I'm Not Homophobic, "I've Got Gay Friends": Evaluating the Validity of Inclusive Masculinity

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Abstract

Anderson's concept of "inclusive masculinity" has generated significant academic and media interest recently. It claims to have replaced hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical framework for exploring gender relations in societies that show "decreased" levels of cultural homophobia and "homohysteria"; this clearly has important implications for critical studies on men and masculinities (CSMMs). This article is divided into two parts and begins with a theoretical evaluation of work using the framework of inclusive masculinity and what it claims to offer over hegemonic masculinity. The second half is an analysis of inclusive masculinity's conceptual division of homophobia and homohysteria. Through this analysis, it is suggested that there are several major theoretical concerns, which call into question the validity of research utilizing the framework of inclusive masculinity.

Keywords

sexualities, sociology, gender equality, hegemonic masculinity, inclusive masculinity

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Introduction

This article is a critical look at Anderson's (2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2011, 2012; Anderson, Adams, and Rivers 2012; Anderson and McGuire 2010) notion of "inclusive masculinity" and its implications for the field of gender studies. His theory has gathered recent academic (Adams 2011; McCormack 2011a, 2011b; McCormack and Anderson 2010; Roberts 2013) and media interest, particularly through its application in the work of Mark McCormack (Economist.com 2012; McVeigh 2012). Anderson's basic theoretical premise is that "masculinity," defined through the still pervasive lens of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985; Connell 1987, 1995), fails to account for the existence of multiple versions of masculinities which may not be easily characterized as "hegemonic" and "subordinated," in a culture that is less homophobic. This is important as it suggests both that there has been a reworking of masculinities, conceived largely in terms of power and subordination, and that hegemonic masculinity may no longer be an adequate framework for theorizing gender inequalities.

However, I argue that despite the appeal of inclusive masculinity theory, there are some significant problems in its theoretical claims. This article suggests that far from providing a new way of exploring masculinities, the concept of inclusive masculinity and associated notions of "homohysteria," gay discourse, and orthodox masculinity, are redundant at best and dangerous at worst. First, this article outlines the core tenets of inclusive masculinity, drawing attention to Anderson's critique of Connell, before noting evidence in support of inclusive masculinity from Anderson's (2005, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2011, 2012; Anderson, Adams, and Rivers 2012; Anderson and McGuire 2010), McCormack's (2011a, 2011b, 2012), and Roberts' (2013) work. It then moves on to develop a theoretical critique of the concept by taking a closer look at ideas around hybridization (Demetriou 2001) and Connell's (1995) notion of "complicit" and "marginal" masculinities. Through this, the article suggests that inclusive masculinity adds little to this debate and may actually further a crude distinction between "types" of masculinity—something which Anderson claims inclusive masculinity overcomes—and reverts back to notions of "sex roles," which Connell has firmly undermined. The piece then moves on to outline the ahistoricity of homohysteria and narrow definitions of homophobia, before finally raising some more serious issues around whether or not, even by the most rudimentary standards, homophobia is no longer significant. It should be noted that these things, taken together, restrict the ability to draw meaningful conclusions from inclusive masculinity theory.

Inclusive Masculinity

As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, 829) highlight, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has attracted some "serious criticism" (Demetriou 2001; Wetherell and Edley 1999). Therefore, Anderson's work has added to the growing number of

voices which have expressed the need for a revision of the concept (Aboim 2010; Beasley 2008, 2012; Coles 2009; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Hearn 2004; Jefferson 1994; MacInnes 1998; Petersen 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999).

First, Anderson (2009) argues that "cultural homophobia" and homohysteria have declined in contemporary society. He characterizes homohysteria as different from homophobia in the sense that while cultural homophobia is concerned with the public representation of sexuality, homohysteria relates to societal "levels" at which boys and men have a "cultural fear of being homosexualised" (McCormack 2011a, 338). McCormack (2011a, 339) especially suggests that inclusive masculinity theory is therefore specific only to societies that categorize men, through social, legal, medical, or political structures, into discrete identities based on whom they have sex with. Anderson (2011, 254) argues that the process of hierarchical stratification that hegemonic masculinity suggests fails to capture the dynamics of gender relations in which "multiple masculinities exist coharmoniously." In this environment, men and boys become less concerned about demonstrating their heterosexuality in opposition to homosexuality as a means of corroborating their own sense of masculinity.

Central to the idea of inclusive masculinity is that, unlike in Connell's work, young men particularly no longer need to construct their masculinities, relationally, in opposition to homosexual or subordinated subject positions and through homophobic language, as other authors have argued (Carnaghi, Maass, and Fasoli 2011; Kimmel 2007; Kimmel and Mahler 2003; Mac an Gháill 1994; Nayak and Kehily 1996; Skelton 2001). Anderson suggests that while in periods of "high homohysteria" hegemonic masculinity may still be exercised as a form of power, he makes the case that in periods of "low homohysteria," where cultural homophobia has declined, homophobic attitudes are actually treated with contempt. Therefore, in such a situation, expressing homophobia—or the exercise of defining masculinity in opposition of subordinated masculinities (Connell 1995, 78)—almost becomes a source of stigma and subordination rather than power.

Furthermore, in situations where there are decreased but still noticeable levels of homophobia, Anderson proposes that two subject positions vie for legitimacy (Anderson 2005, 2008b, 2009; Anderson and McGuire 2010). The first, orthodox masculinity, is framed in terms of a macho and "traditional" response to homosexuality whereby homophobic narratives are openly voiced and males assert dominance over each other through the fear of homosexual stigma. The second, inclusive masculinity, not only tolerates homosexual identities but also openly affirms and, in some cases, incorporates practices and performances associated with subordinated subject positions into its construction. For example, Anderson (2005, 346) talks about heterosexual male cheerleaders "freaking" with homosexual teammates and the "emergence" [*sic*] of straight men kissing each other yet still defining themselves as heterosexual (Anderson, Adams, and Rivers 2012). The critique of Connell, in line with other authors, is that she ignores how some practices that are not deemed "hegemonic" may accrue social capital dependent on the contexts (Wetherell and Edley 1999, 352). This also therefore implies that Connell's focus on material

advantage tends to undermine the discursive elements of gender and sexuality (Beasley 2008, 2012; Petersen 1998).

The Case for Inclusive Masculinity

It is difficult to argue that in the years since the academic formulation of hegemonic masculinity, that men and boys who identify as homosexual are still, publicly, verbally abused in the same way in the UK and the US. In the United Kingdom, amendments to the 1986 Public Order Act, under Section 74 of the 2008 Criminal Justice and Immigration Act, criminalized "hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation," extending to homophobic speech (Johnson and Vanderbeck 2011). This makes homophobic abuse technically illegal. The repeal of Section 28 in 2003, in the United Kingdom (the controversial act which prohibited the "promotion" or teaching of homosexuality), has clearly also gone some way to changing attitudes toward homosexuality in UK schools and there have been significant shifts in attitudes toward sexual practices more generally (Halberstam 2012; Weeks 2007). Research using the framework of inclusive masculinity has therefore been formulated in (and potentially documents a different landscape to) that in Connell's initial work.

McCormack's (2011a, 2012) research, especially, adopting inclusive masculinity wholesale, focuses on three sixth forms in the South of England. He makes a case for what he suggests is the "declining significance of homophobia" in contemporary society, arguing from his findings that, in direct contrast to earlier work around masculinities and schooling (Mac an Gháill 1994; Nayak and Kehily 1996), the boys he interviewed and observed were more openly tactile and physical with each other, did not espouse homophobic language, and actively opposed discrimination on the grounds of sexuality. While conducting research at a religious college, he argues that the openly gay student president was elected after a campaign that made use of cultural stereotypes about homosexuality. He suggests that using puns that played on the candidate's sexuality actively helped the campaign (McCormack 2012, 76) indicating that, far from being a source of stigma, the public visibility of the young man's sexuality was not only tolerated but also keenly valued. McCormack argues that examples such as these mark a departure from the more pervasive view of young gay men in secondary education as those who have to hide their sexuality in order to avoid physical or verbal abuse.

Anderson's own work looks at sporting (Anderson 2005, 2011, 2012; Anderson and McGuire 2010) and educational (Anderson 2008b; Anderson, Adams, and Rivers 2012) contexts, which have both been "traditionally" associated with producing hegemonic masculinity. In research on "frat" cultures in America, for example, he looks at a fraternity called the Troubadours which openly recruited homosexual members and had an openly gay chapter president. This is in stark contrast to the vision of "frat boys" that Kimmel (2008) presents in *Guyland*, where fraternities encourage members to be chauvinistic, misogynistic, and/or homophobic. In this

instance, there is less of a fear of "being homosexualized" and more emphasis is placed on policing homophobia than policing heterosexuality.

In his work on male cheerleaders (Anderson 2005), Anderson postulates that in a supposedly "feminized" terrain it would be expected that men would conform more to a "rigidly hegemonic" mode of behavior (Anderson 2005, 339) in order to assert dominance. His two case studies on two different groups of male cheerleaders finds evidence however of the opposite and he documents the presence of both "ortho-dox" and "inclusive" masculinities, with the difference between the two attitudes hinging, seemingly, on the presence of openly gay male team mates. Even within more "masculine" sporting terrains, such as rugby, Anderson and McGuire (2010) argue that there has been a sharp decline in homophobia and misogyny. Anderson, Adams, and Rivers (2012, 421) work, generating data from 145 hetero-sexual male university students who they randomly stopped on university campuses, also found that 89 percent of them had kissed another man on the lips, with 37 per-cent engaging in "sustained kissing." They assert, therefore, that these data suggest that men's fear of being seen as homosexual (homohysteria) is in decline.

Roberts' (2013) recent work takes up inclusive masculinity in a different fashion. Moving from sexuality he looks at how the decline in "traditional" working-class occupations in the United Kingdom has seen many young working-class men parti-cipating in tertiary sector industries. These arenas are supposedly "feminized" (cf. McDowell 2000; Roberts 2011) because of their stress on physically nonintensive labor, empathy, emotion work (Hochschild 1979), and deference to authority (Roberts 2013, 675) which have (to a certain extent) changed how working-class masculinities are enacted. The young men he interviewed saw interaction with cus-tomers (or engaging in emotion work) as enjoyable, seemingly resisting the idea that the labor was feminized and they adopted more egalitarian stances on relationships and domestic labor. However, as Roberts also notes, their attitudes did little to change the *actual* division of labor within their heterosexual relationships. There-fore, he suggests, in line with McCormack and Anderson (2010), that this behavior indicates that we are witnessing "a co-existence of persistence and change . . . [lead-ing] contemporary masculinity to be somewhat attenuated or softened" (Roberts 2013, 672). This evidence, then, would all seem to indicate that what we are seeing is a shift in masculinities as premised on, and legitimated by, the subordination of homosexual men and a "softening" of the performance of masculinities.

The Response from Hegemonic Masculinity

Types, Identities, and Performances

Inclusive masculinity, like hegemonic masculinity, frames gender (partially) in terms of power relations. However, it suggests a shift toward a more egalitarian con-ception of masculinity and a less rigidly vertical notion of hierarchy. "Macho" beha-vior in the performance of inclusive masculinity is denigrated, while "softer"

masculinities become valorized (Anderson 2009, 96). There is also, as in Connell's work, the presence of multiple masculinities; however, they are more precariously sustained and orthodox and inclusive masculinities are situated ''alongside,'' as opposed to ''on top of,'' each other; neither is more socially powerful. Instead, the focus is on in which *contexts* they are made to appear valued.

What should first be made apparent however is that both Anderson and McCormack frequently refer to hegemonic masculinity as a type of person (Anderson 2011, 252; McCormack 2011a, 338; McCormack and Anderson 2010, 846) or an archetype (Anderson 2009, 31, 36, 93, 94) rather than a web of gendered configurations. As Hearn (2004) and Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) point out, this is a fundamental misreading of what hegemonic masculinity entails. On this point, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, 842) state specifically:

> Although any specification of hegemonic masculinity typically involves the formulation of cultural ideals, it should not be regarded only as a cultural norm.

It is therefore disingenuous to argue, as Anderson does, that Connell claims that ''there will only be one hegemonic archetype of masculinity . . . hegemonic masculinity [is] a hegemonic process by which *one* form of institutionalized masculinity is 'culturally exalted' above all others'' (Anderson 2009, 93–94 my emphasis).

While Anderson (2005, 339; 2009, 30, 45) has stated in some places that hegemonic masculinity is not a type of person, in constantly using the word ''archetype'' in relation to hegemonic and orthodox masculinity, he confusedly paints gender as a cultural identity that one can ''possess,'' inadvertently employing Jungian ideas of psychological correlates as prerequisites to action. To this end, his conflation of ''orthodox masculinity'' with a psychologically stable conception of traditional gender performance, asserts the same fallacy that Connell outlines in relation to Universalist sex-role theory in her initial formulation of hegemonic masculinity. Gender is not stable and the term orthodox, particularly, implies an authentic, historic referential point at which masculinity was fixed. This is precisely the claim the hegemonic masculinity refutes (Connell 1995, 76).

Hegemonic masculinity emerged as a *critique* of sex-role theory and is very much located within what Edwards (2006) describes as the ''second wave'' of studies on men and masculinities. It focused on the ideological nature of sex roles as a product of structural power relations suggesting, crucially, that there were asymmetrical power dynamics at work in cultural ideals of ''masculinity'' and ''femininity,'' which sex-role theory failed to grasp (Demetriou 2001, 338). What Connell (1995, 75) demonstrated comprehensively was that there are *never* singular versions of masculinity or femininity and that power relations also exist between men as well as between men and women. Thus, Western cultural ''ideals'' were often ideologically premised on white, male, middle-class, heterosexual bodies and did not represent the experience of, or indeed the economic and political inequalities experienced by, some groups of men (see also Segal 1990).

Connell's (1995) account is instead performative in that she stresses that gender is something that men *do* rather than what they *are* (Demetriou 2001, 340). While in earlier work she concedes that " . . . it is possible to say that there are some innate differences in temperament or ability between men and women. The hypothesis cannot be ruled out entirely" (Connell 1987, 71), she goes on to note that "but if they exist, we can say quite confidently that they are not the basis of major social institutions" (Ibid.). Here is the crux of Connell's (1995, 77) argument; while gender is performative, hegemonic practices, in order to be legitimated, *must* correspond to institutional privilege and power, which have no basis in nature and are subject to change. Therefore, what is considered gender "identity" is not psychologically "fixed" or acquired, but dependent on arrangements of social power. In contrast, Anderson's account wrongly seems to suggest that gender emanates from an internalized, psychological predisposition, rather than the performance as constituting gender (see Butler 2008, 34).

Hybridity

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, 848) acknowledge that the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been critiqued for not providing a comprehensive account of the impact of "other" subject positions on the construction and performance of hegemony (Demetriou 2001; Howson 2006). However, Connell's (1995, 77, emphasis added) initial definition also emphasized that:

> I stress that hegemonic masculinity embodies 'a *currently* accepted strategy'. When conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, the bases of dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded . . . *Hegemony then, is a historically mobile relation*.

It is curious, then, if hegemony is a flexible, historically mobile relation, why both Anderson and McCormack insist that hegemonic masculinity theory is unable to explain masculinities in periods of low homohysteria. This is vital, as it may be the case that what Anderson calls "inclusive" is just another hegemonic strategy for some heterosexual, white, middle-class men to legitimately maintain economic, social, and political power in the wake of gay rights. Thus, the idea of change alongside the continuity of unequal, gender power relations is not particularly unique or new (see Hearn 1999).

Demetriou (2001, 346) succinctly critiques Connell's treatment of marginal masculinities, noting that the visibility of black and gay men in the public sphere inevitably impacts on the construction of hegemonic practices. This suggests, he argues in line with Gramsci's initial formulation, that hegemony must always hybridize in order to ensure its continued legitimacy as a historical bloc (Howson 2006, 24). In this case, changes in practice may also provide the impression of progress while still protecting the interests of historically privileged groups (for more on hybrid masculinities, see Bridges and Pascoe 2014). Thus, a slightly more nuanced reading

of hegemonic masculinity may still be entirely compatible with changes in gendered practice.

As Allen (2007) clearly demonstrates, using Demetriou's concept of hybridization, ''previously subordinated'' practices can be incorporated into hegemonic strategies by powerful groups while doing very little to change institutional inequalities. This is what is fundamentally lacking in both McCormack's and Anderson's critiques; there *must* be a correspondence between institutional power and group practice. What Demetriou (2001, 345) identifies in his critique of internal and external hegemony, justifiably highlights Connell's privileging of political, economic, or occupational institutions (external) over interaction (internal). However, in focusing only on micro-level interaction, Anderson and McCormack solely privilege what could be understood as the ''internal'' dimensions of hegemony, providing virtually no account of institutional privilege. The unacceptability of overt homophobic speech or violence is now enshrined in legality, which may suggest that homophobia is less integral to hegemonic practices. However, this may do very little to disrupt broader inequalities, hidden prejudice, and the continued institutional privilege of some groups of men (Bridges and Pascoe 2014; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Hearn 2004).

Complicit and Marginal Masculinities

According to the concept of hegemonic masculinity, the relative power of *some* men means that hierarchies are constructed between groups of men as well as between men and women. Perhaps most importantly is Connell's attempt to outline a multi-dimensional understanding of gender inequalities within *patriarchy*, which inclusive masculinity does not touch on at all. In order to do this, Connell specifically outlines four subject positions internal to the ''gender order'' which are constructed relationally. The first, hegemonic, as noted earlier, enjoys the most freedom and access to economic and political power (p. 77). The second, subordinated masculinities (p.78), consists of homosexual-identifying or ''effete'' males, denied legitimacy because of a historic, symbolic blurring with femininity (see Weeks 1977a, 2000). The third, marginalized masculinities, tends to be ''nonwhite'' and working-class men who are structurally denied the same opportunities as other men, even if they engage in similarly hegemonic practices (Connell 1995, 80). Connell's fourth position, complicit masculinities, encompasses those who do not ''actually meet normative standards of hegemonic masculinity'' (p. 79) but directly gain from the ''patriarchal dividend'' (Ibid.) and from hegemony by virtue of being white, middle-class, and heterosexual males.

In Connell's view, men who are not overtly sexist or homophobic, therefore, have often stood to gain from a patriarchal hegemony, even if they do not actively engage in many hegemonic practices. In this respect, the conditions that inclusive masculinity describes are also remarkably similar to Connell's discussion of complicit masculinities. To reiterate, as Connell argues, it may well be the case that *virtually no*

one embodies all the requirements required to fulfill hegemonic ideals (Connell 1995, 79) yet they stand to benefit from wider cultural representations, ideas, and practices around masculinity. Therefore, actively disavowing homophobia while benefiting from cultural homophobia is not new and hegemony does not preclude the presence of multiple hegemonic (Coles 2009), discursive strategies (Bridges 2014; Wetherell and Edley 1999). Similarly, the orthodox vision of masculinity that Anderson describes is not necessarily compatible with Connell's hegemonic configuration. Macho posturing, aggression, and homophobia may actually be more linked to what Connell (1995, 77) describes as marginal subject positions because, as she also states, "this is not to say the most visible bearers of hegemonic masculinity are always the most powerful people."

The class dynamic in many of the studies using inclusive masculinity is significant, given that middle-class men, historically, have not necessarily been considered the most chauvinistic, homophobic, or "physically" powerful (see Segal 1990); yet, they have historically had the most power or stood to benefit the most from hegemonic configurations. Anderson, Adams, and Rivers' (2012) method of randomly stopping male students on two university campuses and asking them if they had ever kissed another man especially raises serious issues of representation and methodological validity here. This is both in terms of the class composition of many universities (Reay, David, and Ball 2005) and in that those who respond to this type of survey are often very different from those who do not.[1] The χ^2 analysis they conduct on the samples at the two unnamed universities claims that there were no statistically significant differences between them—this therefore suggests wider applicability. However, with some subsamples as low as seven respondents, this assertion is in no way statistically valid. How class is defined and just how many of the students may be considered "middle class" in these contexts would therefore be helpful in assessing the applicability of the findings. Inclusive masculinity may therefore only be describing the behavior of the "sexually liberal," complicit, and middle classes.

As already noted, the idea of a singularly dominant ideal is where inclusive masculinity mounts its challenge to the efficacy of hegemonic masculinity. As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, 842) clearly state, however, "hegemonic masculinity was formulated within a multidimensional understanding of gender." Therefore, the even cruder division that Anderson introduces between orthodox and inclusive diminishes the fluidity and diversity of gender as both social and individual practice. As Connell (1995, 181, emphasis added) explicitly observes:

> Hegemonic and complicit masculinities are no more monolithic than are subordinated and marginalized masculinities . . . we even see attempts at reform and modernization, admittedly within well-defined limits.

The difficulty in establishing distinctions among hegemonic, subordinate, complicit, and marginalized positions, as subjectivities, is therefore made even more difficult when these categories are reduced to two, largely based on "personality." Thus, the

usefulness of this distinction should be questioned on the grounds that it actually lacks the complexity and nuance of Connell's initial insights.

Perhaps most problematically, the insistence on typologies of orthodox and inclusive, in Anderson's work, severely limits any discussion of intersections of race, class, and gender (see Crenshaw 1989). Anderson (2008a, 105) conflates dynamics of race with sexuality in his use of the "one-drop rule" (Davis 1991) and interchangeably uses the terms "marginal" and "subordinate" (Anderson 2009, 94) as if they mean the same thing. To suggest that sexuality can be treated the same way as race is particularly problematic in that sexuality has never been a visible marker of discursive difference in the same way as race. Nor has discrimination against gay *men* [*sic*] operated in the same way, historically, as racial (or gender) discrimination. In this respect, the idea that race and sexuality are separate-but-equal itself belies a particularly ethnocentric and reductionist view of both homosexuality and intersectionality.

As Beasley (2012, 759) has noted, "the stress on gender identities, on 'being', that marks CSMM, is often manifest in the inclination to develop homogenizing typologies." Perhaps, therefore, as with Connell's initial approach, stressing the cultural malleability of gender relations should mean moving beyond the simplistic imposition of taxonomies rather than developing even cruder ones. These inevitably become proxies for "identities" that diminish the capacity of CSMM to theories change and complexity. However, again, this means that we should be looking to reformulate Connell's insights into relationality, multidimensionality, and power, not to replace her categories with even more limiting conceptual constructs.

The Problems with Homophobia and Homohysteria

As Beasley (2012) also notes, the separation of material from discursive power in Connell's account is questionable. The two are invariably intertwined and in framing power largely in economic/institutional terms, Connell disenfranchises the ability of "subordinated" and "marginalized" discourses to challenge inequalities by other means (Petersen 1998). It is not then, as Foucault (1979, 100) has suggested, a case of "accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies." Groups do not "possess" power as a tangible and definitive part of their being (Beasley 2012, 759) and in this respect, changes in "internal hegemony" may also reflect, or be indicative of, changes in broader power relations. Thus, if ideas and professional discourses around homosexuality change so too will institutional inequalities and vice versa. This indicates that multiple, seemingly contradictory hegemonic behaviors may exist alongside each other at the same time (Aboim 2010; Coles 2009). The central claim that homophobia has declined and insistence on the term homohysteria, integral to the concept of inclusive masculinity, also requires theoretical exposition then.

As already noted, Anderson (2009, 85) uses the term homohysteria because he suggests that "the term homophobia does not accurately capture the complications of how people feel about homosexuals." He claims that the fear of being homosexualized has declined and that homophobia is no longer integral to the construction of an idealized masculinity. Leaving aside the previously identified oversights in Connell's approach, I would suggest that the division between homophobia and homohysteria, and subsequent claims around "decline," rest on three problematic assumptions: first, that levels of prejudice can be objectively established; second, that acts like same-sex kissing are indicative of attitudes and/or necessarily tied to sexualities; and third, that homophobia is really as insignificant as inclusive masculinity claims.

Defining Decline

On the first point, Anderson's approach is surprisingly ahistorical and essentialist for a gender and sexuality scholar, often seeing "homosexual" as a nominal descriptor for presocial desire rather than a historic construction in itself. However, Western masculinity, emerging in the 1700s (Forth 2008; Mosse 1996; Petersen 1998), predates the discursive formation of Western homosexuality, emerging in the 1800s (Foucault 1979). Therefore, masculinity as a configuration of power appears before homosexuality comes to be articulated as a legal, medical, and social construct. Because hegemony is a "historically mobile relation" and subject to change, this suggests that because masculinity did not always define itself in opposition to homosexuality that the "fear of being homosexualized" is not necessarily a prerequisite to the construction of gendered social power (see also Hearn et al. 2012, 41). As Connell (1995, 242) herself stated explicitly, "... a heterosexual sensibility can be formed without homophobia, so alliances of straight men with gay politics become possible."

To this, Anderson (2009, 86) might suggest that levels of homohysteria are premised on the recognition of homosexuality; therefore, the fact that masculinity predates the construction of homosexuality, alone, does not provide an adequate critique. However, the idea that homophobia can be proscribed into objective categories of "high" and "low" is no less baffling than McCormack's (2012, 60–61) and Anderson's (2009, 88–89) claims that the apex of homophobia was around 1993—an unusually specific date—over two decades after it was decriminalized in the United Kingdom. Homophobia is, to a certain extent, subjective and contextually rather than temporally specific. It is therefore difficult to measure or to say that society is in a period of low homohysteria because the ways that the "fear of being homosexualized" manifest themselves will vary considerably within that society, even over the same time period, based on changing discourses around what "being homosexual" entails.

Given that legal frameworks around homophobia are often deliberately broad in order to recognize its subjective nature, it is odd that Anderson and McCormack

uncritically suggest that homophobia has "declined" rather than evaluate how it might have changed (see Baker 2005; Pascoe 2005). They merely assert as fact that "cultural homophobia" is in decline and tend to perceive homophobia as a deliberate denigration of homosexuality through speech acts. Again, however, drawing on Connell (1995, 40) herself,

> Homophobia is not just an attitude. Straight men's hostility to gay men involves real social practice, ranging from job discrimination through media vilification to imprisonment and sometimes murder.

A broader constructionist account of what exactly homophobia entails is essential given that homophobia, much like sexism, may not be explicit and can be institutional as well as interpersonal (see Tilcsik 2011). This makes the distinction between homohysteria and homophobia somewhat redundant.

Homohysteria, I would suggest, offers its own critique through the use of the feminized concept of hysteria (see Showalter 1987) as a metaphor for irrational fear. Homophobia for men and boys, historically, is not necessarily a fear of whom people have sex with (Foucault 1979, 1985) but a disdain of the symbolic blurring with femininity and men perceivably acting "like women." The fear of homosexuality, with its genesis in the idea of the pathological invert (Weeks 1977a, 1977b, 1995), is often more about distancing from the feminine due to the perceived object of desire being that "natural" to women (Kimmel 2007) than the fear of being homosexualized. Homophobic abuse is not always directed at individuals who identify as homosexual but often those who are perceived to be "feminine" (Connell 1995, 79). Therefore, in suggesting a fear of being "homosexualized," McCormack and Anderson seem to intrinsically attach certain types of performance to a fixed idea of sexuality rather than to outline the fluidity and diversity of sexuality as a series of discursive constructs, which (like hegemony) are themselves *subject to change*. Crucially—particularly in her discussion of a "very straight gay"—the difference between Connell and Anderson is that Connell recognizes that the figure of "the homosexual" as a discursive construction that does not always tally with experience or reality. Just as self-identifying straight men have not always been considered "macho" (see also Bridges 2014), it is equally plausible that self-identifying gay men are not de facto "camp," "effete" men. Therefore, again, the performative dimension of gender in relation to *patriarchy*, rather than *identity*, is crucial to understanding how inequalities are structured.

Acts or Sexualities?

One of the key issues, in terms of assessing the validity of inclusive masculinity, is how gender and sexuality are characterized. McCormack and Anderson both see certain acts as explicitly equated with homosexuality and note that "straight" men's increasing willingness to kiss (Anderson, Adams, and Rivers 2012) and touch other

straight men, should be taken as indicative of a declining fear of being homosexualized. Here, Anderson and McCormack uncritically conflate certain same-sex practices with homosexuality—something queer theorists have gone to great lengths to disavow (see Butler 2008; Fuss 1991; Halberstam 1998; Sedgwick 1990). This is problematic in that it suggests that because straight-identifying men are able to kiss or touch each other in a "nonsexual" way in *some* contexts, that there is an overall decline in the social stigma attached to individuals who identify as homosexual.

However, as the first Kinsey Report (Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin 1948) demonstrated, there were far greater numbers of same-sex, sexual behaviors—even in the 1940s—than there were men who identified as homosexual, yet few would suggest that the decade was particularly sexually permissive. Similarly, Humphreys' (1975) *Tearoom Trade* identified the existence of same-sex sexual practices among self-defined straight men in the late 60s and early 70s. While the Kinsey Report has been methodologically admonished (O Connell Davidson and Layder 1994) its key finding—that large numbers of men and boys who did not define themselves as homosexual were engaging in same-sex sexual encounters—indicates therefore that acts are, in some contexts, historically separable from homosexuality as a discursive construct. The behavior that inclusive masculinity documents is therefore not particularly "new," even after the "birth" of the homosexual.

Men being tactile with each other or being emotionally intimate is also not historically unprecedented and therefore practices such as stroking another boy's leg (McCormack 2011a, 350) or kissing another "straight" man are not necessarily good predictors of societal attitudes toward sexuality. There are numerous examples of other intensely patriarchal societies where men who express same-sex desire face open hostility, such as Iran and Uganda, but where men can openly show public tactility without being considered gay. While the public exhibition of same-sex kissing in the United Kingdom may be more visible in certain places (i.e., clubs), masculinity has been historically characterized by its dialectical and internal contradictions (Aboim 2010; Forth 2008) and hegemonic configurations by their "elastic" capacity to incorporate behaviors in periods of crisis (Bridges and Pascoe 2014; Connell 1995; Demetriou 2001). Therefore, again, the concept of inclusive masculinity offers little in the way of theoretical nuance about these glaring contradictions.

McCormack and Anderson might respond that it is this *public* dimension to same-sex practices of intimacy which is new. This is where sport particularly (Anderson's main research context) provides another problematic fit with inclusive masculinity however. Sport, despite its links to nation building and the embodiment of masculinity (Nagel 1998), has always been a site where 'masculinity' is queered, to a certain extent, by the level of physical intimacy, tactility, and display of emotion; something that can be found historically in the type of initiation practices cultivated by rugby union teams in the United Kingdom. While Anderson (2011, 2012) draws attention to a few of these already-existing practices, he nevertheless stresses the historical originality of men in *some* sports being tactile as equated with macro societal shifts in attitude.

Again, however, same-sex intimacy and tactility between men has always existed, particularly in football, but this has done little to challenge an intensely homophobic culture, as the tragic case of Justin Fashanu attests to.[2] It is certainly not the case that homophobia has become less acceptable in *all* sports or even the majority of popular ones. There is not a single out-gay footballer in any of the "top-flight" English or European football leagues and, statistically speaking, it is highly improbable that there are no self-identifying, gay professional footballers playing today. In fact, Thomas Hitzlsperger, coming out in 2014 *after* retirement from the English Premier League, stated that:

> I have taken a conscious decision to confront publicly the prejudice and hostility shown towards homosexuals . . . [some of] the players concerned have not dared to declare their inclinations because the world of football still sees itself to some extent as a macho environment. (quoted in Halliday 2014)

Hitzlsperger's decision to announce this, deliberately timed after his career had ended, followed years of media speculation about football players' sexuality which had adverse effects on certain players' mental health. Others have also faced intense homophobia as a result of rumors surrounding their sexuality.[3] The most popular, most watched sport in the United Kingdom and Europe is still not all that inclusive.

Homophobia Is Still Prevalent

Finally, McCormack's (2012, 61) largely unqualified disdain for Stonewall[4] aside, what larger surveys show is that there are still high rates of assault and abuse targeted at lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB)-identifying individuals, which do not paint the same optimistic picture. In 2012, a report conducted by the UK Home Office, looking specifically at hate crime (Smith et al. 2012), demonstrated that from 2010/2011, police recorded 4,883 reported hate crimes on the basis of sexuality (p. 25). This was based on figures from England and Wales, with the British Crime Survey estimating much higher incidence rates of 50,000 cases of hate crime on the basis of sexual orientation over the same period (p. 27). Men are also still overwhelmingly more likely to be both defendants and victims in cases brought to trial (Crown Prosecution Service [CPS] 2012, 20).

In direct contrast to McCormack's claims in British education, a report published by the National Union of Teachers in the United Kingdom (NUT 2012) claimed that 90 percent of the teachers interviewed in the Greater Manchester area (750 in total) had witnessed homophobic bullying in the schools they worked in, with similar rates replicated through studies in other locations.[5] A Stonewall-funded report from 2014, conducted independently by YouGov and which looked at 1,832 schools, also found that 86 percent of the teachers in secondary schools and 45 percent of those in primary schools said that they had

witnessed some form of homophobic bullying (Guasap, Ellison, and Satara 2014). The scope of McCormack's research, especially, severely limits the credibility of inclusive masculinity through an inability to generalize to a population beyond a small number of schools and colleges in the South of England. It is also politically dangerous to be making *generalized* claims from small, biased samples—something which he accuses other sources of (McCormack 2012, 61)—as the core narrative may invariably be used by those with specific agendas to justify funding cuts to programs which continue to tackle homophobia in schools.

To this end, there is a notable analytic bias around what is labeled as "homophobic" and "nonhomophobic" behavior in Anderson's, McCormack's, and also slightly in Roberts' work. All three authors document the presence of behavior which may be construed as homophobic; however, they take respondents' interpretations of whether they consider their behavior to be homophobic at face value. The starkest example of this is the fact that the word "gay" is often used as a synonym for something negative (McCormack 2011a, 348; Roberts 2013, 677). McCormack particularly notes the widespread use of "that's so gay." Yet, when questioning the students, he says, "[the] boys maintain that this phrase is not homophobic. Chris says 'I say it all the time. But I don't mean anything by it. I've got gay friends' (McCormack 2011a, 348). This last assertion, particularly, must resonate with anyone who is familiar with the mantra of "I'm not a racist; I've got Black friends."

Both McCormack and Anderson suggest that this "gay discourse," while problematic, is not homophobic because "there is no intent to subordinate an individual when used" (McCormack 2011a, 348). However, this is where hegemonic masculinity offers a substantial countercritique. Even if there is often no *conscious* intent to subordinate or marginalize others, this is often achieved through unquestioned symbolic practices (Coles 2009; Pascoe 2005), naturalized through hegemonic representations, which stigmatize nonheterosexual-identifying individuals. In the same way that telling a young boy to stop behaving "like a girl" is not necessarily a conscious attempt to suggest that femininity should be framed pejoratively, it is precisely a historical awareness of the interplay between language and power that enables social scientists to assume some form of knowledge beyond that amenable to individuals' direct, conscious interpretation. A narrow definition of homophobia as simply a conscious interpersonal act is therefore stripped of any wider relation to historic or social context. Intention is a specious argument which obfuscates the myriad causes of gender inequalities and which perpetrators can often hide behind, even when confronted by the implications of their actions.

McCormack and Anderson also detail a few situations where "homohysteric" attitudes may be present, noting this through observation rather than questioning. For example, they state that when one heterosexual boy kissed his friend on the cheek, there "appeared to be a moment's discomfort" (McCormack and

Anderson 2010, 854). Similarly, when challenged by a girl about ''acting gay,'' two heterosexual male friends avoided continuing with the same practices (McCormack 2011a, 348). However, they go on to directly ask the students about these encounters, unquestioningly accepting what is said rather than what is observed. The distinction between observation and interviewing is particularly important, as both McCormack and Anderson suggest the absence of behavior detailed by Mac an Gháill (1994) and Nayak and Kehily (1996) as indicative of changing masculinities. Yet, the latter studies were rigorously structured observations of behavior and they did not necessarily take the boys' interpretations at face value. Working as openly ''out gay'' researchers and asking about homophobic attitudes raises some serious implications about the validity of research using inclusive masculinity more generally.

Finally, and perhaps most worryingly, when Anderson and McCormack talk about declining homophobia and low homohysteria, there is an almost exclusive focus on how their respondents perceive largely white, middle-class, gay *men and boys*. There is no account of how butch lesbian, queer, or bisexual identifying individuals fit into this schema. What they detail as the declining significance of homophobia appears to actually be the acceptability of *some* gay men in certain contexts (sport and education) and not necessarily a significant shift in cultural homophobia. Therefore, homohysteria, as a core tenet of inclusive masculinity, fails to adequately theorize the relationship between sexuality and gender through the persistence of patriarchal systems of oppression.

Conclusion

Inclusive masculinity sounds appealing; it suggests that society is becoming more egalitarian. To a certain extent, Anderson is right. Overt homophobia is now less legally acceptable due to gains won by gay rights and feminist activists (Weeks 2007). Theories of inclusivity have also received a lot of media attention precisely because they fit with a narrative that equality has been achieved. Policy makers are always keen to emphasize that their policies are working, so it is unsurprising that when academic work seems to support ''good news,'' that it is championed by the mainstream media and academics alike; it demonstrates instrumental notions of ''impact.'' However, a combination of underdeveloped theoretical arguments, inadequate consideration to research design, and a selective use of examples means that a theory of inclusivity is difficult to accept in research looking at gender and sexuality.

This article is not intended as a partisan defense of Connell's initial use of hegemonic masculinity. As already outlined, other authors have suggested a nuanced reformulation of the concept with several excellent critiques (Aboim 2010; Beasley 2012; Bridges and Pascoe 2014; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Demetriou 2001; Hearn 2004; Wetherell and Edley 1999). Inclusive masculinity in contrast to these, however, caricatures hegemonic masculinity and lacks the sophisticated theoretical

engagement of these approaches. As suggested earlier, the fact that Connell (1995) describes hegemony as a "historically mobile relation" and attempts to provide a systematic means for understanding the complexity of patriarchy, alongside Demetriou's (2001) concept of "hybridization," indicates that inclusive masculinity adds little to CSMM. In addition, as outlined previously, hegemony does not entail a type of individual and can mean multiple hegemonic practices (Coles 2009) and discursive strategies so 'inclusive' and 'orthodox' masculinities are conceptually flawed. It should also be observed that Connell's discussion of complicit masculinities' relationship to hegemonic practices already incorporate the possibility for what Anderson perceives to be historically unprecedented.

While the type of behaviors and attitudes that Anderson and McCormack, particularly, purport to document are clearly optimistic, what they describe is not necessarily new and nor do they represent a widespread "softening" of masculinity. As highlighted, the concept of homohysteria is ahistorical in some respects and fails to account for the fact that acts are not always tied to gendered practices. At best, an idea of inclusive masculinity is a catchall attempt to describe behaviors which do not fit within a cultural stereotype of machismo. At worst, however, it is actively dangerous in that it conflates the hard-fought legal rights won by gay rights activists with a mistaken belief that because homophobic speech and violence are less apparent in public contexts, that we are nearing some historical end-point for gender and sexuality discrimination. This has the potential to close down discussions around how we should be continuing to change attitudes toward gender and sexuality.

Inclusive masculinity is misleading in that what it claims to document, the inclusion of "others" into more equal gender practices, is actually the inclusion of some white, gay, men, and boys into hegemonic configurations of power and the hybridization of existing hegemonic practices (Bridges and Pascoe 2014). In a situation where the current coalition government in the United Kingdom has axed child maintenance payments, reduced the number of female MPs, where churches still prohibit same-sex marriage, where men still commit rape against women on a significantly unequal scale with minimal conviction rates and where homophobic assaults and murders are largely committed by men against other men, it begs the question: for whom really is masculinity now inclusive?

Notes

1. Ironically, Anderson (2009, 88) notes this exact point in relation to General Social Survey data.
2. Justin Fashanu was a well-known British footballer who openly came out as gay and committed suicide in 1997, after suffering years of homophobic abuse. Despite ''coming out,'' his younger brother, a similarly well-known ex-professional footballer, in 2012, still denied the claims that his brother was gay (see http://www.thejustincampaign.com).
3. Both Graeme Le Saux and Sol Campbell were Premier League footballers who also faced years of homophobic abuse, from players and fans, and public media speculation about their sexuality. Le Saux, in 2012, gave an interview calling for support for gay footballers as a result of his experiences (see http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/16923518 and http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2009/may/15/sol-campbell-chant-guilty-portsmouth).
   The ''Rainbow Laces'' campaign in 2013 also attempted to tackle the issue of homophobia in British football in a similar to manner to the (arguably successful) ''Kick Racism Out'' campaign. However, the campaign was dogged by criticisms that it reinforced gay stereotypes through its slogans and some high-profile footballers refused to support it.
4. Stonewall is the United Kingdom's leading LGB advocacy organization that campaigns and lobbies against discrimination on the grounds of sexuality.
5. See http://www.schools-out.org.uk/? resources=nut-prevalence-of-homophobia-survey.

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