

**Knuttila, M. (2016) Paying for Masculinity: Boys, Men and the Patriarchal Dividend.
Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.**

Reviewed By: Dorothy Reynolds, MacEwan University

Murray Knuttila's book "Paying for Masculinity: Boys, Men and the Patriarchal Dividend" is an in-depth sociological look at how the Westernized concept of masculinity as a practice for the male gender is exacting a cost to that gender. By analyzing the subject of masculinity from feudalism, to the industrial revolution, to modern times, through a historical and societal lens, Knuttila takes the reader through the various stages of Western society's history to help explain how things have progressed to this point. The taking of a more holistic view of masculinity, how it has been created, intertwined with, and changed through capitalism, imperialism, hegemony, and patriarchy, gives a balanced perspective as to how the perceptions of the male gender have gotten to the point they have.

Knuttila begins by clearly stating that he will be examining masculinity and that it will be a critical analysis of how society interacts in its creation. The concepts of hegemonic masculinity and the patriarchal dividend are introduced, as they come up repeatedly throughout the book. Hegemonic masculinity is shown as a practice that does not just come naturally to males, that it must be taught to them, generally in a patriarchal society. The society invariably ends up with inequities and the benefits that befall the males in that society, which Knuttila labels as patriarchal dividend. Hegemonic masculinity, along with the patriarchal dividend, shifts as history shifts,

therefore, they change over time. He also emphasises the use of abstraction, which he describes as different levels of a subject that academics look at. It starts at high levels of abstraction to create a map to help them navigate to eventual low levels of abstraction to help make sense of all the complexities of a subject.

Knuttila continues laying the foundation to his theory by explaining the concept of sex role theory and its lead into the concept of the male sex role that emerged between the 1950's and the 1970's. Here he describes the four main themes that came from that time "1. No Sissy Stuff: the stigma of all stereotype's feminine characteristics and qualities, including openness and venerability. 2. The Big Wheel: Success, status, and the need to be looked up to. 3. The Sturdy Oak: A manly air of toughness, confidence and self-reliance. 4. Give 'em Hell: The aura of aggression, violence and daring." (p. 16). These themes come up again and again throughout the book as being hegemonic expectations put on men in Western society, and all are distinctly antifeminine.

There is an appreciation for how Knuttila ensures that there is conceptual clarity for sex and gender for those who are reading the book but are not sociology scholars. For sociology scholars, this can seem a bit repetitive, but it is necessary for those who are laymen or scholars in other fields. The many socialization processes, from micro, meso to macro interactions are considered to determine the many directions that boys are socialized in before they transition from boys to men, and what that transition entails. Knuttila clarifies those social processes that happen in concert to show how gender is acquired.

The discussion turns to the development of boys to their eventual end of becoming men. This area of the book is particularly disconcerting. Knuttila shows boys not only want but need

close emotional relationships, including homosocial relationships with peers. From early on boys have the cognitive and emotional capacity to have fully developed, intimate, emotional relationships (p. 54) but it is the pressures from various social learning sources that hamper not only learning to have close relationships but keep them from having those kinds of relationships. Yet not only do they want them, boys express a need to have close friendships with other boys (p. 55). Yet hegemonic ideals of masculinity prevent these friendships from reaching their full potential, part of the price for their patriarchal dividend. The four themes of the male sex role return again to cause the prevention of these relationships from meeting their full possible emotional potential.

Capitalism and how it affects work depending on your gender, is another of Knuttila's focuses. He presents staggering stats of the difference in wages between men and women and the incredible inequality that exists and still exists, perpetuated by patriarchy and capitalism (pp. 106-107). While the percentage of the advantageous financial patriarchal dividend for men have been slowly lowering it is still fairly significant (p. 108). The further historical capitalist patriarchal element in play is the creation of family men and the use of a family wage to help make reinforce the patriarchal dynamic. The family wage was used as an excuse to not only keep women out of the workforce (thus lessening the competition for jobs with men) but it was also used as a rationalization to pay women less for the same job a man does if she did manage to get employment. This information could really benefit the younger generation who may not know how this inequity came about. Knuttila also looks at housework and childcare between men and women, and who is doing what unpaid labour, which astonishingly the majority of which is still women

for both forms of labour no matter their household arrangement (p. 118).

Knuttila continues examining masculinity by turning his focus to violence and men. It was refreshing to discover that he did not just try and blame one or two factors, for instance video games or mental health, as so many in the media try and do these days. Knuttila actually dug under the surface factors for these issues to reveal the underlying multiple comorbidity of issues. One interesting aspect of violence that has been exclusively done by boys/men that he focused on was school shooters. This is a real, horrifying problem that has the majority of occurrences happening in the USA, although it does happen occasionally in Canada as well. Bullying of boys who do not conform or cannot live up to hegemonic masculinity was the largest contributor to creating these shooters. However, Knuttila poses the question that has not been answered: why do not all men who are bullied, just some, become school shooters? He presents the facts that men tend to be more violent to other men when it's a stranger, but men are more violent to women that they are in a relationship with. This seems to show that when men are violent it manifests at a deeply personal level when it comes to towards women.

Representation of boys and men in media, sports and literature is touched upon, but Knuttila brought up how androcentric they tend to be. The presentations of other representations of masculinity, rather than hegemonic masculinity, is still pretty scarce. However, of all of them, literature had the most diverse ranges of masculinities. Knuttila discusses the cost to men and whether hegemonic masculinity and capitalism can survive their intertwinement with the patriarchal dividend.

Knuttila intentions with this book are pretty clear, in his own words:

If a man on a farm in Saskatchewan, in an office in Sydney, an oilrig offshore Newfoundland, a sawmill in Oregon, or a hospital in Atlanta can use what I have suggested about the nature and dynamics of capitalism and patriarchy to start to understand how his life intersects with history, then I am pleased. I am equally pleased if, having considered what I have suggested are key concepts historically, men can start to think about how they practice gender, who benefits from those practices and the costs to themselves, others around them and society as a whole. My pleasure has nothing to do with me personally, but rather it allows me to be hopeful that we are ready to reconsider how we practice masculinity (p. 181).

There are some limitations in trying to take on such a large subject in such a small book, so hopefully Knuttila is hard at work on either a larger volume on this subject or a follow up to this work. While this book is informative and enlightening, perhaps in the future he could consider a look at mass murderers via gun violence and their propensity to be white males. Knuttila might also present some solutions as to how to avoid all the pressures of becoming trapped by hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy, and also how to start to get society to start changing their parameters of hegemonic masculinity. Even within a predominantly heteronormative social script, there is the potential for change that will benefit not just men but women, minorities, LGBTQ+ and children. Society's ideals and morals are not static, they change and so can hegemonic requirements. There are so many academic disciplines that could benefit from this book, like psychology, anthropology, gender studies, education, philosophy, film and media studies, criminology and many others. This book is not about excuses for the behaviour of men, but rather an explanation of how men end up behaving as they do. This reviewer will be buying this book for many of the men in their family so they may have some outside insight into masculinities.