Concepts, Ideas and Practices of Masculinity in Catholicism and Protestantism around 1900

Some Reflections on Recent Research

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Published in:
God's Own Gender?

2018

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

God's Own Gender?

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RELIGION IN DER GESELLSCHAFT

herausgegeben von

Matthias Koenig, Volkhard Krech, Martin Laube,
Detlef Pollack, Hartmann Tyrell, Gerhard Wegner,
Monika Wohlrab-Sahr

Band 44

ERGON VERLAG

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ERGON VERLAG

Cover: Lucas Cranach the Elder, Adam, Florence, Uffizi Gallery, Inv. 1890. no. 1459.
Courtesy of Ministerio dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication
in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic
data are available in the Internet at http://dnb.d-nb.de.

Umschlaggestaltung: Jan von Hugo

www.ergon-verlag.de

ISBN 978-3-95650-453-2 (Print)
ISBN 978-3-95650-454-9 (ePDF)
ISSN 1432-0304

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Concepts, Ideas, and Practices of Masculinity in Catholicism and Protestantism around 1900. Some Reflections on Recent Research

Yvonne Maria Werner

At the turn of the 20th century, the question arose of whether Christianity could be compatible with modernity, progress and reason. In liberal, middle-class circles, where belief in science and social progress gradually replaced Christianity as a normative guideline, Christian faith was considered depreciated. If religion should have any place in modern society, then it was in the private sphere of the family, not in public life. Yet, since the home was considered to be the woman's domain, religion came to be associated with femininity and 'soft' values. The modern man had to be rational, determined, and bent on profit, characteristics that seemed to be in glaring contrast to the Christian ideals of gentleness, lovingness, and humility. The idea of religion as soft and 'feminine' thus went hand in hand with the division into private and public and the idea of the separate spheres that marked the bourgeois society.[1]

To differentiate such an over-simplified narrative the aim of my article is to present some reflections, based on the development within historical research since the 1980s, on Christian concepts of manliness and the question of the (re-)masculinization of religion in (Western) European discourses from the mid-19th to the first part of the 20th century.[2] Until the 1990s, modern historical research had been 'blind' to religion to a great extent, and religious issues were generally ignored. This can partly be explained by the fact that boundaries were clearly drawn between different disciplines. Church and religion were considered subjects of theology in many countries, and thus addressed mainly by church historians. Yet an even more important reason for general history to neglect religion was that many historians agreed, directly or indirectly, with the secularization paradigm. As a result, historians doing research on the period after 1800 treated religion either as a remnant of an earlier time or as a cover for other, more materialistic interests. In women's history for

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1 See McLeod 1988; Hölscher 1996; Morgan/de Vries (eds) 2010.

2 The concepts 'manliness' and 'masculinity' will be used as synonyms. According to Gail Bederman, manliness, with its allusions to ideal of manhood, was the common term in the 19th century, whereas masculinity refers to both good and bad characteristics. Cf. Bederman 1995, 17-20.

example, religious belief and practices were mainly analyzed as an inhibitory factor for women's emancipation efforts.[3]

1. The Religious Turn in Gender Research

In the 1980s there was a new departure in modern historical research. The previously dominant focus on political, economic, and social conditions had to give way for cultural perspectives, and with that shift also religion came to the fore. Social and church historians took the lead in this development, thereby pointing to the importance of religious values for ordinary people and in everyday life.[4] From the 1980s, women's historians also began increasingly to take into account the significance of religion for the position of women in modern society.[5]

This was the start of what has been called the 'religious turn' in gender historiography.[6] The development is illustrated in a collection of essays with the title *Frauen unter dem Patriarchat der Kirchen* published in 1995, which was a result of a research project headed by the German historian Irmtraud Götz von Olenhusen. One of the book's articles, by the historian Ursula Baumann, deals with the Catholic and the Protestant Woman's Leagues in Germany in the early 20th century. Baumann notes that women's history research had more or less ignored these two confessional women's associations and instead concentrated on the less successful, but anticlerical liberal women's association. Her article has the telling title *Emancipation and Religion*.[7] This is also the title of the Swedish historian Inger Hammar's doctoral thesis from 1999, which represents a milestone in Swedish women's historical research on religion and gender.[8] Her criticism of the 'religion blindness' of modern history research triggered a lively debate among Nordic gender historians, thus helping to draw attention to this long-neglected field of research.[9]

Since then a great number of studies on woman and Christian religion have been published in which religion figures both as a hindrance to the emancipation movement, and as an instrument of empowerment. It has been observed that religious engagement offered women an alternative to their confined,

3 See, for example, Lein 1981; Offen 2000.
4 Religion plays an important role in E.P. Thompson's research, for example in his famous work *The Making of the English Working Class* (1964). See also Schieder 1986; Schneider 1996.
5 For an overview of research, see Gause et al. (eds) 2000; Saurer 2005.
6 See De Groot/Morgan 2013.
7 See Götz von Olenhusen (ed.) 1995b; Baumann 1995. See also Baumann 1992.
8 See Hammar 1999; 2000b.
9 See Hammar 1998; Manns 1998.

domestic sphere.[10] Other studies have pointed to the extent of female engagement in the Protestant missionary movements, and the growing importance of female religious orders and congregations in the Catholic world.[11]

Yet, while women's and gender history has increasingly heeded the role of religion, religious issues were long overlooked in the rapidly expanding field of men's history, particularly in research on masculinity in the modern period. An exception, however, is in Anglo-American research, where already around 1990 historians such as John Tosh and Leonore Davidoff published works that addressed the question of manhood and Christian religion in modern society.[12] Since then, a large number of studies on Christian manliness have been published. Several of them focused on so-called Muscular Christianity, a movement in the Anglo-American world, whose advocates tried to find a spiritual dimension in typically male activities such as sports, politics, and business, and to shape a new synthesis of masculinity and Christian practice.[13] But most studies dealing with men in modern society, not least those published in the Nordic countries, were until recently based on the often unspoken assumption that religion was a private matter connected to the home and the female sphere, and therefore lacking relevance to public life, i.e. the men's domain.[14]

Christian belief and practice and modern masculinity thus seemed incompatible. This assumption was the starting point for my research project *Christian Manliness – A Paradox of Modernity* that was set in train in 2004 with the aim of studying the relationship between Christianity and constructions of manhood in Northern Europe in the period 1840 to 1940. Scholars from different Swedish universities, as well as Olaf Blaschke, then attached to the University of Trier in Germany, were connected to the project, which collaborated with researchers and research groups working on similar issues in Great Britain, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, and Belgium.[15]

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10 See Hill Lindley 1996; Hölscher1996; Markkola (ed.) 2000b.

11 See Meiwes 2000; Okkenhaug (ed.) 2003; Werner (ed.) 2004.

12 See Davidoff/Hall 1992; Tosh 1999.

13 See Bederman 1989; O'Brien 1993; Hall (ed.) 1994; Warren 1994; Putney 2001; O'Brien 2008.

14 See, for example, Stearns 1990; Mosse 1996; Schmale 1998; Tjeder 2003.

15 Marit Monteiro at the Radboud University Nijmegen was in charge of a project group dealing with clerical masculinity, and Patrick Pasture and Jan Art at the Universities of Ghent and Louvain led a project on feminization and masculinity in Belgian Catholicism. These research groups have produced several monographs, articles and collections of essays, see, for example: Werner 2011b; Pasture et al. (eds) 2012; Van Osselaer/Pasture (eds) 2014; Ackermans/Monteiro (eds) 2007.

2. *Feminization and Confessionalization*

These research projects were all parts of the rapidly growing field of men's studies, which was originally closely connected to feminist-oriented women's studies. Whereas women's and gender studies largely deal with woman's subordination and the struggle for emancipation, men's studies often focus on ideals of manhood and the construction of masculinity. Yet, both research traditions build on the assumption that men exercise power, which explains why most studies of men and masculinity deal with homosocial relations between men and groups of men.[16]

Both the Belgian and Swedish research project had a similar theoretical starting point focussing on two conflicting theories, the theory of feminization on the one hand and the concept of religious revitalization and re-confessionalization on the other. The feminization theory, which is a kind of master narrative when it comes to research on religion and gender in modernity, implies that religious life in Europe became more and more feminized during the 19th century and that men distanced themselves from the churches, whereas the concept of confessionalization relates to those parts of society that were dominated by men and stresses the engagement of men in church matters and religious life.[17]

2.1 The Theory of a Feminization of Christianity

The feminization theory is developed on the basis of studies of liberal-bourgeois milieus, where faith in science and social progress gradually replaced Christianity as a normative order. Religion instead was seen as a private matter pertaining to women, which had little or no relevance in the world of men. In a broad study of religion and society in Britain, France, and Germany, the British historian Hugh McLeod argues that piety was seen as a normal and desirable part of womanhood in many parts of Western Europe, whereas religious indifference was regarded as an equally normal part of manhood, and men were heavily over-represented in free thought and secularist movements. In many regions, not least in parts of Catholic France, but also in Protestant Scandinavia, there was a drastic reduction in church attendance, particularly amongst men.[18] At the same time, women's importance for church life increased, reinforcing the image of churchgoing and piety as a female concern. The discursive feminization of Christianity thus went hand in hand

16 See Mosse 1996; Ekenstam/Lorentzen (eds) 2006; Broughton/Rogers (eds) 2007.
17 See Van Osselear/Buerman 2008; Pasture 2012.
18 See McLeod 2000. However, he notes that the differences in religious commitment between men and woman varied greatly according to country and region.

with the division into private and public that characterized the emerging liberal-bourgeois society.[19]

In accordance with such findings, Callum Brown stresses that the feminization of Christianity during the 19th century counteracted the secularization of British society in general. In his famous work *The Death of Christian Britain*, he shows that Christian discourse and moral codes of behaviour remained in place until the mid-20th century due to women's religious engagement. This was especially evident within evangelical Christianity, where women as the 'pious sex' stood at the centre of a 'salvation economy'. Here as elsewhere, Christian piety focused more and more on women, while masculinity developed into an antithesis of religiosity. According to Brown, women's changing relationship to church and religion lies at the heart of late 20th-century secularization.[20] Similar to Brown, Linda Woodhead discusses the concept of religious feminization as part of a gendering of the secularization theory. She notes that religion became increasingly relegated to a private, domestic sphere in Protestant countries, and identified with women's work. Although men ran the churches and the clergy long remained exclusively male, it was to a high degree women who took on responsibilities at the parochial level and within the Christian philanthropic associations.[21]

All these studies can be traced back to feminization theory as already introduced by the historian Barbara Welter in the 1970s. In a study on religion and society in the 19th-century United States, she interpreted the feminization of Protestant piety as an important part of the delineation of a private sphere belonging to women from the public sphere proper to men. This concept was further developed by Ann Douglas. In her pioneering work *The Feminization of American Culture*, she explores the transformation of Evangelical religious culture in the 19th century from a male-dominated tradition to feminine sentimentalism, dominated by religiously engaged middle-class women.[22] Christian mission, where women played an important role too, came to be associated with female attributes, and contrasted with 'male' political-economic colonial activities. Some studies on gender and mission therefore speak of a 'feminization of mission'.[23] There is an extensive body of research on Christian mission and gender. Yet these studies have seldom focused on mission and manliness.[24]

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19 See McLeod 1988; Götz von Olenhusen 1995a; Kirkley 1996; Kimmel 2003.
20 See Brown 2001. Cf. Brown 2011.
21 See Woodhead 2005, 1/2, 20-33.
22 See Welter 1974; Douglas 1977.
23 See Huber/Lutkehaus (eds) 1999; Okkenhaug et al. (eds) 2011.
24 In the Introduction to *Protestant Mission and Local Encounters*, the editors' note that studies on missionary masculinity "are still sparse", Okkenhaug et al. (eds) 2011, 18.

Studies on gender and religion within Catholicism have partly had another focus. Several scholars, among them the German historian Norbert Busch, pointed to the feminization of religious symbols and practices in the new forms of Marian devotion and the cult of the Heart of Jesus.[25] Others highlighted the growing importance of the female religious congregations, which also affected the missionary activity. From the mid-19th century, members of female religious institutes made up the largest part of the mission staff. French historiography has accentuated these developments even more.[26] Even the fact that contemporary anti-clerical liberals accused the Catholic church of being 'effeminate' and 'unmanly' is sometimes used as an argument for the thesis of a feminization of Catholicism.[27]

2.2 The Concept of Confessionalization

The concept of the re-confessionalization of society offers another perspective. One starting point is the revivalist movements and revitalization of the churches in Western European society during the 19th century, which contributed to restoring or stabilizing a religiously determined social order along confessional lines. In Protestant countries, these revivals often originated in Pietist and Low Church movements, while the Ultramontane revival in the Catholic world drew its inspiration from Counter-Reformation ideology. These religious movements were striving to restore a religiously determined social order, based on a traditional understanding of Christianity along confessional lines. The German historian Hartmut Lehmann argues that religious revival, church mobilization, and secularization were the dominant cultural trends in the Western world in the 19th century.[28] Other researchers have stressed the link between confessional culture and national identity. An inherited Christian confession was thus an important factor in the construction of 19th-century national identities, and nationalism and religion frequently intermingled.[29]

Olaf Blaschke, in drawing an analogy with the process of confessionalization in the early modern era, describes the period between 1830 and 1960 as 'a second confessional age', characterized by church consolidation and conflicts between the denominations, culminating in the 'cultural wars' in Germany, Belgium, France, and other countries. Middle-class liberalism was certainly of crucial importance for the political developments of the period. But it

25 See Busch 1997; Jonas 2000; Sohn-Kronthaler 2016.
26 See Langlois 1984; Turin 1989; Gugglberger 2014; Curtis 2010.
27 See Gross 2004; Borutta 2011.
28 See Lehmann 1997; 2004.
29 See McLeod 2000, 216-247, 286; Blückert 2000; Smith 2003, 1-25, 41; Haupt/Langewiesche (eds) 2004.

accounted for only a minority of the population, and, notwithstanding dwindling attendance at religious services, Christianity in its different denominational forms continued to serve as the normative basis of society in many ways.[30]

The word 'confession' is to be understood in a broad sense, comprising not only a community based on Christian belief but also the cultural context that it produced. Catholic confessionalism served as a basis for a religiously determined worldview, which stood in sharp contrast to liberal ideology and the concept of the modern state. Within Protestantism, which consisted of a multiplicity of groupings and movements, attitudes towards modern society and its principals were generally more positive. A common trait was the strong repudiation of Catholicism, and the Catholic Church was regarded as a real threat to progress and national integrity by many Protestants.[31]

Established confessional culture was an important marker of national identity. As several historians have noted, this fusion of confession and nation was to a certain extent characterized by a desire to strengthen masculine identity.[32] In order to overcome the 'effeminate' image of religious practice, the churches developed male semantics supposedly appealing to men, and offered an apostolic framework where male virtues and powers could be used for religious purposes. The sweeping generalization that religion was a female concern is often built on a narrow understanding of religion, leaving out political expressions of religious activities.[33]

Blaschke, too, points to different strategies used by the churches to appeal to men and to counteract the perception of Christian religion as feminized. Christian virtues were masculinized and described as truly manly, and contemporary male characters and stereotypes were identified and linked with Christian ideals. Men's activities in the public sphere were embraced and used for religious purposes as well as to stabilize the confessional milieu and to fight confessional and ideological enemies. In Germany, this was especially evident within Catholicism with its many influential associations and mass organizations.[34] Historians such as Anne O'Brien, Clifford Putney, and several others have pointed to similar strategies in the English-speaking world, where movements sprung up emphasizing muscularity, militarism, and sporting but also political engagement and missionary enterprise.[35]

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30 See Blaschke 2000; Id. (ed.) 2002; 2011a. See also Jarlert 2007.
31 See Blückert 2000, 180-257; Borutta 2011. See also Werner/Harvard (eds) 2013.
32 See Hübinger 1994; McLeod 2000, 217-247; Blückert 2000, 148-212, 313-320; Kuhlemann 2001.
33 See Schneider 2016; Muschiol 2016.
34 See Blaschke 2011b.
35 See O'Brien 1993; O'Brien 2008; Putney 2001.

Whereas the feminization thesis points to the preponderance of women in the religious field, as well as to changes in religious content such as emotionalization, the association of femininity with piety and the discursive feminization of religious culture, the concept of masculinization focuses on the strategies developed within various confessional and national contexts to make religious life more attractive to men.

3. Christian Masculinity in Northern Europe

The close connection between confessional culture and strategies to stabilize, defend, and renew Christian ideals of masculinity stands out very clearly in Blaschke's work. Using examples from imperial Germany he shows the way in which confessionalism was an instrument to re-masculinize the religious sphere. Religious actions, attitudes, and people regarded as feminine, weak, and submissive in the hegemonic bourgeois discourse were re-coded into something masculine, strong, and heroic, and vice versa. Protestantism proliferated as a specifically male religion because of its connection with the nationalist discourse of the dominant bourgeois culture. The strategy used within Catholicism was to re-code the religious actions and attitudes regarded as feminine such as, for example, church going and prayer to something masculine and to instrumentalize traditionally male characteristics and actions for religious purposes. Blaschke pays special attention to the Catholic Men's Apostolate (*Männer-Apostolat*), a campaign organized by the Jesuits that started in the 1880s with the aim of bringing religiously indifferent men back to church and to engage them in religious life. Blaschke concludes that while Protestants tended to use religion for the sake of nationalism, Catholics strived to instrumentalize nationalism for the sake of religion. Ideally, Catholic men were to keep their distance from an exaggerated cult of the nation and first and foremost be servants of Christ and the pope.[36]

In a study on the Swedish theologian Johan Alfred Eklund, the famous leader of the nationalist Swedish Young Church movement and from 1907 Bishop of Karlstad, David Tjeder illustrates how nationalism was an important tool to construct Protestant manliness. Tjeder shows how Eklund tried to come to terms with the accusation that Christian faith was incompatible with modern manhood by redefining both the content of modernity and the understanding of Christian faith. By referring to nationalist ideology and the Christian rhetoric of struggle, he sought to create an up-to-date male ideal that was modern, manly, and truly Lutheran. This ideal was contrasted with the proposed effeminate types of manliness of the 'foreign', non-established

36 See Blaschke 2011b.

churches, not least the Catholic Church. Tjeder also reveals the importance played by the experience of religious crises in the constructions of 'modern' Protestant manliness. In the writings of Eklund and other leading Swedish church men at the time, the intellectual struggle to keep the faith was described as something specifically male, distinct from what they saw as a more 'natural' female religiosity. It was this intellectual fight that made the Christian faith truly male, modern and authentic. While advocates of the feminization theory, among them Brown, have seen the public obsession with men's religious crises as an expression of secularization, Tjeder is thus interpreting them as an example of religious modernization and re-masculinization in the spirit of Christian activism.[37]

Three further studies, amongst them two on male Christian heroes and my own on Catholic manliness in Scandinavia, analyze the different Catholic and Protestant constructions of masculinity as discussed by Blaschke. With examples taken from the Catholic Sacred Heart movement in Belgium and from the writings of Swedish neo-Lutheran theologians respectively, the Belgian historian Tine Van Osselaer and the Swedish Church historian Alexander Maurits illustrate the importance of denominational culture for the perception of Christian heroism. Both describe how Christian heroes are described as instruments of God, with Jesus as the ultimate example. They must show religious zeal and a willingness to refrain from the comforts of this world in order to promote the cause of the Christian faith. Yet whereas the Protestant heroes were either kings or male church reformers, fighting for the true faith or for their nation, the Catholic heroes were either heroic and brave religious soldiers like the Papal Zouaves, zealous missionaries, or fervent laymen (or women), defending the rights of the Catholic Church. And despite the fact that Catholic heroes as well as Lutheran ones incorporated Christian virtues such as piety and self-sacrifice, these ideals played a more subordinate role in the neo-Lutheran discourse. In contrast, Catholic heroism focused more on classical Christian virtues such as piety, charity, discipline, humility and gentleness, together with asceticism and strict obedience to the ecclesiastical authorities.[38]

These kinds of 'soft' Christian virtues played an important role in the constructions of Christian manhood among male Catholic missionaries, too. The Catholic Church strongly emphasized its claim to be the only true Church, and as a consequence all non-Catholic regions were regarded as missionary fields. Catholic missionary activities were thus extended to the Nordic countries, where the liberalization of religious legislation in the mid-19th century

37 See Tjeder 2011; 2010.

38 See Van Osselaer/Maurits 2011; Holger Arning verifies Van Osselaer's findings in a study on German Catholic constructions of heroism in the 1930s. See Arning 2008.

enabled the Catholic Church to build up a network of parishes and missions, with schools, hospitals, and other social institutions. Most of the male missionaries were members of religious institutes in Catholic countries, whereas native converts from Protestantism dominated in the Catholic parishes. Three male religious orders take centre stage in my own research, namely the Italian Barnabites, German Jesuits, and French Dominicans, yet I also analyze the ideals of manhood among male converts, priests as well as laymen.[39] My research has partially confirmed previous findings that the 'ultramontanization' of Catholic culture contributed to giving the Catholic concept of manhood a 'weak' and gentle touch that was contradictory to the prevailing secular ideals of masculinity.[40]

Monastic life with its emphasis on religious virtues such as humility, obedience, piety and self-sacrifice served as a model for both clergy and laity, and on a discursive level Catholic ideals of masculinity had a marked anti-bourgeois character. The humble, pious, obedient, and self-sacrificing ideals of manliness expressed in the reports of the Catholic missionaries in Scandinavia stood in sharp contrast not only to modern Protestant ideas of manhood, but also to the prevailing middle-class understanding of masculinity. Certainly, in the analyzed correspondence more active characteristics more in line with bourgeois liberal concepts of masculinity were also pointed out, not least by the Jesuits. Yet these characteristics were part of a religious context, where religious virtues were regarded as superior.[41]

Nevertheless, even if the membership of religious institutes discursively transcended socially constructed gender differences, and women religious sometimes had a great influence on mission work, in Scandinavia as elsewhere, it was nevertheless only men who held the power- and norm-generating positions. The reports on the relations between male and female missionaries reveal the then-current division into male and female occupations, and the analyzed correspondence shows that women's subordination was regarded as a natural obligation, and, as is especially evident with the Jesuits, a prerequisite for man's ability to realize his full manhood. In the publications of the Jesuits, the holiness, high dignity, and the exclusively male character of Catholic priesthood is underlined, and celibacy and male 'virginity' is highlighted as a foundation for clerical manhood.[42]

Tine Van Osselaer, too, clearly illustrates the importance of confessional ideology for Catholic gender constructions in her work on 'the pious sex', i.e.

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39 My research on Catholic manliness is presented in several publications, among them Werner 2014; 2016; 2011a.

40 See, for example, Götz von Olenhusen 1996.

41 The importance of these ideals is also demonstrated in studies by Marit Monteiro, see Monteiro 2011; 2012.

42 See Werner 2014, 104-191.

the ascription of religiosity to men and women, in Catholic Belgium in the 19th and early 20th century. Her focus is on the Catholic laity and the activities, norms, attitudes, values and gender ideals represented within popular lay organizations connected to the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Catholic Action movement, as well as in Catholic family discourse. She shows that Catholic family life was organized in accordance with a monastic model with regular prayers, adoration, attending mass, confession, and religious readings. A mixture of contemporary masculine ideals and Christian virtues characterized the ideals of manhood in the movements she studied. Yet religious virtues such as piety, obedience, submission and self-sacrifice had a prioritized position. The male members of the movement were expected to be both pious churchgoers and fervent defenders of church and faith in the public sphere. In the Catholic Action, which represented a more combatant type of Catholic manliness, militaristic metaphors were used to stress the male character of Christian virtues.[43] Other studies on Catholic men's organizations have come to similar conclusions, such as those of the Austrian historian Nina Kogler, who has studied the masculinity discourses of the Catholic Action in Austria in the interwar period.[44]

Van Osselaer's results are in many ways in line with the findings of Blaschke, and her analysis of Catholic family discourse and constructions of masculinity are confirmed by other studies. With examples from Germany and France, the historians Mattieu Brejon de Lavergnée and Bertrand Goujon offer an image of Catholic family life marked by devotional practices of different kinds, attending mass, charitable activities, and male engagement for the sake of the church.[45] Van Osselaer explains the increased focus on men with the Catholic Church's efforts to maintain and restore its influence in society. As politics was still a man's affair, it was important for the churches to secure men's church loyalty and to engage them for the interests of the church and prevent them from engaging in anti-clerical movements. As potential voters and holders of key positions in society, men's religious involvement was a prerequisite for the maintenance of a Christian society.[46]

Marriage and family are accorded great importance in the teaching of all Christian churches and denominations, and the subordinate role of woman was stressed in both Catholic and the Protestant doctrine at the time. Yet in the Catholic tradition, regulated religious life offered an alternative to marriage that was not only accepted but also regarded as superior. According to classical Catholic teaching, vocation only refers to clerical office and regu-

43 See Van Osselaer 2013; 2012; 2014; 2016.
44 See Kogler 2016. See also Große Kracht 2016.
45 See Brejon de Lavergnée 2014, 67-81, 83-103. Cf. Schneider 2014, who verifies this picture in his analysis of German religious books for Catholic men.
46 See Van Osselaer 2013, 35-106, 195-249.

lated religious life, while the Lutheran doctrine of vocation stressed the normative function of marriage and the household, and celibate monastic life was condemned as unnatural and unethical.[47] Scholars studying woman and religion in Scandinavia have pointed to the important role of the Lutheran doctrine of vocation and the related household ideology for Christian women, as it strongly emphasized the reproductive and domestic duties of the female sex. Many of the pioneers of the early women's movement were influenced, directly or indirectly, by this Lutheran gender ideology. To legitimize their socio-political engagement in society they tried to enlarge the domestic sphere to include social activities.[48]

Several studies from the Swedish research project illustrate that the Lutheran household ideology was also crucial for the construction of Protestant masculinity. Maurits provides an example in his study of a group of neo-Lutheran churchmen connected to the University of Lund in the mid-19th century. These High-Church theologians adhered to an ideal of manliness that was characterized by paternalism, a Lutheran ethics of duty, and political engagement to defend the traditional Lutheran social order, not least the role of the household and responsibility of the house-father. They thus stressed the connection between Christian manhood and the function of a house-father with moral, political and religious responsibility for the household and its members. Yet by repudiating liberal views on society, they also distanced themselves from the liberal gender construction with its rigid division between a private and a public sphere in favour of more cooperative, although hierarchical relations within the framework of the household.[49]

The Danish historian Nanna Damsholt traces the emergence of a new type of Danish masculinity, characterized by a mixture of middle-class liberal and traditional Christian ideals, in a study of gender constructions in the Danish folk high school movement in the 19th century. The Danish folk high schools were part of the Grundtvigian revivalist movement, so called after its leader, the famous theologian, poet and philosopher N.F.S. Grundtvig. They represented a new kind of educational establishment, intended for young men, and later also for women, from rural areas. A patriarchal model was upheld at these schools, which were organized as a household with the headmaster and his wife at the top. The Lutheran faith and Danish patriotism constituted the ideological basis, and religion was ever-present in the daily life of the schools. The Danish folk high school movement contributed to removing walls between the old ranks and classes and to transforming and democra-

47 See Birkenmeier 1994, 306/307.

48 See Hammar 1999, 20-78. The Lutheran doctrine of vocation and its importance for the Scandinavian women's movement is discussed in Hammar 2000a. See also Markkola 2000a, 27-67, 69-112.

49 See Maurits 2013; 2014.

tizing Danish political culture, but also to confirming and stabilizing a patriarchal gender order.[50]

The importance of Lutheran household ideology is also demonstrated in the study by Anna Prestjan on ideals of masculinity in the Church of Sweden in the early 19th century. She focusses on the Swedish clergyman Erik E:son Hammar and his religiously motivated settlement movement in Northern Sweden. This philanthropic project, aiming to help alcoholic men and their families by resettling them in 'colonies', represented an attempt to restore the Lutheran domestic ideal of man and wife as a complementary team and was also intended to serve as springboards for more extensive social reforms on a Protestant basis. The ideals of gender and masculinity and the aspiration to combine Christian virtues and practical action that meet in this colonization movement show many similarities with the visions of the Muscular Christianity movement.[51]

It is therefore not very surprising that the ideals of clerical manliness revealed in obituaries from the Church of Sweden reflected contemporary, secular ideals of manliness. Qualities associated with general masculine ideals such as vigour, loyalty, decency, and ability are frequently used in the characterizations of the clergymen, whereas more specific Christian ideals such as humility, piety, and love are used rarely. There is also a tendency to counterbalance these kinds of 'passive' virtues by combining them with more active qualities, such as physical strength and initiative. They were thus 'decoded' to correspond with secular masculinity. Whereas religious virtues dominated the Catholic discourse of masculinity, which is particularly evident when it comes to clerical manliness, the focus was here on contemporary, more secular qualities of masculinity.[52]

An opposite strategy is at the fore in Elin Malmer's investigation of the evangelical Swedish Mission Covenant's missionary activities among conscripts at the beginning of the 20th century. Here the main point was to demonstrate the genuinely male character of Christian virtues, which is reflected in reports and letters in the organization's youth magazine. Both the Church of Sweden and the Free Churches were engaged in this kind of work among soldiers, and a network of so-called soldiers' homes was erected. In the homes of the Swedish Mission Covenant a specific evangelical male identity was formed with a focus on conversion, and on spiritual and moral growth. The Protestant gender order was clearly marked in these homes, which were led by married couples with the husband as supervisor and his wife as a subordinate helper. The mission among conscripts was motivated by

50 See Damsholt 2011.
51 See Prestjan 2009.
52 See Prestjan 2011.

the need to counteract sinful behaviour among the soldiers such as drinking and gambling. Yet it was of course also aiming at winning new members, and Malmer interprets this evangelization work as a strategy of re-masculinization in order to counteract the feminization of the movement. The membership of the Swedish Mission Covenant was, namely, largely female, while the leadership was almost totally male.[53] Other Protestant movements had the same problem, among them the Salvation Army.[54]

Erik Sidenvall's work on Swedish evangelical missionaries in China around 1900 reveals an activist ideal of masculinity, where older Lutheran ideals of manliness were combined with modern, middle-class, liberal concepts. He argues that for these evangelical missionaries, who all came from rural, working-class backgrounds, missionary work was an alternative to emigration and that their missionary engagement can partly be seen as a striving for middle class respectability. They thus adopted a modern, middle-class notion of masculinity, not least the idea of the 'self-made man', developed within the American Protestant missionary movement to which they were connected. These ideals were mixed with ideas of manliness derived from the Lutheran household ideology, and personified above all by the married clergyman. The Protestant missionaries had to be married men, and marriage was a fundamental component in missionary manhood. To build Christian homes was prioritized as a mission strategy and at the same time regarded as an important means of Christianising the 'heathen'. The missionaries were thus both modern entrepreneurs and pre-modern patriarchs in their households.[55]

If compared with constructions of gender and masculinity in the Catholic overseas missions several differences appear. In the Catholic case the missionary work was pursued by religious institutes with regulated religious life as the guiding principle, not a patriarchal household ideology. This is reflected in an interesting way in the German historian Michael Weidert's work on gender, masculinity and ethnicity in the German mission in East Africa around 1900. In his analysis of reports and letters in missionary magazines, the Catholic missionary is depicted as a hero, characterized by qualities such as piety, humility and self-sacrificing obedience, and the ascetic ideal of the male religious, represented above all by the priests, is contrasted with the Protestant missionaries and their middle class family life.[56]

53 See Malmer 2011; Malmer 2013.
54 See Lundin 2013. Cf. Lauer 2000.
55 See Sidenvall 2009; 2011. The Norwegian church historian Kristin Fjelde Tjelle observes similar trends in the Norwegian Protestant mission in South Africa, see Fjelde Tjelle 2011.
56 See Weidert 2007.

4. Conclusions

Christian masculinity was, as we have learnt from the examples mentioned above, re-constructed in different ways during the 19th and early 20th century. Such re-modelling of images of 'the Christian man' can be understood as part of the response of the churches to modernity and its challenges, drawing on longstanding, traditional Christian patterns of interpretation. Since the very beginning of Christian religion, male superiority had manifested itself in classical doctrines, thereby laying ground for male dominance in society and everyday life. New Christian masculinities in the 19th and early 20th century could easily refer to these traditions. Even if women were seen as equal to men in spiritual matters, this very equality was conceived of as a form of 'spiritual manliness'.[57] It should be noted, however, that the accentuation of male superiority was not only based on the hierarchical anthropology that formed the basis of Christian Creation theology, but was linked to the bourgeois ideology of the separate spheres as well.

The perception of religion as increasingly feminized and the efforts made by churches and religious organizations to appeal to men and to masculinize the image of Christian religion have been the starting points for the research presented in this article. Two distinct strategies can be identified: The first was to combine elements of contemporary secular masculinity with 'classical', Christian virtues regarded as feminine in the hegemonic middle-class liberal discourse; the second one was to define Christian virtues as truly manly, and vice versa. Research on Christian manliness illustrates not only the importance of religion but also the need to take into consideration the confessional and institutional aspects of religious identity in the modern world.

A common finding in the studies discussed above is that social and missionary engagement on confessional grounds was a key component in the construction of Christian masculinity. In Catholicism, where regulated religious life served as a normative foundation, 'classical' Christian ideals such as piety, humility, obedience, and self-sacrifice played a more central role than in the family-oriented Protestant gender ideology, with its sharp demarcation between male and female and between politics and religion. Protestant ideals of manhood were more tightly entwined with nationalist ideologies, and also more marked by the gender ideologies of contemporary bourgeois society, whereas piety and the political struggle on behalf of the church were the most significant features of Catholic manliness. In the Protestant case also older gender ideals rooted in the Lutheran ideology of the household had a large impact on the construction of Christian manhood.

57 Cf. Hallonsten 2011.

Much work remains to be done on Christian masculinities and on Christian men's strivings to come to terms with the growing dissonance between secular and religious codes of manhood in the modern era. More micro-studies from different countries and regions are needed, not least from the Latin parts of the Western world and the world of Orthodox Christianity. In addition, further research is needed in the form of comparative and transnational studies that include the constructions of masculinity in other religions.

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Acknowledgements

This volume publishes the contributions to the conference *God's Own Gender? Religions and their Concepts of Masculinity*, which took place at the University of Münster, Germany, in November 2016 and was organized collaboratively by the Center for Religion and Modernity, the Cluster of Excellence 'Religion and Politics' and the Centre for Islamic Theology. The international and interdisciplinary conference was also the culmination of research carried out by a Junior Research Group funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research between 2012 and 2016 on the subject of *Religious Plurality as a Challenge for Religions and Societies* ('Religiöse Pluralität als Herausforderung für Religionen und Gesellschaften').

The editors sincerely thank everybody who helped in publishing this book. First and foremost, we are grateful to all the presenters at the conference who have made their papers available in written form, as well as to all those authors who contributed after the conference. Furthermore, we would like to thank Perry Schmidt-Leukel and Thomas K. Gugler for their suggestions and the support they gave us before and during the conference, as well as Detlef Pollack, Astrid Reuter and Felix Krämer for their repeated feedback during the making of this book. Our thanks also go to Marianne Heimbach-Steins for her comments during the review process. The work of David West, Eduard Levin, Theo Riches and Jana Weiß in translating and correcting the text meant that the book could appear in English. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to them, as we do to Sarah Armbruster, Annika Keute and Vivien Wodara for the extensive work needed to prepare the texts for publication. Last but not least, we would like to thank the editors of the series *Religion in der Gesellschaft* for accepting this volume, as well as Ergon Publishing and Nomos Publishing, in particular Hans-Jürgen Dietrich and Holger Schumacher, for their close cooperation during the creation of the book. We are grateful to the Cluster of Excellence 'Religion and Politics' for the financial support in the publication of this volume.

Daniel Gerster, Münster & Michael Krüggeler, Aruanã (Brazil), July 2018

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