glorified and praised forms of masculinities. For example, in American and European societies hegemonic masculinity encompasses such valued characteristics as achievement, aggression, toughness and domination over women. Males inhabiting less appreciated traits such as compassion, nurturance, sensitivity, softness and empathy are likely to be denigrated in those societies.

In *Masculinities* (1995) Connell cites male homosexuality as a common example of a subordinated masculinity. Homosexual men are culturally viewed as inferior, discriminated against economically, physically subject to hate crimes and other violence, and politically oppressed. These forms of harm illustrate societal disapproval for those who exhibit non-typical male behaviour. A hierarchy exists in masculinity within which subordinated masculinities serve to bolster dominant forms of masculinity.

Subordinated masculinities are socially constructed, and views on subordinated masculinity may vary from culture to culture. Subordinated masculinities may also vary within a given society or environment. In prison culture the dominant form of masculinity ('Men') is categorised in relation to subordinated masculinities such as queens, punks, intellectuals, jailhouse lawyers and religious leaders (Donaldson 2001). Subordination can occur to males during certain periods of their lives, i.e. the low social position of apprentices in London printing shops to tradesmen (Cockburn 1986). Dominant and subordinate masculinities can also be defined culturally: for example, in American college fraternities where accepted male behaviour is defined through aggressive drinking, challenges to this behaviour can cast males as inferior to other members of the group (West 2001).

Race and class can serve as categories of subordinated masculinities. The historic oppression of black males in United States society is manifest in physical (lynching), cultural (segregation) and economic (professional discrimination) abuse.

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See also: gay masculinities; hegemonic masculinity; lunching

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SUICIDE

Suicide – intentional, self-inflicted death – is markedly patterned by gender, with the number of males killing themselves several times greater than that of females in most countries. Men talk and think about suicide (suicidal ideation) and attempt it less often than women. But when they engage in suicidal behaviour, they are more likely to die.

Suicide rates are higher among males than females in almost all countries, according to World Health Organization data (WHO 2003). Male rates typically are two to four times higher than female rates, and men also suffer higher rates of other forms of premature death (Möller-Leimkühler 2003).

Males' greater vulnerability to (completed) suicide increasingly has been explained in terms of constructions and practices of masculinity. As Hunt *et al.* (2003: 642) summarise, men choose more lethal methods; may be less resilient to stressful life events, such as marriage breakdown; may have more psychopathology and a greater propensity to violence and substance abuse; and may 'be more reluctant to seek help or less able to articulate emotional distress; and suicide may be seen as more acceptable for men'.

Other social circumstances, such as the presence of poverty, crime, divorce and family

breakdown, and licit and illicit drug abuse, also are influential (Sabo 2005). Gay and bisexual males, especially among adolescents, have higher rates of suicidal ideation, attempts and completions than heterosexual males, presumably because of homophobic social contexts and resulting depression, lack of social support, family dysfunction and substance abuse (Sabo 2005).

Rising suicide rates particularly among young men may be influenced by shifts in employment, intensified gender-role conflict and excessive norms of individualism in industrialised nations and rapid social change in post-communist countries (Möller-Leimkühler 2003; Smalley *et al.* 2005).

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See also: depression; health and illness, men's; men's health studies

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