

COMMENTS

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Masculinity emerges in this session as a broad paradigm (codes and symbols, institutional practices, experience and memory) that sheds new light on the modern history of politics and war. Together with women's history, it can challenge conventional accounts of that history in strategically important ways - as these papers demonstrate. My remarks will concern this 'external' value of the history of masculinity.

The transformation of politics begun by the revolutions and wars of the late 18th century took real and symbolic power from monarchic and religious models of fatherhood and the family and reinvested it in citizenship and the nation. Masculinity was internalized as a source of political identity and authority in new and reformed polities. Particular models of masculinity symbolized different political systems - as Stefan Dudink shows in the case of Holland where revolutionary and military patriotism faded by comparison with a civic reformism embodied in the renegotiated image of William of Orange. Codes of masculinity structured male citizenship and political practice, as shown by Carroll Smith-Rosenberg for the 19th century United States and Thomas Welskopp for the mid-19th century German Social Democratic movement. The invention of national community was a related political development whose cultural density (already apparent in the German response to Napoleonic occupation and the Italian Risorgimento) intensified in the later 19th and early 20th centuries. Here, too, masculinity was a powerful source of identity and legitimacy, as demonstrated by Jacobus Du Pisani for Afrikaner nationalism. These three vectors of political development - state authority, citizen activism, national identity - were moulded by symbols and codes of masculinity which offer scope for extensive investigation.

War was both a vital articulation of political masculinities and a problematic field of masculine experience. From the American and French Revolutions, military service became a counter-part of citizenship (through the volunteer or the short-service conscript). As such, it democratized the warrior ethos, reinforced masculine paradigms, and furnished myths of national identity. Yet 20th century industrialized warfare destabilized gender categories. It required the mobilization of women and men in non-combat roles and also (in World War II) brought combat to whole populations. Contrasting variants of masculinity (and femininity) were expressed in different mobilizations for total war, as Sonya Rose shows for Britain (by comparison with Nazi Germany) in 1939-45. Also, the trauma of industrialized combat was a pervasive threat to the ideal of the democratized warrior, especially (though not exclusively) in the warfare of attrition in World War I. Michael Roper's study of how a troubled masculine

self-image provoked by that trauma reworked memory through a lifetime points to the complex ways in which conflicts between gender roles and gendered experience both articulated the experience of war and sought to reabsorb it retrospectively. Post-war periods (from 1815 to 1945 and beyond) are moments when gender is particularly explicit.

The authority of the self-constituted citizen (as of the 'respectable' bourgeois or worker) was embedded in the family. Yet the family was located in class, ethnic, or racial (as well as gender) relationships which defined it in diverse ways as a source of male power and masculine identity. As direct state intervention in the family grew for medical, social, demographic or racial ends, it shaped - and was shaped by - considerations of masculinity. Marilyn Lake's exploration of how Australian male workers defended their basic family wage between the wars shows more broadly why welfare was a sphere partly shaped by masculinity as practice and power, albeit in ways that differed by country and regime. The same point deserves exploration for other spheres (eg. education, labour relations) into which the state expanded in the 19th and 20th centuries.

National politics, war, the social action of the state are identified here as key fields in which masculinity offers new possibilities of interpretation. Other such fields - colonialism, racism - are indicated. Hints emerge on how to re-conceptualize mainstream histories in the light of masculinity and gender. Partly, this relates to the ambitions of cultural history to make explicit contemporary belief-systems and behaviours, both dominant and subordinate. However, power lies at the heart of politics and war, and re-examining mainstream histories means both identifying political moments or conflicts which directly articulate masculinity (as does Marilyn Lake) and also relating what James Joll long since called 'unspoken assumptions' (e.g. male codes of honour) to the apparently unrelated exercise of power, and to political causality.