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On men, organizations and intersectionality

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On men, organizations and intersectionality:
personal, working, political and theoretical reflections
(or how organization studies met profeminism)

Jeff Hearn

Introduction

I have been asked to write personally, reflectively, on the theme of “Men ‘Doing’ In-Equalities Research: Critical Reflections and Analyses from Men in the Field”. Emphasis is requested on research and fieldwork in the Diversity and Equalities field, on gender and intersectional dynamics, and on research process rather than findings. But what indeed is “the Field”, and what is fieldwork? I see it, the Field, as much broader than the doing of research in the field. The F/field and research are not just about research projects. They are a developing, moving set of activities and experiences that operates simultaneously personally, in working, politically, and theoretically – in organizing, writing, teaching, researching, and also in very different locations. The point is that there are many places of departure, yet they have one element in common – the intertwining of personal, working, political and theoretical elements (Hearn, 1983, 1992b, 2008). In such ways the personal (practice and experience), doing work, politics, and theorizing are all always implicated. The Field also includes the question “How did I/we get here?” At the same time, this autoethnographic approach has limitations and carries some risks (Hearn, 2005, 2010).

In working on questions of equality, diversity and inclusion – class and capitalism, and race and imperialism have long been fundamental, but politics came alive in a different way through

engaging with feminism and gender and patriarchy. A long while ago I resolved that the best way to be profeminist was to focus on the critique of men, but without re-centring men. For many years I had a broad guide for myself that if I was writing or presenting a paper on my own I would focus critically on men, and if writing or presenting with women I would usually address gender and sexuality. More recently, I have relaxed and complicated this a little, partly with what have appeared as spatial, political and theoretical complexities.

At the same time, and contrary to some accounts, the recognition of multiple social divisions or multiple oppressions (or intersectionality) is not new. In my experience intersections of age, class, dis/ability, ethnicity, gender, racialization and sexuality were at the centre of political and academic concerns in the 1980s, and indeed earlier. I remember being especially influenced then by Christine Griffin on intersections of age and other social divisions, and Helen Meekosha on intersections of disability with other social divisions. Indeed disability is a kind of base for other oppressions, and especially so in organizations. I have also long felt, in keeping with the “new sexuality” and anti-violence movements that politics and research on justice and equality have to prioritize issues of sexuality and violence.

Within this broad frame, men’s relations to feminism are problematic: there is always a gap, a gap between men and feminism. I have been continually stirred by the personal-political sense that the current ways in which class, gender, racialized/ethnic, intersectional relations are organized is deeply disturbing materially. Their unfairness is painful, even if, by virtue of being a white man, I benefit from them. Men, and particular groups and versions of men, as the dominant

social category in gender relations, are still in many ways the main, though not the only, problem, in most societies, most of the time. This is intolerable. All this takes many forms: for a start, just think of who does most of the world's killing, owns most wealth, runs the military, international finance, religions, and so on.

Researching, analysing, working on, and theorizing men are contradictory experiences. From the start, the connections between the personal, working, the political and the theoretical were intense. Researching men was not and is not some distanced, abstract enterprise; it can be a matter of life and death. All this demands political action by men in relation to gender dominance, just as much as, say, racist regimes need to be resisted by white people.

One of the problems, perhaps paradoxes, is how is it possible for men to speak differently, in relation to women and feminism, bearing in mind that men's voices have been far from quiet, historically, politically, culturally. Meanwhile, feminists, even with a clear focus on women, have almost always been making analyses of men; indeed they have had to do so, living in a patriarchal world. There has always been a question of what to do with men. So, how to name men, critique men and deconstruct men? The point of naming men as men (Hanmer, 1990), or white people as white people, or similar formulations, is not to reify or solidify social categories or to prioritize identity: it is the opposite, to deconstruct the dominant (Hearn, 1996).

Finding the field of organizations and organization studies

At just 18, I went from London to Oxford to study Geography where most of the young men and women were, or appeared to me, middle or even upper class. The college I went to was single sex, as were virtually all colleges then. There I struggled to make sense of the class privilege of Oxford and my working class cultural background. So, from way back I have been in this contradiction between different worlds, having some access to some elite places, but not part of them. That disjunction had a class, educational, ethnicized, racialized, gender, sexual and embodied character too. Perhaps not surprisingly Marxism replaced religion. At Oxford I discovered anti-racism, Irish republicanism, anti-imperialist political history and geography of Africa, the problematizing of whiteness, and postcolonialism. I did my final university exams in May '68 when there were more important events in Paris and elsewhere! Thereafter I got involved in various forms of politics – mainly community, but also student, peace, anti-racist, and of course sexual/gender.

After graduating, I had the offer of staying on as a research student, but turned it down and went to the other Oxford university, then the Polytechnic, now Oxford Brookes University, to study Urban Planning and then Sociology – a small political act. I saw studying there and those subjects as “more useful”, more politically engaged in the “real world”. It was there I came across exciting analytical writing on organizations, organizational development (OD) and social change. The course was also organized primarily around group projects, and from that I soon realised an affinity and enjoyment with that way of working with very different kinds of people.

Working in local government and then a new town development corporation introduced me more directly to the power of work and organizational life. I began reading anthropological texts as a kind of hobby; they seemed to be a good guide to how organizations, their rituals, intrigues, and strange ways worked. I was especially interested in how was it that in urban planning and development the work itself was very satisfying, even intellectually rewarding, but the outcomes were controlled by two things: external local and national politics (the state), and land ownership (capitalism), plus their intersection. So I was hooked on organizations. In 1973 I gave up a relatively well paid job and went north to Leeds University to study a Masters on Organization Studies in the Department of Management Studies. I had the feeling that “the North” would be the place where I could be more useful, where within the close-grained interstices of regional oppression it was possible to be someone else than in “Home Counties” confines. In retrospect, I can see it as another small political act.

In the very first week of the course we were plunged into a T-Group led by a US group process expert, Horowitz, I think Ira, but I am not quite sure. Organizational psychology was taught by Doug Duckworth, study on careers by John Hayes (provoking early interest in gendered careers), and organization theory by Ken Bamforth, a link back to the classics of the Tavistock School, Eric Trist, Elliot Jaques and A.K. Rice, socio-technical systems, and so on. While the course deepened my interest in group process, my main preoccupations were sociological, and I became especially drawn to the study of everyday life. So through the 1970s key influences included ethnomethodology and phenomenology, Marxism and feminism, especially radical feminism and

feminist recognitions of body autonomy, as well as careers, organizations and planning. I have long thought that the so-called structural and the so-called everyday address the same thing.

In 1974 I got a job as Lecturer in Public and Social Policy at Bradford University. From the mid-1970s and much of the 1980s I was teaching large amounts of “Social Policy”, including questions of poverty, health, social planning, welfare state development, class-gender-race, equality and inequality. So, by the early 1970s my academic disciplines were a mixture of geography, urban planning, sociology, organization studies, and social policy, and I was living in one of the most multi-ethnic of UK cities.

The field of the personal and the political: organizing and writing

So, why and how did I become bothered by all this stuff about men and masculinities? Several interconnected processes led me into “men’s politics” and studies on men. Though I became interested in feminism, gender equality and sexuality politics in the late 1960s and early 1970s, I usually begin that story in 1978: I was living with my then partner and our very young children, very concerned about the many messages of feminism, and conscious of most men’s avoidance of care for children. Most men who were sympathetic to feminism seemed to me to be unconcerned about the facts and labour of childcare, or “childwork” (Hearn, 1983).

From this, I became involved in founding two groups centrally concerned with social change around gendered power relations: one a mixed-group campaigning for more provision and support for children under-five, their mothers and other carers; the other, a men's group that lasted several years and was broadly anti-sexist and consciousness-raising in orientation (after an unpleasant start when some men came for other reasons, then soon left!). These and other similar personal-political initiatives became my political home; I have been involved in numerous anti-sexist, profeminist activities, campaigns and groups since.

This has for a long time raised the ambiguity and necessary reflexivity of studying what is a rather small social movement that I have been, and am, myself part of. This has meant that reflexivity is not just a technique to be employed – “ahah, now I think I will be reflexive!” – it has to be built into the fabric of (pro)feminist work, personally, politically and theoretically, in studying the movement, and from time to time writing more overtly politically and more academically on all this. It has involved needing to have at least “two brains”, one being totally in the moment of “the group”, the other thinking, reflecting, that what is happening here is also about group, organizational, political and social movement processes, and indeed longer-term (pro)feminist political strategy. Reflexivity can be reduced to a technique; I think to be of interest it needs to be political. Being reflexive is no guarantee of anything progressive in itself; I am sure there are reflexive fascists out there.

In 1978 I also began writing on the relations of me(n) and children, and five years later, in 1983 published a short personal-political-theoretical book, *Birth and Afterbirth*, on men's and my

relationship to children and gender, emphasizing consciousness-raising, (hard) work, politics and a largely structuralist analysis of patriarchy, denouncing the institution of fatherhood (Hearn, 1983, 1987). Thus, this addressed the four activities introduced earlier: *experience*, including being at the birth of our third child, doing *work* for children, childcare *politics*, and *theorizing* on gender, children, patriarchy and reproduction in a broad sense. The main political-theoretical impetus was to rethink gender through Marxism, turning it upside down, placing reproduction as the base to production (cf. Mitchell, 1966). This led onto critical feminist(ic) social sciences, especially anthropology (e.g. Edholm *et al.*, 1977; Women's Studies Group, 1978), and the work of Christine Delphy (1977). When I discovered Mary O'Brien's *The Politics of Reproduction* (1981), one of my favourite books by one of main intellectual influences (Hearn, 1999), including as a way of understanding organizations, I realised that we were working along very similar lines. Ironically, Marxism was not materialist enough, in neglecting in some respects the materialism of the body, in birth, sexuality, (interpersonal) violence, care, ageing, disability, death. I haven't changed my view on this; ideological mystification of fatherhood is a major problem; and I still find the concept of patriarchy useful.

There have been clear links between men's politics, and research on men and masculinities. In 1984, to my surprise, one of my university colleagues along the corridor started using part of my small book on birth and children in his teaching on "Human Socialization and Development". I was surprised, though not displeased. My personal-political interest was being academicized by myself and others. Above all, I realised my profeminist personal-political interests were very close to my (profeminist) working, academic, scientific and theoretical interests.

The field of teaching: working, researching and more writing

From the mid-1970s I had started teaching “Organizations and Groups” to social work students at Bradford University. This was all in the days before the dreaded modularization. The first part of the course was an introduction to theories and approaches to organizations and groups, and then after two terms of this I involved the student year group, overwhelmingly women, in planning the second part of the course. This comprised a fairly intensive reflexive course exercise, over three weeks, in understanding how organizations, including their own self-organizing, work. The outcome of this was requests and agreements for more teaching on race, culture and organizations (taught by my friend and colleague, Peter Hitch), and more teaching on what was initially called “women and organizations”. So, in 1977, thanks to these students, I began teaching on what became women, men, gender and organizations. At the time this was novel; it was exciting; it fed into my political interests, and was popular amongst at least a significant number of the students. It is often good to learn from the learners; knowledge comes from different margins. Age was also an issue; I was older, but not that much, than most of those students; I could convince myself I was a friend to some of them. An interest in gender and supporting women was a currency for that, which helped my anxiety as a young lecturer.

This also led onto a long research and writing collaboration with Wendy Parkin, who was a so-called “mature student” from that cohort, ten years older than me. We have researched and published together over 35 years, in which we have focused on gender, sexuality and organizational life. (e.g. Hearn and Parkin, 1983, 1987/1995). We decided that the most obvious

gap in knowledge in the study of gender and organizations was around sexuality, and without much forethought assembled and brought together many small-scale studies, “in the field”, of how sexuality was being used amongst workers and professionals, and by management. We worked separately in collecting observed and reported examples, often without informing, in one sense covertly, that is, without announcing our specific interest in sexuality at work. We have never had funding for our work nor have we worked from a research plan (unlike my funded research projects) nor have we been departmental colleagues.

In the book, *‘Sex’ at ‘Work’* (Hearn and Parkin, 1987), we managed to produce one of the first overarching attempts to relate sexuality studies and organization studies. In this, we were critical of Michel Foucault for his neglect of gender, but also attended to issues of discourse, bodies and space that he had highlighted. Our work has developed a distinctively bodily materialism, drawing on various materialist feminisms, but framing them within organizations, rather than, say, family or media. Key influences in developing this research were lesbian and gay scholarship (e.g. Rich, 1980; Weeks, 1977), various Foucaultian works, and *New French Feminisms* (Marks and de Coutrivon, 1981).

In studying gender and sexuality in and around work organizations, it is very difficult to do so without being aware of organizational position, hierarchy, work/labour, status, class, occupation, profession, and management. These inevitably intersect with gender and sexuality and much more, so that intersectionality has been central to this gendered anthropological project. More recently, we turned to questions of violence and emotions in and around organizational contexts,

bringing together organization studies and violence studies (sets of researches usually far apart) (e.g. Hearn and Parkin 2001; Flam *et al.*, 2010).

Meanwhile, at the end of the 1970s Women's Studies was being organized the University, with the first summer school in Women's Studies held in Bradford in 1979, and the first UK Masters in Women's Studies (Applied) founded there in 1981. The context I worked and lived in was radical-socialist feminist. I was very influenced, and still am, by materialist feminisms. It was in this context I offered a postgraduate reading course, in 1983 I think, on Mary O'Brien's (1981) *The Politics of Reproduction*, not in Women's Studies, but for postgraduate social workers, probation officers, and youth and community workers. Though this was successful, I was unsure if all the Women's Studies staff welcomed it, as it might have been construed as encroaching on their territory. The next year I offered a course on "Men and Masculinities". The year after the Women's Studies students and staff invited me to do the same course for them. The first year there were too many students for one seminar, so I ran two parallel seminars, each including students from the two Masters courses (Women's Studies; Social and Community Work); the result was emotionally demanding, with, perhaps not surprisingly, much disagreement amongst the students. It also represented a new phase of involvement with Women's Studies. Following frustrations with the lack of depth in some men's groups, I was grateful that I was now in the midst of four years of eclectic (part-Jungian) psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Though I was then and generally remain critical of psychoanalytic approaches to gender power relations, those experiences helped me to become more upfront, less apologetic, and to explore my own relations to sex(uality) and violence, so I was less scared of what might be said, what might happen in the

classroom. The year after, I ran the two seminars for the two student groups separately, with their different knowledges, interests and expertise.

So by 1985 I was on an ambiguous margin of Women's Studies, teaching the course on "Men and Masculinities", but not part of the women's staff group running and developing the course. I was teaching in Women's Studies, but was myself outside Women's Studies. This was OK by me, but it was slightly complicated issue for me to go into the women's space of the "women's room" of the MA students, if, for example, I needed to speak to a student taking my course. I recall going to the door and then asking one of the other students to get the student in question.

More generally, the department I worked in was a site of principled standpoint politics too. When I joined in 1974 there was a significant presence of ego psychologists; in 1976 Hilary Rose, the feminist sociologist of science and social policy, became professor and Head of Department; shortly after, Jalna Hanmer, the feminist scholar of violence, reproductive politics and community organizing, and later Hilary Graham, Marilyn Lawrence and Jo Sutton joined the department, adding to the strong feminist presence. The wider department included staff identifying as liberals, such as Alison Froggatt focusing on ageing, and Geoffrey Pearson on crime and deviance, Marxists, such as Jim Kincaid and Tony Novak, and further impacts soon came from poststructuralism and anti-racism, partly by way of departmental colleagues: Kum Kum Bhavnani, Barbara Fawcett, Brid Featherstone, Elizabeth Harlow, Wendy Hollway, Gus John, Gail Lewis, Ruth Lister, Marie Macey, and Fiona Williams. In the 1980s and early 1990s

the department had for many years two Standing Committees of staff and students: one on Gender and Sexuality, another on “Race”, Racism and Anti-racism. Also, a group of us on the Faculty Board initiated an internal audit of all courses taught in the Faculty, with the participation of most departments, apart from the Management Centre, if my memory is correct.

At issue were not only gender and sexuality politics, but also those of anti-racism and other anti-oppressive movements, with inspirations from Black/postcolonial scholars, as varied as Frantz Fanon (1963), Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1988) and Patricia Hill Collins (1990); I remember being especially impressed on reading María Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman’s (1983) evocative “Have we got a theory for you!”. An interesting issue here is the relation between (neo-)imperialism and problematizing of men: (post)imperialism problematizes the white rational subject, paralleling attempts to deconstruct men and the male subject. This was, and is, also an everyday matter. Living in Bradford then made postcolonial forces immediate, through a history of immigration, understandable through colonization and imperialism. It was and is always necessary to question: who is the “we”?

The field of the field: researching, writing and more publishing

In researching and theorizing on men, some repeated patterns appear around men’s power and men’s social interests and yet also the extreme complexity of men, masculinities and men’s practices. Much work on men and masculinities in recent decades has emphasized multiple masculinities, in terms of ways of being men, forms of men’s structural, collective and individual practices, and the interconnections of gender with other social divisions such as age, class,

disability, ethnicity, nationality, occupation, racialization, religion, and sexuality. Such relations are complicated by contradictions, ambiguities and paradoxes that persist intrapersonally, interpersonally, collectively, structurally. With this, I have chosen to focus on arenas of men's power, in patriarchy, in violence, and in management. This has not always endeared me to the men who count.

Indeed one issue I had to deal with for a long time was having my work ignored by most other men. In contrast, I was very fortunate to find support from several leading feminist sociologists, such as the sociologist of health and illness, Margaret Stacey, and the sociologist of interpersonal relations, Carol Smart. For many years my career was marked by non-recognition by those in power and what can be seen, in comparison with equivalent men, as stalling or delayed "promotions". I was and am a kind of gender traitor, after all. Working on gender, sexuality, violence, and men has certainly not aided my formal career path, though it has led to many exciting collaborations and networks. It has also affected my workplace working relations. With men, I have worked with few immediate colleagues as allies, and at times distance and hostility. On the other hand, on occasion I have been one of the few men invited to contribute to a publication of women or talk at what is primarily a women's event.

Eventually it seemed to be partly sheer weight of publishing that changed my formal career to an extent. In fact, I realised that heavy publishing was necessary as a defensive strategy. In 1988–1989 I had what seemed my first major professional recognition, a research fellowship at the

University of Manchester on “The political economy of men and masculinities in historical perspective, 1870–1920”. I was keen to track where “modern”, contemporary formations of men, masculinities, gender, organizations and public patriarchies had “come from” (Hearn, 1992a). This historicization continued earlier explorations of men as a gender class, but paradoxically in terms of both historical, changing, fracturing fragmentation, and the dispensability of (some) men. Masculinity was understood here as a material-discursive construction of and by the male/masculine subject.

This work was a development in the analysis of patriarchy towards a more complex view that emphasized pluralizing, processes and multiple selves: relations of unities of men with deconstructions of “men”. From the late 1980s I have tried to tread a path *in-between* structuralism and poststructuralism, modernism and postmodernism, that combines materialism and discourse, calling this by various labels, such as discursive bodily materialism; and reproductive cultural materialism. At the time this appeared to some strange, and I found few similar framings, though, thanks to Gary Wickham, I recall being intrigued by the work of Ian Hunter (1988). But looking back, I recognize various attempts in this direction, from post-marxist political theorizing (e.g. Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) to materialist and Marxist-influenced versions of discourse theory, to postcolonialism and postmaterialism. These debates around the material/discursive were important in developing and conducting detailed research on men who were and/or had been violent to women. What could be more simultaneously material and discursive than violence? What can be more unequal(izing) and excluding than violence?

A turning point at work was in 1989 when Jalna Hanmer and I decided to work together, and set up the Violence, Abuse and Gender Relations Research Unit. Though we had neighbouring offices, we had been researching, separately over many years, different forms of violence and abuse: for her, violence to women and children, and reproductive rights; for me, sexual harassment, child abuse and historical studies. Apart from Jalna's own work, I was especially influenced by that of Catharine MacKinnon (1982) and Liz Kelly (1988), amongst many others. Jalna and I were fortunate in gaining research grants from the UK research council, the ESRC, and elsewhere, involving a great deal of field research. Significantly, the research that was possible depended on much previous political and policy work within and outside the state. Jalna and colleagues focused on researching women's experiences of violence; my colleagues and I researched men's experiences doing violence. This was reflected in the gendered layout of the research offices. She and I worked very closely and determinedly on organizational policy development, with key policy-makers, managers and specialists, especially with police, criminal justice agencies, housing agencies, health agencies, social services, and third sector. In all this, Jalna was a constant support and inspiration.

In this research I was fully "in the field" – everything was the field, the field was everything – even if I was not necessarily in the field. To do this research work meant engaging with men across all classes, from very powerful, respectable and privileged men at the top of state organizations, such as the police and the prosecution services, as well as men who were not powerful, respectable nor privileged at the structural level. Class-gender intersections were pervasive. Racialization and ethnicity figured in a complex way, with the projects on women having extensive cooperation with Black and Asian women's organizations, while close research

cooperation with Black and Asian men's organizations was not possible then in working against men's violence to women. At that time, the risk, real or imagined, perhaps from both researchers and potentially researched, of relating, even equating, violence and racialization, and thus feeding into popular racism, was probably too great. More recently, the issue of men's violence is being taken up by BME men's organizations themselves. Thus, the women's research was very mixed ethnically and in racialization, while the men's research was largely, though certainly not totally, white.

In this work I had to use my own gender resources, my own self as a method, to be a somewhat different kind of man in different times and places, to secure research access, often at several different organizational levels. In interviewing, there were different challenges again, how to be polite and respectful to a man whom you knew had recently beaten up his wife, without colluding with him. It was very important in this kind of fieldwork to use one's professional power and expert authority at some points, in negotiating access, and in doing the interviewing itself to keep control of the interview.

Another crucial task was support for the other researchers in the research team. So the external professional, expert "front" of the research had to be coupled with a very caring, mutually caring, set of relations between the researchers. All of us men who did interviewing of men had experience in men's personal development work, men's politics and/or critical academic studies on men and masculinities. Still, there was much stress and tension to be dealt with, and a need for caring relations between men in discussing whatever came up from interviews, especially

around sex and violence. I realised when these projects were completed that I had been under a medium level of stress for several years.

Researching men's violence in a profeminist way is difficult, methodologically, emotionally, politically. Feminist research has highlighted the significance of intersectional gender power relations *throughout* the research process and all its aspects and "stages". These include questions of epistemology, location, ethics, reflexivity, relations between researchers and researched, and emotions in research (Hearn, 1998b). This gendering of men applied in definite ways, even though this could not be read about in textbooks, feminist or non-feminist, when we began this kind of empirical work in the early 1990s. This led the research team to develop our own extensive guidelines on many issues (Hearn, 1993). Key issues in interviewing men about their violence include very thorough preparation for any eventuality, through training and role plays; paying close attention to how to begin interviews; polite persistence in accessing interviewees; relaxing in asking difficult, perhaps embarrassing, questions; preparing the end of interviews. Such practical questions can be placed into the broader frame of interviewing the powerful or relatively powerful. They are deeply methodological and theoretical, including the very construction of knowledge, typically an intersectional, not a one-dimensional, social process.

From the early 1990s I also began another cooperation in studying organizations, this time with David Collinson, on another arena of power and dominance. Here, we focused on the relations of men and management in the light of patriarchy, materiality and discourse, intersectionalities and

identity, and the critique of the concept of masculinities (e.g. Collinson and Hearn, 1994). Our first collaborations were in two linked papers at the 1990 British Sociological Association Conference on Social Divisions and Social Change, but we continue to research and write on men, gender, organizations and management (e.g. Collinson and Hearn, 2014). This initially meant re-analysing empirical data gathered earlier, now seen through the eyes of what kind of managers/men/masculinities were being reproduced, in a sense simultaneously.

This perspective of naming, and deconstructing men, has had many implications for the doing of research in the field. Interviewing the powerful, such as corporate elites, top businessmen or leading politicians, raises key methodological challenges. Elites are often used to being listened to, presenting themselves, speaking authoritatively, avoiding direct questions, adapting, and speaking on behalf of their organization. This means attending closely to the gendered dynamics of control in the interview, including interviewees' use of speaking on/off the record. Corporate elites frequently identify with the company; it can be challenging for researchers to distinguish between the company's and the interviewee's perspectives. This "front" should not be dismissed or assumed to "hide" a more complete picture; it is of interest in itself, as is the unofficial story. Key practical intersectionally gendered matters are the need for a professional, punctual, polite approach; dress; use of humour; respectfulness, but not too much deference or excessive flattery.

This work on men and managers has seemed to strike a chord with some colleagues, with, for example, the 1994 article with David Collinson, "Naming men as men", my most cited publication, whilst seeming to confuse some others, who, probably without reading carefully,

seem to take this framing (or title?) as evidence of an essentialism, which is exactly the opposite of what we are arguing, as in our use of contingent discourses. More generally, such work has often seemed to be of little or no interest even for those researchers who study only men or mostly men managers, as if the fact that most managers, especially top managers, were men was just not worth researching: ignoring is powerful. Despite the obviousness, many or most men researchers seem very reluctant to even begin to name themselves or other men as men, to think about how their being men affects their “academic” or “research” analyses. Can you imagine if for the introductory lecture or seminar in economics or business studies all that was on the table, in the teacher’s positioning and analysis of what is happening in the world? And then that was continued throughout the whole course? From the mid-1990s the relevance of this perspective became increasingly obvious in terms of comparative, global and transnational research on men and masculinities in organizations and elsewhere. A kind of return to Geography! And a few years later I moved abroad.

Broadening the field: to the transnational

Living and working abroad raises some further challenges (and some delights) (Hearn, 2005); this (former experience) was especially so in the initial phase, when I experienced what is like to be the Other (Hearn, 2004b, 2007). At first, you are an unknown quantity; you have to show you are of at least “some use” in a new context. There are few loyalties to rely upon, though I had great support from some Finns, especially Swedish-speaking Finns, initially at Åbo Academy University. It took some years to get into the new systems, but then I was fortunate to gain permanent university jobs, first, in management and organization in Hanken School of

Economics, Finland, and, then, what was probably the first generic chair in critical studies on men and masculinities (so there my career was not impeded by my academic focus!) in Linköping University, Sweden, a post from which I recently moved to Örebro University to a faculty-wide position based in gender studies.

These various moves also changed my relation to the Field. For a start, the country I moved to, Finland, is a much more equal country than the UK (the ratio of income share of the richest 10% to the poorest 10% is 5.6 in Finland, 13.8 in the UK). At least there is not a taboo against equality, as in much UK politics, policy and practice. This is not to say that equality reigns; for example, there are major exclusions in Finland, around youth and ethnic minority unemployment, and continuing problems around alcohol, violence, and racism, for example. But the historical and geopolitical setting is certainly very different.

On the other hand, in the Nordic countries I see a reluctance to really say that creating greater gender equality might actually not to be in (white) men's interest, or at least some men's interests – there is a faith in the evolution of win-win situations: “all shall prosper”, “all shall be winners”, whether social democratic or neo-liberal. Everyone can agree that gender equality is a “good thing”, but for men to lose out, say, in terms of resources is not popular. In Finland, in 2006 the slogan, “gender equality needs men, men need gender equality”, was used by the government as part of making men and gender equality one of the priorities of its EU presidency. I still ambivalent about that slogan; it is clever, but it can be read in several ways.

For myself, in living abroad, I decided to be cautious about doing my own empirical work in the field in the new country, not least because of language. The question of language, and working between languages, has become central, with, for example, even amongst English, Finnish and Swedish, different notions of policy, politics and *politiikka/politik* (meaning both policy and politics), and of sex, gender, *kön*, *genus* (which in Swedish do *not* exactly parallel sex and gender) and *sukupuoli* (encapsulating sex, gender and sexuality in Finnish, a language without gendered pronouns). It is so arrogant to parachute into another country and then start telling the people there how to understand things; I have heard non-Nordic academics, often Anglos, coming to talk/tell about how “gender equality” is not such a straightforward concept, as if the locals have never given that thought before!

Instead I thought I could be more useful in supervising and managing research projects. I am in a profound paradox, with less direct fieldwork myself, but much more involvement with many doctoral and other research projects that include intense fieldwork. At the same time, less direct local fieldwork has led to more transnational fieldwork across and between countries. In this, I have had a lot of research cooperation, especially with women and some men, including in many national, regional and EU projects, and transnational “transinstitutional strategic initiatives” (Hearn, 2012b), with very many valued colleagues, especially in Central and Eastern Europe (but to discuss this in detail would need another article). Also, living in another country, I have become more and more convinced of the importance of the structural and the empirical. This is

different to my early days in academia, when I thought that more empirical work was not needed. I now think that anti-empirical orientation was arrogant.

One of the most difficult issues I have had to face is working out which men to trust and work with. Outside academia, in Finland my political allegiance is “Profeministimiehet” [Profeminist men] founded in 1999 as a breakaway from the Finnish White Ribbon Campaign, which we were dissatisfied with. This is now a registered organization, and has done some good things since; we joke: at least it has created a new word in Finnish. Within academia, it is more difficult. In some ways the growth of international research has made it easier, with a larger pool of men to work with who are trusted on both scholarly and political grounds. It is very easy to meet the opposite. It is important not to waste time trying to cooperate with those who are hostile to feminism.

Another indirect consequence of living abroad has been a lot of conferences, seminars and outreach. In October 2010 after giving a talk on men and ageing in Tromsø University I was kindly given by the organizers the book *Challenging Situatedness*. The last chapter by Karin Widerberg was of special interest. She writes about how feminist knowledge can be situated differently in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, and how such knowledge can be both differentially liberating and even differentially oppressive. She provides a qualified critique of some recent trends in knowledge, especially those that seem to separate themselves from situating themselves and situated, embodied lived experience outside academia. I found this resonant with my own thoughts and feelings. What’s the use of certain kinds of knowledge if it doesn’t stop men’s

violence and sexual violence? This situatedness comes to mind from being, working and living in different countries, as affirmed through postcolonial and transnational feminisms.

For me, the personal is work is political is theoretical. A key challenge is how to both name men as men, and at the same time, as a way of avoiding re-centring men, deconstruct and subvert men, and even consider the abolition of “men” as social category of power. This is important in knowledge creation; it involves working critically, reflexively and intersectionally, as well as reconstituting the relations of objectivity and subjectivity (Hearn, 1998a). For example, we may ask: to what extent does dominant “scientific” knowledge rely on *particular* forms of men’s subjectivity? To what extent does what is called “objectivity” flow from forms of subjectivity, made possible by the invisible labours, exclusions and marginalizations of malestream research and science? To address such questions suggests a political restructuring of academia that needs to be analysed, lived with, and critiqued. It also points to the recognition of the silences that still surround men, theorizing and academic knowledge, such as the lack of reflexive theorizing on men, both as authors of theory and as a social category. This is not simply a matter of technique in academic or theoretical work but speaks to the very heart of what counts *as theory*.

I have tried to follow this path, or at least be informed by it, in various researches, such as historical studies of organizations (Hearn, 1992), work on the hegemony of men (Hearn, 2004a) in relation to men’s violence (Hearn, 2012a), and autoethnographic embodied deconstructive writings (Hearn, 2010, 2011, 2012b). I think such agendas, simultaneously naming and subverting men, are increasingly in evidence in critical work on men and masculinities (e.g. Collier, 2010; Jackson, 1990; Thomas, 1998; Cornwall *et al.*, 2011; Pini and Pease, 2013). It is

very difficult to evaluate the success of these moves; in fact, having noted such attempts, I am not convinced that the relatively rapid development of the sub-field of studies on men and masculinities has been so wholly positive, as overall it has opened up a space for some not very critical discourse on men and masculinities.

All this is not just an academic question. The hegemony of men involves men being a taken-for-granted gender category in numerous everyday contexts. Men are formed by the gender system, and reproduce situation in individual and collective ways of being and doing. But this is not a closed system; it is contested and potentially unstable. If you are a man, please do not speak simply “as a man”. Take (the problem, power and hegemony of) men incredibly seriously, but do not take your own self “as a man” seriously at all. For budding male theorists of feminism/gender/queer/sexuality/equality/diversity/inclusion/intersectionality, who may separate themselves from situated, embodied lived experience in and outside academia, please consider – what is the use of knowledge if it doesn’t stop men’s violence and sexual violence?

Coda

On my office door in Helsinki I have two photographs – of me wearing a jacket created by the Finnish artist Eija-Liisa Ahtila (<http://www.parkettart.com/editions/68-edition-ahtila.html>). One photo shows me from the front with the words “VEIL OF IGNORANCE” woven into the arms and front of the jacket, in such a way that it can only be read in a mirror. The photo is taken into the mirror. The other photo is of me also in the jacket, but this time showing the back of the jacket (which I therefore couldn’t see whilst wearing it) which also says “VEIL OF IGNORANCE”.

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