

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

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Murray Knuttila's book, "Paying for Masculinity: Boys, Men, and the Patriarchal Dividend," discusses the promotion of hegemonic masculinity and the role that the patriarchal dividend serves in doing so. Knuttila references both the causes and the consequences this dangerous form of masculinity has brought to our society today. He specifically emphasizes capitalism's role on the continued oppression of women, the power of peer influence, and masculinity as a catalyst for violence. Knuttila organizes his book into chapters that systematically introduce the many layers of hegemonic masculinity including gender and gender roles, parental influence, and societal norms. Knuttila concludes each chapter with a "moving on" portion that gives readers a general take-away on the information he presented and suggestions on what we, as a society, can do to improve moving forward.

Knuttila defines capitalism as "a gender order in which men are dominant and masculinity tends to be esteemed, and in which major social institutions, practices and ideological frameworks tend to support, legitimize and facilitate male and masculine domination" (p. 31). He explains how this view of masculinity encourages the exploitation and oppression of both women and men who present with typically non-masculine traits. Further, he describes the socialization process that men often undergo in capitalist economies during which they learn to be the breadwinners and sole providers of the family, even if it means taking measures to actively exclude their wives and daughters. In addition, Knuttila suggests that male dominance is upheld in society due to the

patriarchal dividend, which allows men to directly benefit from practicing hegemonic masculinity. He provides an example of this using the patrilineal system that was in place during the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, specifically, the time of white settler nations. In this type of lineage system, men are the sole benefactors when it comes to ownership of property, decision-making, and control over family members. The benefits provided to men by the patriarchal dividend are a significant influence in the continued practice of hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, Knuttila goes into detail on how men in today's society are incentivized by a variety of different factors.

Knuttila makes reference to several institutions that may be to blame for the increasing allure of hegemonic masculinity on impressionable young boys. These influences include school, media, family, and the heaviest influence, other men. Knuttila claims that hegemonic masculinity “unfolds in the presence of, or under the gaze of, other men, whose roles as the gender police ensure that the gender performance of men adheres to the proscriptions and prescriptions of hegemonic masculinity” (p. 73). It is astounding just how much of an influence our peers have on our behaviour. According to Knuttila's research, many school-aged boys are encouraged to follow a type of code that forbids them from acting in non-masculine ways such as displaying affection or asking for help. If a boy were to act out of accordance with this code, they would be quickly exiled, and in many cases, bullied. Knuttila makes reference to a number of action films whose male leads seem to be capable of “super-human feats and literal invincibility” and in addition, the men seem to be “fearless, immune to physical pains and, when emotionally damaged ... capable of truly fantastic levels of violence and mayhem” (p. 150). This portrayal can leave some boys

questioning whether they are capable of the same things, and if not, they may question whether or not they are living up to society's masculine standards. For most boys and men hegemonic masculinity is an unattainable desire and an impossible fantasy. Due to this, the inability to acquire it can trigger a dangerous, and at times deadly, response.

Knuttila suggests that "violence can be understood as part of the process of either establishing, maintaining, re-establishing or reaffirming one's power, domination, control and authority; put otherwise, one's hegemonic masculinity" (p. 147). He discusses the effects that bullying, homophobia, and rejection have had on the increase of school shootings in recent decades. Knuttila presents several cases of school shooting around the world, and subsequent theories and studies that have been done in order to determine a cause for these seemingly thoughtless acts. He includes excerpts taken from the shooter's dispositions, social media posts, and interviews that detail the feelings of rejection, and accounts of endured physical violence which ultimately led them to act out in such a disastrous way. Through his research, Knuttila discovers that each study seems to either lack or dismiss a certain characteristic, that being masculinity. He explains that the only way one can regain masculinity once lost is to do so with violence and suggests a link between the two. Knuttila attributes this link to the behaviouralist approach, in which men learn through receiving rewards for typically masculine, or antifeminine behavior, and punishment for "sissy," or typically feminine behaviour. This approach heavily promotes hegemonic masculinity ideals in that it characterizes feminine traits as not only undesirable, but punishable. School-aged boys learn through socialization with their parents, teachers, and peers. As a result, they often receive unhealthy, and unattainable standards regarded

as social norms. To conclude his argument, Knuttila attributes acts of mindless violence, such as school shootings, with the desire to maintain, reinforce, and display one's status as masculine (p. 137).

Knuttila includes a number of insightful studies and statistics that have been executed and collected over the years in order to demonstrate the unfortunate and unintended effects of capitalism and hegemonic masculinity. One particular study performed by a female journalist involved disguising and living as a man for over a year. Knuttila interpreted the outcome of this study as being "a direct result of how [men] practice masculinity and something they can change" (p.178). However, from the perspective of a psychologist, specifically a social psychologist, this statement is up for debate. This is due to the powerful role that conformity and group settings play in influencing human behaviour, which a sociologist, like Knuttila, may have overlooked when interpreting the study's results. In order to improve, I would recommend looking at the results through a different perspective that may give more of an insight into why men act this way in the first place and why it is so difficult to resist acting otherwise when there are other people present.

It is clear that Knuttila's intended academic audience are those interested in sociology, although many disciplines could benefit from his insight. These include women's studies, psychology, social psychology, anthropology, and history, to list a few. Knuttila makes meaningful connections to many of the topics he discusses throughout the book. Knuttila's intention when writing this book is to bring awareness to the causes and many toxic effects of hegemonic masculinity, such as the benefits it brings to men due to the patriarchal dividend. In addition, he introduces non-toxic forms of masculinity that can be practiced in its place in order to benefit everyone. To quote a selection from his conclusion, "patriarchal hegemonic masculinity emerged

alongside, in conjunction with and as part of the emergence of capitalism as an economic order. (p.179)” His proof of this is seamlessly presented through the various studies, methodologies, and Knuttila’s own expertise on the subject throughout the book. Through his analysis, it is undeniable that capitalism is the cause of this dangerous masculine practice known as hegemonic masculinity. I thoroughly enjoyed reading Knuttila’s “Paying for Masculinity: Boys, Men and the Patriarchal Dividend” and would recommend it to anyone seeking to expand their knowledge on patriarchy and why it is still present in our society today.