Lindisfarne and Neale (2016), Masculinities Under Neoliberalism

Lindisfarne, Nancy and Jonathan Neale


In the article "Masculinities under Neoliberalism," authors Lindisfarne and Neale discuss how neoliberal ideology has guided policy over the last forty years, and how this ideology has altered the experience of masculinity. They employ a Marxist perspective in their analysis that focuses on the impact of economic relationships.

Neoliberalism is a type of capitalist class ideology (or philosophy) with "a set of deliberate strategies to increase the share of profits going to capitalists," including reducing wages, cutting taxes, and reducing social services (Lindisfarne and Neale 2016, replace comma with colon in this style 29). While they succeeded in encouraging technological innovation and globalization, they also increased inequalities by concentrating wealth in an elite minority and subjecting the lower classes to greater insecurity (Lindisfarne and Neale 2016, 32).

Ordinary people, however, dislike inequality and are prone to resist it. In response, elites justify inequality by normalizing it, convincing people that it is an inescapable reality (Lindisfarne and Neale 2016, 42). Towards this effort, they encourage other forms of inequality, such as gender inequality, to prepare people for economic inequality (Lindisfarne and Neale 2016, 31).

The article describes a number of ideological strategies used to reinforce gender inequality. Essentialism is encouraged and supported by bad science to promote inescapable gender differences (well, some of the science is good but it is often over-emphasized or distorted in essentialist arguments) , while the real ways identities are socially constructed are obscured (Lindisfarne and Neale 2016, 37). Gender marking is increased, ensuring that simple items, such as colors or clothing, have gendered connotations that reinforce differences (Lindisfarne and Neale 2016, 41).

The article uses hegemonic masculinity not as a way to describe pervasive forms of masculinity, but to denote the types of masculinity practiced by elites good distinction. Hegemonic masculinities define success and make other forms subordinate to them. Hegemonic masculinity includes the type of enterprise culture that has flourished under neoliberalism discussed by Edley (2017, 86), which most men cannot live up to. The traditional strongman breadwinner is actually a form of subordinate masculinity, strongly coded as working class, meant to exacerbate gender inequalities (Lindisfarne and Neale 2016, 38). These men were allowed to dominate subordinate women, making them responsible for female suffering rather than the elites. The entrance of women into the working world is treated as emasculating to these men, implying gender is a zero-sum game (Lindisfarne and Neale 2016, 40). Besides breadwinning, other characteristics of subordinate men have changed under neoliberalism. Fitness has become a feature of the elite, who have the time for athletics (Lindisfarne and Neale 2016, 41). The article also discusses what Edley (2017, 88) calls a materialist point of view, whereby jobs shape people (2017, 88), as men in traditionally female lines of work may adopt feminine characteristics (Lindisfarne and Neale 2016, 41). As a result of these processes, neoliberalism has made masculinity for ordinary men precarious.

There are some problems with the article, however. Firstly, the authors often treat these systems as the direct result of nefarious elite collusion, only acknowledging complexities in passing (Lindisfarne and Neale 2016, 44) excellent point. Secondly, they treat the development of neoliberalism solely as the result of elite greed, dismissing the degree to which it is a legitimate political theory meant to better society overall nice critical thought! Thirdly, some of their examples of neoliberal policies are questionable. For example, they attribute competition in Assad’s Syria to neoliberalism (Lindisfarne and Neale 2016, 46), despite engagement in state capitalism and the prevalence of neopatrimonialism (Hinnebusch 1995). Generally, the article’s sole focus on economic drivers as the cause of inequality may provide only a limited view. very strong critical analysis in this last paragraph. see rubric below

References Cited

Edley, Nigel


Lindisfarne, Nancy and Jonathan Neale


Hinnebusch, Raymond


Reference is in same format as syllabus (e.g., American Antiquity style): yes no minor issues

Entry is concise and informative about the content of the article: Excellent good adequate needs work

Entry connects the resource reading to the core readings: Excellent good adequate needs work

Entry shows evidence of critical thought: Excellent good adequate needs work

Writing style: Excellent good adequate needs work