

# HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY IN THE ARCHIVES: A CALL FOR RE- ENVISIONING APPRAISAL METHODOLOGIES

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# PLAN

- Gender and the archives
- “Hegemonic masculinity”: definition and scope
- Masculinity, bureaucracy, and archival interventions

# GENDER AND THE ARCHIVES

- Difficulties related to the construction of women's archives
- Near absence of women's narratives in the archives
- Efforts to document women too limited in scope, and not confronting dynamics of power restricting women's presence in archival collections (Cifor, Wood, "Critical Feminism in the Archives")

# GENDER AND THE ARCHIVES

- Challenges: dealing with archives outside of the heteronormative framework
  - Highlighting the importance of preserving narratives of LGBTQ+ communities (Sheffield, “More than Acid-Free Folders”)
  - Problematic archival descriptions
    - Importance of language in archival descriptions (Baucom, “An Exploration into Archival Descriptions of LGBTQ Materials”)
    - Hatred part of description of non-heteronormative archives (Cifor, “Aligning Bodies”)

# GENDER AND THE ARCHIVES

- Mainstream archives as spaces for the production and preservation of men's historical achievements, and resistant to other genders
  - “Fighting, strategizing, writing”!!!! (Duval, *Independence Lost*)
  - Masculine and fraternal environment of early modern Britain's paper collectors (Pal, *Accidental Archive*)

# HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY: DEFINITION AND SCOPE

- Research on men and masculinity emerged from the feminist movement of the 1970s
- Theoretical concept of “hegemonic masculinity” developed by R.W. Connell
  - based on the theory of cultural hegemony articulated by Antonio Gramsci

# HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY: DEFINITION AND SCOPE

Defining features of the concept of “hegemonic masculinity”:

- Dynamic, relational, ideological, part of organizations and processes
- Relations with other types of masculinity: “subordinated,” “marginalized,” “non-hegemonic masculinity”
- Comparative theoretical framework with concepts of gender, femininity, homophobia, other types of masculinity
- Emerges from social constructionists frameworks and structural inequality theories
- Conceptions of men and masculinities are produced, reproduced, constantly evolving – according to historical circumstances, social and cultural settings, geography, space, etc.
- “Hegemonic masculinity” is not fixed
  - Unstable, dynamic, never fully realized

# HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY: DEFINITION AND SCOPE

- Theoretical concept of “hegemonic masculinity” studied in a diversity of fields
  - Sports
  - Psychology
  - Academia
  - The military
  - Globalization



# MASCULINITY, BUREAUCRACY, AND ARCHIVAL INTERVENTIONS

- “Hegemonic masculinity” operates in all sectors of society and is present in everyday life
- Men and administrative frameworks
  - “technocratic patriarchy” (Burris, “Technocracy, Patriarchy, and Management”)
- Presumed impartiality of administrative functions

# MASCULINITY, BUREAUCRACY, AND ARCHIVAL INTERVENTIONS

- Scientific management and organization of archives
  - Neutral management of records
  - Rationalization of practices
- Standardized and rational frameworks producing knowledge
- Subjective organization of information
- Traditional archival descriptions validating and enhancing worldviews of dominant forces (Duff and Harris, “Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings”)
- Administrative configurations of archival practices and masculine representations
- “To recognize gender as a social pattern requires us to see it as a product of history, and also as a *producer* of history.” (Connell, *Masculinities*, 81)

# MASCULINITY, BUREAUCRACY, AND ARCHIVAL INTERVENTIONS

- “Hegemonic masculinity” to examine mainstream archival processes
- Prominence of men in the archives not solely the result of the amount of records describing men’s activities
  - Recordkeeping organizations socially and culturally constructed and embedded in claims of neutrality and impartiality
- “Hegemonic masculinity” in the archives expressed through administrative decisions and organizations’ identity, but also by unintentional power dynamics

# MASCULINITY, BUREAUCRACY, AND ARCHIVAL INTERVENTIONS

- Archival activations
  - New knowledge and perspectives
- New approaches to archival appraisal
  - Affect theory (Cifor, “Affecting Relations”)
  - Radical empathy in the archives (Caswell, Cifor, “From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics”)
- Deconstructionist approach
  - “Hegemonic masculinity” as an archival deconstructionist methodology

# MASCULINITY, BUREAUCRACY, AND ARCHIVAL INTERVENTIONS

- “The deconstructive move in relation to binary opposites is not simply to wage battle against them. It is, rather, to expose their provenances and deployments. It is to use them strategically, play with their spectrality – by demonstrating how each ‘opposite’ opens out of the other, and how each bifurcates endlessly.” (Harris, “Insistering Derrida,” 11)

# CONCLUDING REMARKS

- Theoretical concept of “hegemonic masculinity” put forward to “open up” the archives
- Integration of masculinity studies in archival theory to activate records from a plurality of perspectives
  - Build more inclusive archival spaces

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