

“Speedy cars, perky women, champagne and striptease bars”. Neo-liberal masculinity in crisis?

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### 1. The financial crisis as a crisis of neo-liberal masculinity? – An Introduction<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that the debates around the financial and economic crisis at the turn of the 2010s were debates about masculinity. In parts these topics were treated explicitly, in parts however merely implicitly. There are three aspects in these debates. *First*, some voices of the public debate, like Matthias Horx, defined the financial crisis as a “male crisis” (Interview in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 10/05/2009). The crisis was not a “re-cession” but rather a “he-cession”, a “crisis of men”, as Germany’s *Zeit*-journalists Hamann, Niejahr and Schloter (*Die Zeit*, 07/23/2009) put it. According to this view, the crisis was caused by greedy, gambling and testosterone-driven broker, banker and manager. Totally driven by the idea of maximizing profits and obsessed with “financialisation” they caused the bubble in the real estate market and the collapse of investment banks. “The financial crisis”, as Matthias Horx put it, “is the result of risky male strategies. It is also a crisis of testosterone. In measuring the hormone level of financial analysts and traders in New York and London during the boom before the crisis, scientists found out, that these levels were extremely high.” (Interview in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 10/05/2009). This argument is in line with Barbara Stcherbatcheff’s, an ex-investment banker characterization of the lifestyle of her (male) colleagues with the quotation in the headline of my talk: They are most interested in “Speedy cars, perky women, champagne and striptease bars”.

Does this mean, that the crisis wouldn’t have been occurred or at least would have taken a different course if the investment bank “Lehman Brothers” would have been run by “Lehman Sisters”, and therefore women would at least have been able to co-decide, as was the question of a symposium of the German Union “ver.di” in Frankfurt (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 01/30/2010). Horx is convinced, that “if we would have had 40 percent women in the directorates worldwide before the crisis, then the crisis would have taken another course.” Because “women are less risky than men and deal differently with responsibility (...). Besides this the will for exercising power is shaped differently (Interview in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 10/5/2009).

Hence, these voices explain the financial crisis with biological concepts of masculinity and femininity. The relationship of gender and economy is therefore reduced to individual behavior and individual and biological attributes. These individual and naturalizing models for explanation are very relieving. So the complex, multiple economic, social and cultural crisis can be explained

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by the biological functionality of brain waves (as the recent developments in neuro-economy suggests, see Priddat 2007) and physical phenomena like hormones. In short: Instead of an economic and social system called neo-liberalism, “bio”-men are blamed for the crisis. A focus on gendered structures of social hierarchies is therefore obstructed.

For the first time a woman, Elinor Ostrom, was awarded the Nobel Prize for economic sciences. At first sight this too seems to be a biologicistic response to the failure of economic models, which base on masculinistic ideas of a rational *homo oeconomicus*. But this awarding was also gender sensitive, insofar as the economic models of agency of the political scientist Ostrom are socially and politically contextualized in contrast to economic model-building in the tradition of rational choice (for a critique see Michalitsch 2006; Habermann 2008).

A *second* dimension of the “crisis of masculinity” is the fact, that in export-oriented Germany’s economy mainly the “old”, male industrial sector is in crisis. The structural crisis of the automobile industry increasingly affects young male workers, who become the “losers of the crisis”. “Male, young – unemployed“ headed for example Germany’s Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The German unemployment-rate among men increased for 1,7 percent between March 2009 to 2010. The unemployment-rate among women was decreasing for 3,2 percent at the same time

([www.pub.arbeitsamt.de/hst/services/statistik/detail/a.html](http://www.pub.arbeitsamt.de/hst/services/statistik/detail/a.html)). The trend of rapidly increasing numbers of jobless men as a consequence of the financial crisis was observed in all EU-member states (Young/Schubert 2010: V). Hence, the crisis is also interpreted as a turning point for traditional hierarchical gender relations, which base upon a gendered division of labor in which men occupy long-term employments. The crisis therefore “changes the relationship of genders”, as the above mentioned *Zeit*-journalists phrase it. This trend of changing gender relations, it is said, is not restricted to the sphere of the family, in which the unemployed husband now has to do the shopping for the household and to empty the garbage can, but affects also the labor market, because there “women should care for new economic growth” (Die Zeit 07/23/2009).

A *third dimension* of the “manhood in crisis” has only had to be brought to public debate by feminist scientists. They showed, that the political solutions to the crisis in Germany and other countries are deeply engendered – they privilege men. Bank bailouts, public funding for short-

time-work in specific labor market segments, bonuses as incentives to wreck and to buy new cars and other state-funded programs to support the automotive industry, as for example the publicly celebrated and highly controversial rescue of the car manufacturer Opel – in short all government aid programs for so called “key-industries” had a masculinistic subtext: they supported economies with a disproportionately high number of male workers (Reiner 2009). Female jobs, in contrast to Opel, were left to insolvency. This concerned on the one hand jobs in the service sector, like the German federal service provider “Arcandor”, to which also the mail order company “Quelle” belonged, and on the other hand the care sector. Both were classified as not important for the national economy and hence received less or no public aid (Sauer 2010).

These ambiguous gendered dimension of the climax of crisis of economic globalization and therefore also the collapse of self-regulating global financial markets, highlights the paradox effects of the economic, social and political transformation in the past 15 years. On the one hand these transformations bear the possibilities to overcome masculinism and androcentrism, hierarchical systems of a binary conception of gender and subordinate femininity. Economic globalization, neo-liberal restructuring after the crisis of Fordism and political internationalization open the possibility for “de-gendering” market and family relations. These processes could foster the erosion of privileging regimes of masculinity and exclusionary and discriminating regimes of femininity of Fordism and hence the possibility for increasing gender equality concerning wage labor and political representation. Western industrial countries for example cannot expect to organize their gender regime around the Keynesian welfare state and the male breadwinner model anymore. Instead, they have to find new arrangements. The increasing participation of women in the labor market, which is fostered by the “Lisbon strategy” of the European Union, pushes the emergence of dual-breadwinner models. This has consequences not only for power relations within the family or new identities of male and female workers but also for social and welfare policies, as shown for example in the new regulation of parental leave in Germany. Also, hegemonic masculinity is open for change in these processes (Connell/Messerschmidt 2005: 853).

On the other hand these dynamics of neo-liberal globalization could also lead to an even increased “bipolar gender order” (Wetterer 2004), especially along the lines of class and race/ethnicity. In analyzing the restructuring of (nation-)states there is one development to

observe: national gender-regimes and corresponding regimes of masculinity open up and new gendered identities are “hailed” as a basis for governmental arrangements and political agency. But does this imply at the same time the transformation of masculinity as a central feature of western industrial societies? In this paper, I want to argue, that in the context of economic globalization, neo-liberal restructuring and political internationalization masculinity understood as a gendered form of governance is in fact reconfigured and reestablished in a new and extended way. In the following, this new form of masculinity is termed „neo-liberal masculinity“. This reconfiguration is at the same time the precondition for the fact that masculinity was preserved as the central feature of western gender regimes.

In order to make this argument of the reconfiguration of hegemonic masculinity I first want to show the interrelationship of the state, gender and masculinity (section 2). In the next step I aim at contextualizing the emergence of neo-liberal (political) masculinities in the processes of economic globalization and internationalization of the state (section 3). Subsequently the scope of reconfigured neo-liberal political masculinity is discussed using the example of “masculinity in crisis” (section 4).

## **2. On the interrelationship of state, gender and masculinity**

“I see in this inner power, which is linked more to the function than to the civil servant itself, liked more to the man than to the visible signs of his power, some virility that I adore”, states the sharp-witted French analyst of the American democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville in 1835 (1997: 121). What is meant – in contrast to Tocqueville’s emphatic reference – by political masculinity or political masculinism today? I conceive *political* masculinity as a dimension of specific regimes of masculinity, varying from country to country. These regimes of masculinity relate to „regimes of femininity“, which means that they are closely connected with institutionalized images of femininity. Regimes of masculinity and regimes of femininity do exist in a constellation of tension and delimitation. To put it differently: The gender regimes of all western societies are characterized by the subordination of femininity under masculinity (Connell/Messerschmidt 2005: 840; see also Bereswill/Meuser/Scholz 2009).

Regimes of masculinity encompass the following five aspects: *first* the “material aspect”, masculinistic social *relations*, mainly mediated by labor or rather gendered division of labor;

*second social practices and power relations*, which permanently reinstate female subordination; *third institutions and norms*, which mark masculinity as superior relating to femininity; *fourth the symbolic aspect* of the representation of masculinity or rather of discourses about masculinities and *finally the fifth aspect* of male modes of subjectivation or rather the dimension of individual adoption of norms, discourses and their respective institutionalizations. This idea corresponds to Raewyn Connells concept of masculinity: „'(M)asculinity' represents not a certain type of man but, rather, a way that men position themselves through discursive practices.“

(Connell/Messerschmidt 2005: 841). Following Connell (1995: 76ff.) I distinguish several forms or male modes and practices of subjectivation and adoption: hegemonic, subaltern, complicit and marginalized masculinity.

In the context of gender studies in political science the masculinity of the state and politics, hence, is discussed around five aspects – these are not separate aspects but different focuses (Sauer 2001): The *first dimension*, which is based on the biological category of sex, is termed „positional“ (Lovenduski 1996: 5) or „nominal“ masculinity (Witz/Savage 1992: 35). This aspect focuses on the over-representation of men in boards and the state apparatuses. Parties, parliaments, state bureaucracies – the integral state (Antonio Gramsci), including the corporatist system – are “manned”. Male bonding and networks in politics cultivate systematically their likes: men. This dimension of political masculinity refers to a homo-social and quasi homo-erotic integration in the political field (Kreisky 1995). This form of political masculinism is by now often leaky, but not ruined. In the meanwhile women are nevertheless part of political elites and networks, although they are still obstructed by a quite robust glass ceiling.

This perspective of a biological connotation of masculinity is added by a *second dimension*, which is termed „organizational“ (Lovenduski 1996: 5) or „substantial“ masculinity (Savage/Witz 1992: 37) and relates to the working of political institutions and bureaucracies. Eva Kreisky (1992) coined the term the “state as a male fraternity” and refers with it to “masculinity as a system” (Kreisky 1995) and therefore to the fact that the male character of a state is not just expressed in the male sex of its stakeholders. Rather it relies on rules and norms, which reproduce specific modes of political and bureaucratic behaviour and a male culture. This is expressed for example in a gendered division of labour, de-emotionalized politics, which mark men as non-emotional and women as bound to emotions. Also, the seniority principle, which

concentrates power and authority at continuous – read male – careers. My term of “ratioanalyzed masculinity” – with reference to Max Weber – also wants to advert to this embedded state masculinity (Sauer 2001).

A *third* dimension refers to male power relations and practices, which form the state. This state-theoretical approach points to the fact that the state is the “condensation” (Nicos Poulantzas), the crystallisation of social power relations and practices (Ludwig/Sauer 2010). Hence, the state is a terrain on which gendered forms of oppression are linked, condensed and therefore institutionalized. Public institutions consequently can be understood as sedimented masculinistic power relations and practices. Similar to the concept of formal masculinity, this dimension of political masculinity focuses on the fact that gender relations and gendered practices are embedded in public institutions and norms. This applies to power relations between men and women as well as among men and among women. The material basis of masculinistic statehood and political institutions, hence, is formed by social power relations and hegemonic male constellations.

The *fourth* dimension highlights political processes. The term “policy-masculinity”, coined by the British political scientist Joni Lovenduski (1996: 6), indicates, that policies are always confronted with gendered forms of social inequality and therefore work like a gendered *filter*: male lifestyles and interests linked to wage labour are privileged. Hence, laws prefer particular masculinities and render them hegemonic, for example the male breadwinner. State policies however also institutionalize marginalised masculinities, like the migrant male adolescent as violent and loser in education and on the labour market.

The *fifth* aspect refers to the individual or micro-dimension. The state hereby is conceptualized as a form of “male subjectivation” (Ludwig/Sauer 2010). It constitutes a terrain in which hegemonic, complicit, subordinated and marginalised forms of masculinity are constructed and, hence, materialise in public institutions and power relations. To put it differently: Statehood and masculinities are homologous, however not congruent. This dimension emphasizes that individuals, their bodies, emotions and thoughts are linked to social structures and public relations. Consequently, masculinity is not just an individual characteristic, but conceptualized as a structure. The important point of this argument is, that state-discourses and practices do not

impose political identities by force. Rather, state practices have to be acquired and performed actively by the individual. The state therefore is not just an oppressive apparatus, but also an arena in which subjects develop identities and interests in an active manner. Consequently, these subjects do have the possibility to transform statehood. Also, institutionalized masculinities, like all gendered identities are social practices and therefore subject to social contestation and transformation (Connell/Messerschmidt 2005: 832, 836). State masculinities, too, are constantly disputed over, paradox and ready for compromises (ibid.: 852).

In the following section I want to ask, which specific forms of “political masculinities” occurred in the context of economic globalization, neo-liberal restructuring, and political internationalization.

### **3. The emergence of neo-liberal political masculinities in the internationalized state**

The *catch all*-term “globalization” encompasses social as well as political, cultural and economic transformations (Beisheim/Walter 1997: 155ff.). Globalization refers to the delimitation of national states through the interconnection by the media and communication technologies and migration flows, the internationalization of political decision-making bodies, the shortening of spacial and temporal distances by new information technologies and last but not least the almost worldwide expansion of the capitalist mode of production. The discourses and practices of globalization do share one central feature: They reframe social, political and symbolic spaces on local, national and international scales and subject them to a neo-liberal discourse of efficiency and competition. Globalization therefore, has to be termed more accurately as “global *neoliberal* restructuring” (Marchand/Runyan 2000: 3ff.; emphasis added, B.S.).

Neo-liberal restructuring implies a „political revolution“ (Brodie 1994: 55), because the sphere of the political is re-articulated and its boundaries are defined anew. The “delimitation” of capitalism after the collapse of real socialism and the “re-embedding” of capital and financial flows produced a new basis for the state (Altvater/Mahnkopf 1996: 107) at a national and international scale, in contrast to the national states, the former political “bed” of capitalism. Thus the state is not eroding, rather the state apparatus performs a „transformation in its architecture“ (Altvater/Mahnkopf 1996: 116). Furthermore new forms of opinion- and decision-making processes emerged on international, national and local scales due to the political

internationalization of the past decade (re-scaling of state-power). Central to these new forms of decision-making is that (national) administrations do not play the key role any more. Rather, civil society groups, like NGOs and women's organizations, for example the European Women's League, are involved in the policy-processes from an early stage on. Hence, the state-run monopoly on defining and deciding on social problems is put into question and the emerging forms of "governance" raise hope of non-hierarchical, co-operative and more democratic forms of politics. "Governance" therefore can be seen as an opportunity to overcome masculinistic forms of statehood and hence, for a new world order (Holland-Cunz 2000: 26; Holland-Cunz/Ruppert 2000: 16).

The internationalization of the state is, however, a masculinistic project, because instead of eliminating sedimented gendered – as well as ethnic and class-related – hierarchies, it reconfigures them in a different manner. Gender relations remain to be power relations. The chance for democratic gender structures is very poor and „positional“ as well as „formal“ masculinity remain in place or, rather, are reinforced. At the same time new forms of masculinist subjectivation emerge in order to assure these positional and formal masculinities of the state. I refer to these new constellations with the term "neo-liberal masculinity". In the following I want to demonstrate the forms and specificities of neo-liberal masculinity in the internationalized state on the basis of the five dimensions of "masculinity of the state" elaborated above. – I have to state, that these thoughts do not rest on systematic empirical surveys. Rather they are paradigmatic thoughts, which draw on empirical examples for illustration.

### *3.1. „Positional“ masculinity: the consolidation of „structures of male bonding“*

Politics beyond the national state, international networks and cooperation between women from the global south and north of the past decade shed light on new possibilities for feminist action and new space for feminist agency. In this regard the career of women's NGOs at UN conferences can be seen as a story of success: the *descriptive or quantitative representation* (Pitkin 1967) of women in the World Bank and the UN, for instance, was augmented (D'Amico 1999), women's organizations became important agents in the context of UN conferences. Also, the European Commission has been the initiator for European women's networks (Abels 2001). Women's movements not only became a central feature of "global governance", but the international movement of women can also be seen as a co-initiator of the structures of "Global

Governance” (Ruppert 2002: 61).

However, the rising representation of women and women’s movements indeed did not lead to the depletion of positional masculinity and therefore the over-representation of men in these (new) political decision-making bodies on the international level. Supranational institutions like national political institutions too, historically developed by excluding women and they still today show a masculinistic bias: International state apparatuses are obviously “manned“. The most influential political institutions like the World Bank, the International Money Fund, the European Central Bank or the World Trade Organization show a significant under-representation of women (Lenz 2002: 84ff.). Currently often cited examples due to the financial crises are the under-representation of women in the boards of global corporations, in the executive suites of large banks and in the global governance boards of the financial markets, like in the “Basel Committee on Banking Supervision“ (Schubert/Young 2010: 13). Furthermore women are marginalized not only in these big organizations of “Global Governance”, but also in inter- and transnational NGOs (Ruppert 2002: 79).

The process of informalization of politics in international governance-regimes, and, hence, the transfer of political decision-making in national and international networks, generally is also linked to a homogenization of these networks – and consequently also a homogenization of the genders. Alison Woodward (1996) showed at the example of the EU-Commission, that being a man is a tool for fraternization across national, cultural and idiomatic boundaries. This is the case especially in international boards, which are at first glance conceived by their members as hostile and culturally divers. The common gender is a mode to deal with this diversity. Political internationalization therefore is a mode of reconstructing positional masculinity in decision-making bodies.

### *3.2 “Formal“ masculinity: informalization of politics and male fraternities*

So far, the development of international patterns of regulation never questioned “formal” masculinity, neither on the national, nor on the international scale. On the contrary, supranational statehood too, is characterized by long established, male rules and norms. An important reason for the conservation and reproduction of formal masculinity is the increasing informalization of politics via informal sub-structures of national and international bodies of negotiation and

networks of pre-parliamentary space. In the context of the so called „ negotiations state“ institutions of democratic legitimacy, like parliaments, hand over their monopoly on defining political problems, on agenda setting, and problem solutions to corporatist networks of public administrations, influential social groups, like the industry and unions, the church, the media and the sciences. Vivien Schmidt (1995: 85) uses the term “asymmetry“ of state power, because by this informalization, the executive gains more and more power in relation to the legislature. This process of “de-parliamentarization” and the strengthening of state administrations in the policy-process is shown for instance in the denomination of boards of experts like the German “Council of Ethics”. In parts, social agents like NGOs and women’s organizations are integrated in these networks. However, the power and influence of economic lobby groups exceeds those of known corporatist forms in Fordist constellations.

These processes of „privatization“, or rather „informalization“ of politics do have gendered implications, too. They are weakening institutions of representation and negotiation, like parliaments, to which women fought successfully for access and quotas. In contrast to this, political decisions are increasingly made in semi-public fraternities and networks. The process of privatization, the lack of transparency and democratic control is one *modus operandi* of masculinization and formal masculinity, and hence, the interconnection of positional and formal masculinity.

### 3.3 *The strengthening of policy-masculinity*

The intensification of the informal interconnection of lobbying groups, state bureaucracy and civil society actors increases the influence of men in policy-making. Thereby interventions of institutionalized women’s and equal-opportunity-policies are hindered and at the same time policy-masculinity is intensified. In the last decade it was possible to raise the substantial representation of women on the international scale, and at least to relativize policy-masculinity: In international boards and committees women’s groups successfully managed to engender the political agenda (Meyer/Prügl 1999: 5), to make gender an important international issue and to establish the policies of “international women’s policy” (Ruppert 2002: 60). Feminist experts managed to increase the gender competence of important international institutions and organizations, like the UN, the World Bank and the EU-Commission. They managed to „gender mainstream“ (Hafner-Burton/Pollack 2009) these organizations and, hence, to sensitize them for

gender topics and to frame political topics in a gender-sensitive way. The international women's movement for example gave the impulse for including women's rights (i.e. reproductive rights, protection against violence against women, recognition of rape as a war crime) into the human rights (Meyer/Prügl 1999: 3, 7; Joachim 2000; Klingebiel 2000: 162). Also, on the EU level similar results have been achieved. The EU-Commission was able to realize together with the European Court of Justice women-friendly policies in the field of wage labour. Furthermore, they realized binding laws on anti-discrimination and achieved the implementation of these directives even in reluctant states like Germany.

But how is then a new policy-masculinism materializing? The informal institutions of the so-called post-national network democracy are as impermeable for gender-related topics and the goal of gender equality as the formal national institutions. Last but not least policy-masculinity roots in the fact, that all policies are framed in economic terms. In particular this is visible in the shift of national policies to globalizing industries, that is in the neo-liberal shift to the supply-side and the "economization" of the social. The political neglect of care-work, for instance, while at the same time pushing women's labour participation and the parallel establishment of a feminized low-wage-sector encouraged by new policy-instruments are illustrative examples for a still dominant masculinistic concentration of policies on male patterns of wage labour. On an international scale the discourse on demographic policy, too, is an example for political masculinism. In the global south gender becomes, for example, a resource for economic growth (see report of the World Bank 2001, ch. II, cit. in: Ruppert 2002: 56). In this sense, empowerment programs (reproductive rights, health of women) are framed economically and demographically and, hence, reframed in a masculinist way. Women of the global North and South are "commodified".

#### *3.4. New modes of subjectivation of hegemonic neo-liberal masculinities*

The "macro"-masculinities presented above are completed in the following by a focus on the micro-dimensions of masculinities, on the governing of masculinity. Neo-liberal restructuring refers not only to new political institutions on a national and international scale, but also to new modes of male subjectivation, namely the technique to "govern oneself" (Foucault 2000). In the context of the internationalized state modes of subjectivation are emerging, and consequently new forms of constructed masculinities, too. The internationalized state is a new „arena of

masculinity formation“ (Connell 1998b: 16). Or put it different: Neo-liberal governmentality rests on new forms of governing gender. Connell distinguishes between three historical phases of „globalized masculinities“: those of the time of conquests, those of colonialism and those post-colonialism, or rather neo-liberalism (Connell 1998b: 12ff.). Hence, the following paradigmatic modes of neo-liberal masculine subjectivation want to point to structures of masculinity

#### 3.4.1. *International “state-masculinity” and transnational economic masculinity*

In the new international forms of governance women are at first glance integrated; but the forms of gendered and ethnic interpellation which are linked to these structures are embedded in a power-laden setting, which reconfigures the relation of gender, ethnicity and class as modes of dominance: whiteness, manhood and the belonging to a new worldwide class of the “hyperbourgeoisie” (Duclos 1998) are rearticulated and becoming the social basis for power in the neo-liberal state. Connell refers to this as “globalized masculinity” (1998b: 12).

Neo-liberalism is characterized by delimitation of the marked, or the economy, politics and the media. These delimitation also develop hybrid forms of neo-liberal masculinity. Common for the field of the economy and politics is the “*homo oeconomicus*-politician”. For Connell, the new globalized masculinity, the “transnational economic masculinity” takes two forms: „We might propose, then, that the hegemonic form of masculinity in the current world gender order is the masculinity associated with those who control is dominant institutions: the business executives who operate in global markets, and the political executives who interact (and in many contexts) merge with them. I will call this transnational business masculinity.“ (Connell 1998b: 16)

The “anarchy” of national masculinities, hence, is replaced by new and powerful networks of a political and economic “world masculinity”. Global economy and internationalized politics are creating new heroes of masculinity, new masculinities of conquest (Kreisky 2001: 85f.): Today it is not just “warriors” and military heroes anymore, which conquest the world, although they become dominant again; global virility is materializing in the figure of the broker, in the “manager-masculinity of transnational corporations” (Connell 1998a: 102; Connell/Messerschmidt 2005: 839) or in the cosmopolitan “spin doctor”. These are more handsome masculinities – and therefore these figures are potentially more open to women, too.

The hegemonic masculinity of neo-liberalism, the „transnational business masculinity“ (Connell 1998b: 16) is characterised *first* by attributes and interests of male businessmen, which are closely linked to the political agenda of globalization (Connell 1998b: 15). This can be the “pattern of calculated egocentrism” of stock exchanges and banks, for instance (Connell 1998a: 101; Connell/Messerschmidt 2005: 849). If one looks for a personification of this „transnational business masculinity“ in reality, one would find it in the chief executive of Deutsche Bank, Josef Ackermann. *Second*, according to Connell, this transnational form of masculinity is characterised by “the obedience to rules and the dominance of bureaucracy” (Connell 1998a: 101), materialised in the president of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso.

The financial system, which is disconnected from everyday-life, and its specific logic of maximizing profits emerged as a separate sphere of masculinistic practices, rules and decisions. Nevertheless it stays closely connected to the sphere of the state – as seen recently in the yelling for the state after the bursting of the housing bubble. The market-related, financialized masculinity is characterised by acting in a very risky manner and by receiving immense bonuses. The denigrated greed of bankers and their „commitment to risk-taking“ (Connell/Messerschmidt 2005: 851) is not a weakness of character, but rather the *modus operandi* of neo-liberal identity on the financial market.

The hybridization of neo-liberal political masculinity does have specific consequences. The delimitation of politics and the market is extremely amenable for corruption. The neo-liberal *homo oeconomicus* is represented at the one hand in corrupt and corruptible politician, at the other hand in the bribe-money-paying tycoon. One example for this is the Siemens-corporation. In November 2006 it was revealed, that 1,3 Billion bribe money were paid to get public contracts. That the consequences are “mild”, as FAZ titled on Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009, is a sign for the implosion of politics and economy: the involved managers only have to expect low fines of several Million Euros. Furthermore this corruption scandal served as a opportunity to call for “corporate governance”. By this, the scandal is again used to justify and enforce “new forms of governance”, i.e. self-management of corporations without public control and regulations.

Michael Bloomberg, too, one of the wealthiest men in the US and since 2001 the mayor of New York, is an example for the *homo oeconomicus*-politician. He advocates for these things, which

are demanded by New York's economy, stated „New York Times“-reporter Joyce Purnick in her biography of Bloomberg: If the public budget is not sufficient, he grants from his own fortune; the „Bloomberg Foundation“ for example supports cultural and non-profit-organizations. As a modern politician Bloomberg represents the “benevolent king” (Die Zeit, 10/29/2009), which corresponds to the medieval aspect of neo-liberalism and the related masculinity of politicians. Just to mention the delimitation in the “Mediocracy”. Silvio Berlusconi is an example for such a hybrid position between politics, the media, and the economy. He “stages” neo-liberal political masculinity, as a physical phenomenon, too.

The creation of hegemonic masculinity on a global scale serves the perpetuation of hierarchical gender relations and neo-liberal masculinity „embodies, organizes, and legitimates men's domination in the gender order as a whole“ (Connell 1998b: 12). This is shown particularly, when the interrelation of the gender order and sexual order is focused: „Transnational business masculinity“ is characterized by its „increasingly libertarian sexuality, with a growing tendency to commodify relations with women“ (Connell 1998b: 16). An example for this is the affair around brothel visiting on international travels, organized by the chairman of the workers' council of the Volkswagen Group, Peter Hartz.

#### *3.4.2. Militarized neo-liberal masculinity*

Uta Ruppert rightly states, that compared to the international relations during the Cold War “Global Governance” appears as a revolutionary shift of paradigm. It indicates a shift from military conception of security to models of conflict management by cooperation (Ruppert 2000: 51ff.). But the first decade of the new millennium showed, that new forms of state authority and sovereignty and consequently violent forms of state-masculinity and modes of subjectivation are reinstated and do expand. Violent, cosmopolitan and male modes of subjectivation do not just refer to „impersonal power“ or merely structural violence. In so-called “new wars” also “new warriors” are developing. This can be war criminals like Radovan Karadic, Afghan Taliban-fighters or western politicians, which, as the case in Afghanistan, justify the war with the goal of women's liberation and at the same time exercising military violence. As a paradigmatic example stands George W. Bush, who had a legendary appearance on the aircraft-carrier USS Abraham Lincoln on Mai 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003 in the Persian Gulf. He was floating from above, in uniform, down to the soldiers. His appearance symbolized the victory of the US in the Iraq war. A banner in the

background heralded „Mission accomplished“.

Such scenes mark at the same time the end of the „post-heroic“ age and the revival of heroic political state-masculinity. This form of neo-liberal masculinity is “bio-masculinity” and represents an archaic form of hegemonic warrior-masculinity, which subjects and controls the “Other” and which is always winning. According to Connell (1998b: 17) the transnational economic masculinity „has only one competitor for hegemony in recent decades, the rigid, control-oriented masculinity of the military“.

### *3.4.3. Subjected, marginalized and precarious masculinities*

In this ‘inside-outside’-logic of the state sovereignty also forms of subaltern and marginalized masculinities exist. The foe image of “international organized crime”, Islamic terrorism and “sleepers” (terrorist, who still live in the underground) legitimize the reorganization of state violence on a national and international scale. Islamic terrorists, male adolescent migrants and male gunman, for example, are subjected, or rather masculinities which have to be subjected and controlled, because they are threatening masculinities.

Such male images of enemies are used to vindicate the reorganization and armament of the state for reasons of security. In interpellating these images also the masculinistic architecture of the state is “renovated”: Terrains, which are historically closely linked with masculinity, e.g. the apparatuses of violence and oppression, are strengthened and empowered in the global process of restructuring. Feminized apparatuses however, like education and equal-opportunity-policies, which were established later, are weakened. The upgrading of state-apparatuses of violence in turn reproduces hierarchical gender relations and concepts. In the context of a “militarized” society, which has to defend itself against enemies – i.e. the “Other” – from inside and outside, women represent society members in need of protection. The combination of paternalistic assistance and oppression can be seen in the widespread discourse on policies on sex-workers and trafficking in women. These women have to be protected from the “male violence” of smugglers, pimps, and organized crime but at the same time they have to be disciplined as immoral prostitutes and as illegal migrants.

Also precarious masculinities (Kreisky/Löffler 2010: 85) are part of the neo-liberal

reconfiguration of society and male modes of subjectivation. Precarity as a central feature is not exclusively restricted to female biographies any more, but increasingly concerns male biographies, too. By this, precarity is getting more and more public attention. Especially populist politicians focus on the „man on the street“, who seeks shelter from inconveniences of the world market, the European Union and migrant masculinities at the figure of a strong leader.

These examples should have made clear, how new modes of subjectivation and specific masculinities emerge out of the macro-processes of economic globalization and political internationalization. These modes of masculinity correspond to structural forms of positional, substantive and policy-masculinity.

#### **4. The crisis of neo-liberal masculinity – masculinity in the (financial) crisis?**

Looked at from a distance, the financial and economic crisis at the turn of the first decade of the new century is *not* a crisis of neo-liberalism. Hence, it is *not* a crisis of neo-liberal hegemony and neo-liberal masculinity, too. To the contrary, during and through the crisis neo-liberal masculinities were able to restructure. It is interesting that the same male actors, managers, bankers and politicians, who initiated the crises, became the self-appointed, socially tolerated and legitimized as well as publicly backed ‘solution-finders’ for the crisis. The economic “losers” – all of them are representatives of hegemonic neo-liberal masculinity – who provoked the crisis, suddenly were said to have the expertise to find a solution to the crisis; these were the same people, who nurtured the US housing bubble for years by fostering the financialization of the economy and toxic loans, who privatized public service systems, and hindered the regulation of the financial markets. In addition to this, when looking at the current enormous gains of the banks, these representatives of neo-liberal hegemonic masculinity are the winners of the crisis.

How can this be explained? What is the reason for that neo-liberal hegemonic masculinity is sustaining itself without even little disagreement? What is the reason for that neo-liberal gender hegemony was conserved so persistently? In the following I want to suggest two answers. The *first argument* directs at the point, that the persistency of neo-liberal hegemonic masculinity is grounded in the gradual transformation of masculinity in the context of neo-liberal globalization and internationalization in the past two decades. Neo-liberal masculinity was able to establish itself as the central mode of subjectivation in nearly every social domain. Therefore it became

hegemonic and, hence, is accepted and partially “lived” also by marginalized masculinities. Specific aspects of neo-liberal modes of male subjectivation have been generalized. Neo-liberal masculinity, developed in the field of economy, became the mode of subjectivation and way of living also for all other social domains and systems. Thus, neo-liberal masculinity is not reduced to a small elite, but a mandatory identity for all people, and consequently also for women and marginalized or subaltern masculinities.

Neo-liberal hegemonic masculinity became the main form for individuals to be recognized as an economic citizen and participant of the market: Thinking in terms of competition, the exclusion and marginalizing of the “other”, calculating and acting under the premise of efficiency and effectiveness as well as the erosion of solidarity should become the hegemonic mode of subjectivation in the context of neo-liberal restructuring of western societies. The cutback of the welfare state – the quasi feminized form of the state – by economization and financialization of all sectors of living fostered the relating male coded orientations and forms of behaviour. These were able to be forced on all people and, hence, became normalized and hegemonic. The “self-entrepreneur” (of both genders) is forced at least to simulate neo-liberal masculinity and to adopt competition, readiness to assume risk and to practice exclusion in order to survive in every-day life.

Especially the practice of calculating gets in the focus of neo-liberal male practice. A paradigm of neo-liberal hybridization shows the following argument: In the financial crisis the calculating and risky strategies of players should be capitalized, and players should literally become part of neo-liberal economic masculinity: “From Poker to broker” (FAZ 11/21/2009) becomes the ideal of neo-liberal masculinity in crisis. Hedge-Funds and broker-houses hire poker players: These – as it is assumed – handle risks in a rational way, are disciplined, are able to take quick decisions under pressure and do have a good memory. All these are features, which are demanded by the financial business. Furthermore this is also a document of the universalization of neo-liberal characteristics of gambling.

These hybrid neo-liberal modes of subjectivation assure hegemonic masculinity in social and political institutions (like the German Hartz IV-laws, the social security and unemployment regulations) as well as in every-day life of the people. Neo-liberal masculinities of different social

domains are able to sustain and to secure each other: Not just banker, but also politicians take part in the system of hegemonic masculinity, and so do union-members and women, too. This neo-liberal network renders the thinking of alternatives in the financial crisis impossible. To sharpen the argument: Neo-liberalism of the past 20 years was and still is a giant project of the (permanent re-)masculinisation of society, politics and the state. It is also a project of diffusion of masculinity in a rather “subversive” manner. Despite and besides all efforts of equal-opportunity-policy, a huge restructuring of the state and politics in a masculinistic direction took place. Put it different: To live in a neo-liberal capitalist context requires a male behaviour.

The cheaters and card shapers, and especially those who failed at this foul play, like the US hedge-fund-cheater Marc Dreier, became icons of this universalized neo-liberal masculinity. The hedge-fund-trustee fleeced his investors of 400 Million Dollars. The attention of the media – a mixture of attraction to the forbidden and the malice for the cheated investors – as well as the normality of the longing for huge returns makes Dreier an ideal of neo-liberal generalized masculinity in the crisis: Since his childhood he was under pressure “to be successful” (Süddeutsche Zeitung 10/12/2009). His relationship to his parents, which he describes as “warm and close”, pushed the belief: “I have always been a leader. The people always said, that one time in my life I shall be really successful.” He was sentenced to 20 years of jail. His repentance, or rather, his death as a member of society was presented by the media as a heroic deed and consequently his way of life has been normalized.

A *second* and related model for explanation is the fact that neo-liberal masculinity managed to diversify and to integrate new aspects. Former characteristics, which were not qualified as male – especially female attributes – gradually became part of neo-liberal masculinities. Consequently one can speak sort of a “feminization” of neo-liberal masculinity. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 845) point to these possibilities for transmission and hybridization:“(T)he hegemonic masculine bloc is a hybridization whose appropriation of diverse elements makes it capable of reconfiguring itself and adapting to the specificities of new historical conjunctures“. The mobilizing of emotions (Sauer 2007) is an example for the feminization and delimitation of neo-liberal masculinity. The *homo oeconomicus*, as written in the FAZ of Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> 2009, “shows emotions, is longing for justice and expects fairness”. Such findings of the research of the „behavioural economy“ and the neuro-economy strive for a „new economic idea of men“ (FAZ

11/9/2009), which should be able to locate economic agency and decisions in the body, in emotions and of course also in genes and hormones. The sciences thus are actively working on a new image of hegemonic economic masculinity, which is governed in an emphatic and emotional-driven way, but first of all by biology.

The new handling of emotions and the integration of emotionality in images of masculinity are also shown in the public discourse about emotions. Men, too, should be allowed, or better: they are supposed to show their feelings in public. Also the *homo oeconomicus* is allowed to present himself in public as “weak” and crying publicly increasingly loses its status as a taboo. Suicides and depression formerly have been negated as a feature of masculinity, because conflicts and the inner emotional disruption of these masculinities had to be oppressed and hidden away (Connell/Messerschmidt 2005: 852). Today these topics are presented and discussed in the media. In rendering suicides of “hegemonic men” to a topic presented in the media, suicides became a matter of discussion and grievance. The example of the goalkeeper of Germany's national soccer team, who committed suicide on October 9<sup>th</sup> 2009, opened the possibility for the thoroughly masculinistic field of male soccer to discuss emotions in public. The example shows, too, how emotions eventually are kept in a masculinistic discourse and how they are used to reinstate hegemonic masculinity. In an interview a former trainer of the German *Bundesliga* stresses: “A fan is expecting strength. That a player is winning against himself. This might seem simple, but football is that popular because it is so simple.” (Die Zeit 11/19/2009)

Also the suicide of Adolf Merckle, a German producer of medical drugs, in spring 2010 is an evidence for the reconfiguration of neo-liberal masculinity by the integration of weakness. His suicide is interpreted as the result of failing as a business-man, taking risky economic strategies and, hence, the suicide was discussed as a part of hegemonic masculinity. Suicide then is not an expression of weakness, but appears as acting in a consequent manner. In committing suicide, masculinity reinstates strength and harshness, with which neo-liberal masculinity is associated. Suicide is presented as a heroic deed. The former scientific and critical debates around the “exhausted self” (Alain Ehrenberg) have been – not least in during the economic crisis – rearticulated in a hegemonic way. The integration of emotions led to an immunization of hegemonic masculinity against critique and, hence, to an anew normalization. By this it can also take a position against equal opportunity policies in the context of traditional gender relations and

images.

To conclude, the new neo-liberal gender identities, that is governing by and through gender, as well as unequal gendered structures are characterized by two developments. *On the one hand* women are able to participate in hegemonic masculinity in the context of the phallogentric restructuring of neo-liberalism, although they are just able to do so only at the margins, in a precarious way and as the “Other”: Catherine Ashton, the new EU minister for foreign affairs can be cited as an example. She, as a woman, does have much more difficulties to establish herself on the international terrain than the colorless political bureaucrat José Manuel Barroso. *On the other hand* female, or rather, feminized attributes have been integrated in the image of neo-liberal masculinity to reproduce and normalize it. These modes of subjectivation strengthen the positional, substantive and policy-masculinity. Thus, neo-liberal masculinity was able to immunize against transformation and critique and particularly against the demands of an equal opportunity policy. Despite of the integration of feminized attributes, despite of delimitation and hybridization neo-liberal masculinity has to distinguish itself from femininity and especially from all demands for equal rights. This constant feature of western gender regimes stays a central feature of neo-liberal constellations in the crisis.

One last example: The Ex-Lehman banker Hugh McGee, who was fired in summer 2009 as responsible person for the bankruptcy, himself wants the teacher and the directory of the private school of his son to be fired: The (female) teacher of his son called bankers as “phony bricks“ and in particular because she intervened when a group of male football players wanted to perform in school as cheerleaders. The teacher argued that this reproduces “negative gender clichés“. In consequence, McGee felt – as he stated – like being haunted by a “feminist fiend“ (Süddeutsche Zeitung 12/5 and 6/2009). So, no twilight of “Speedy cars, perky women, champagne and striptease bars”!

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