roles appropriate to men/women, masculinity/femininity

Contemporary thinking on sex and gender

- Sex understood to refer to human reproductive biology
- Gender understood to refer to socially and historically specific roles
- Gender is understood to be changeable over time and place and cultures
- Gender describes a power relationship
- Gender inequalities harm men in ways that are often hard to see
- Power inequalities built on basis of sex & gender limit our ability to improve both men and women's lives – eg gender inequality and HIV/AIDS

KEY COMPONENTS OF THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MASCULINITIES

- Gender identities of men are socially constructed within different contexts, therefore multiple and often contradictory
- Masculinities, both ideological meaning and how different men negotiate their identity, can change
- Masculinities are created in specific historical, material, ideological circumstances
- As circumstances change, gender practices can be contested and reconstructed facilitating shifts in constructions of masculinities

HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

- Refers to a particular idealised image of masculinity in relation to which images of femininity and other masculinities are marginalised and subordinated
- Versions of it achieve meaning within patterns of differences - not universal (Barrett, 1996; Connell, 1995)
- Masculinity should be understood within a social context, and in relation to race, class, economic status, organisational culture, etc.

MASCULINITY AND THE BODY

- The centrality of the body to constructions of dominant masculinity- both theoretical arguments and empirical illustrations
- Gender, body and sexuality are the controlling aspects at work (Kimmel, 2000)
- Men's bodies which are expected to be tough, macho, aggressive and sporty are valued and associated with organisational success and provide images for teamwork, complex and tough competition
- Closely interrelated with this is traditional, macho (hetero)sexuality that is often integral to the self-image

Constructions of bodies in the military

- John underlines the centrality of the physical in constructions of masculinity. Despite the information that he 'looks like a teddy bear', joining the military proves he is a man - identity military man serves to undermine the social construction of him as 'not man enough' with respect to his body:

- *John: If you've got your own occupation you'll be able to do whatever is required of you.[] I don't really, personally, again, I don't really care about what people think about me. My soft voice or physique about my stomach and my backside, but ja, I don't really care about what people think about me. You know because I've been characterised as a ... they used to call me a teddy bear that was when there was nothing (pointing to the beard) at that stage, that was when I joined the army. And I never felt like threatened.*



Cont.

- The excerpt above demonstrates that bodies have become hyper-biologised, in the sense that social acts are brought under the realm of the biologist.
- This results in the body becoming the point of transfer of power.
- Broadly, the terms of masculinity require men to have a high level of muscular strength.

Physique and clothing

- The significance of the adornment of the body, with emphasis on dressing and the role of the media in reinforcing bodily concerns for men:

- *Simon: You don't read Cosmo [Cosmopolitan] (laughing). I enjoy, I shave, put moisturiser on, I look after my body, ok. I put some weight down, I enjoy ... I don't want to be this, you know you get a guy who thinks he is a man because he's got a lot of chesty hair, he has a moustache, he is healthy. I want to look good. I want to be a man but I want to dress well. I wanna look good. I want to make an impression, so I want to cut my nails, I want to clean my nails ...*

Clothing/uniform

- Some men join the orgs/clubs for the status afforded which is symbolized by physical representation, primarily the clothing (uniform) which also powerfully impacts on the constructions of body image.
- Gerhard: *If I'm at Stellenbosch and I'm in uniform and I walk in there between the girls, then I'm feeling two feet taller. Really, I think it's the, it's the feeling of pride. [] It's a nice feeling to be in uniform, I think even nicer if you're walking between civilians on the street and people are looking at you.*

Clothing/uniform cont

- The clothing/uniform confers a sense of masculinity
- The social structure of an institution creates gender patterns which not only give men a sense of masculinity through the danger implied in their profession, but also a sense of strength through observable symbols, primarily that of the uniform.
- As Connell (2000) puts it, normative bodily practices within a social context ranging across dress, sport and sexuality modify bodies and subjectivities

The body intersecting with ethnic rites of passage

- Factors relevant to constructions of ethnicity can play a significant role in the interpretation of masculinity.
- Circumcision confers manhood
- Power is on the secrecy



Body and weapons

- The weapons used represent both a real and symbolic idolisation of aggression and as such function as an extension of the body
- *Gerhard: It's just like in a relationship also, at first, everything is new to you, you can't wait just to hold the girl's hand and to kiss her at night and whatever, but then after a while you get use to it and then it's not funny anymore, and ag wat. It's just another thing, there's nothing special.*

Body and weapons cont.

- Weapons are seen as phallic symbols
- A weapon (penis) is used to conquer the enemy/female body
- Weapons and physicality not only boosts the sense of masculinity, but is also linked to sexual prowess – having achieved physically viewed as representing sexual ability

GENDER DIVERSITY IN ORGANISATIONS

- Traditional constructions of gender (race, age etc) impact on employment equity
 - Men employed in more senior, better paid positions even when women have same experience & qualifications
- Intersection of race, gender, age: most SA organisations still lack black women in senior positions
- Young black women generally located in positions of vulnerability e.g. salary inequities, exploitation, abuse, limited opportunities
- Barriers to women's advancement
 - glass ceiling
 - men's club
 - queen bee-ism

Organisations & Gender cont.

- Sexism and gender stereotyped practices limit women's career opportunities (and privilege men)
 - Sexist jokes
 - Gender stereotyping/division labour e.g women making tea
 - doing more admin or nurturing work
- Women's double load (home & work) undermines women's ability to gain work experience, work overtime etc
- Inflexible work environments - male model of career seen as the norm
- Sexual harassment, sexualised abuse of power & gender-based violence also limit women's career opportunities