

# GEXcel Work in Progress Report Volume XV

Proceedings from GEXcel Theme 9:  
Gendered Sexualed Transnationalisations,  
Deconstructing the Dominant: Transforming men,  
“centres” and knowledge/policy/practice  
Spring 2011

Edited by  
Alp Biricik and Jeff Hearn

Centre of Gendering Excellence – GEXcel

Towards a European Centre of Excellence in  
Transnational and Transdisciplinary Studies of

- Changing Gender Relations
- Intersectionalities
- Embodiment

Institute of Thematic Gender Studies:  
Department of Gender Studies, Tema Institute,  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Linköping University  
Division of Gender and Medicine,  
Faculty of Health Sciences, Linköping University

&

Centre for Feminist Social Studies (CFS), School of Humanities,  
Education and Social Sciences (HumES), Örebro University  
Gender Studies, School of Humanities,  
Education and Social Sciences (HumES), Örebro University

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Gendered Sexuated Transnationalisations, Deconstructing the Dominant:  
Transforming men, “centres” and knowledge/policy/practice  
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Institute of Thematic Gender Studies, LiU-ÖU  
– an inter-university institute, located at:

Department of Gender Studies  
Linköping University  
SE 581 83 Linköping, Sweden

Division of Gender and Medicine  
Department of Clinical and Experimental Medicine  
Faculty of Health Sciences  
SE 58185 Linköping, Sweden

&

Centre for Feminist Social Sciences (CFS)  
School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences (HumES)  
Örebro University  
SE 70182 Örebro, Sweden

Gender Studies  
School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences (HumES)  
Örebro University  
SE 70182 Örebro, Sweden

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*Nurseli Yeşim Sünbuloğlu*

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# Centre of Gender Excellence Gendering Excellence – GEXcel

Towards a European Centre of Excellence in  
Transnational and Transdisciplinary Studies of:

- Changing Gender Relations
- Intersectionalities
- Embodiment

*Nina Lykke,  
Linköping University, Director of GEXcel*

In 2006, the Swedish Research Council granted 20 million SEK to set up a Centre of Gender Excellence at the inter-university Institute of Thematic Gender Studies, Linköping University and Örebro University, for the period 2007-2011. Linköping University has added five million SEK as matching funds, while Örebro University has added three million SEK as matching funds.

The following is a short presentation of the excellence centre. For more information contact: Scientific Director of GEXcel, Professor Nina Lykke ([ninly@tema.liu.se](mailto:ninly@tema.liu.se)); GEXcel Research Coordinator, Dr. Ulrica Engdahl ([coordinator@genderexcel.org](mailto:coordinator@genderexcel.org)); GEXcel Research Coordinator, Dr. Gunnel Karlsson ([gunnel.karlsson@oru.se](mailto:gunnel.karlsson@oru.se)); or Manager, Gender Studies, Linköping, Berit Starkman ([berst@tema.liu.se](mailto:berst@tema.liu.se)).

## Institutional basis of GEXcel

Institute of Thematic Gender Studies, Linköping University and Örebro University

The institute is a collaboration between:

Department of Gender Studies, Linköping University;

Division of Gender and Medicine, Linköping University

&

Centre for Feminist Social Studies, Örebro University;

Gender Studies, Örebro University

## GEXcel board and lead-team

– a transdisciplinary team of Gender Studies professors:

- Professor Nina Lykke, Linköping University (Director) – Gender and Culture; background: Literary Studies
- Professor Anita Göransson, Linköping University – Gender, Organisation and Economic Change; background: Economic History
- Professor Jeff Hearn, Linköping University – Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities; background: Sociology and Organisation Studies
- Professor Liisa Husu, Örebro University – Gender Studies with a Social Science profile; background: Sociology
- Professor Emerita Anna G. Jónasdóttir, Örebro University – Gender Studies with a Social Science profile; background: Political Science, Social and Political Theory
- Professor Barbro Wijma, Linköping University – Gender and Medicine; background: Medicine and Associate Professor Katharina Swahnberg – Gender and Medicine; background: Medicine

## International advisory board

- Professor Karen Barad, University of California, St. Cruz, USA
- Professor Rosi Braidotti, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands
- Professor Raewyn Connell, University of Sydney, Australia
- Professor Emerita Kathleen B. Jones, San Diego State University, USA
- Professor Elzbieta Oleksy, University of Lodz, Poland
- Professor Berit Schei, Norwegian University of Technology, Trondheim, Norway
- Professor Birte Siim, University of Aalborg, Denmark



## Aims of GEXcel

- 1) To set up a temporary (five year) Centre of Gender Excellence (Gendering EXcellence: GEXcel) in order to develop innovative research on changing gender relations, intersectionalities and embodiment from transnational and transdisciplinary perspectives.
- 2) To become a pilot or developmental scheme for a more permanent Sweden-based European Collegium for Advanced Transnational and Transdisciplinary Gender Studies (CATSgender).

## A core activity of GEXcel 2007–2011

A core activity is a visiting fellows programme, organised to attract excellent senior researchers and promising younger scholars from Sweden and abroad and from many disciplinary backgrounds. The visiting fellows are taken in after application and a peer-reviewed evaluation process of the applications; a number of top scholars within the field are also invited to be part of GEXcel's research teams. GEXcel's visiting fellows receive grants from one week to 12 months to stay at GEXcel to do research together with the permanent staff of six Gender Studies professors and other relevant local staff.

The Fellowship Programme is concentrated on annually shifting thematic foci. We select and construct shifting research groups, consisting of excellent researchers of different academic generations (professors, post doctoral scholars, doctoral students) to carry out new research on specified research themes within the overall frame of changing gender relations, intersectionalities and embodiment.

## Brief definition of overall research theme of GEXcel

The overall theme of GEXcel research is defined as transnational and transdisciplinary studies of changing gender relations, intersectionalities and embodiment. We have chosen a broad and inclusive frame in order to attract a diversity of excellent scholars from different disciplines, countries and academic generations, but specificity and focus are also given high priority and ensured via annually shifting thematic foci.

The overall keywords of the (long!) title are chosen in order to indicate currently pressing theoretical and methodological challenges of gender research to be addressed by GEXcel research:

–By the keyword 'transnational' we underline that GEXcel research should contribute to a systematic transnationalizing of research on gender relations, intersectionalities and embodiment, and, in so doing, develop a reflexive stance vis-à-vis transnational travelling of ideas, theories

and concepts, and consciously try to overcome reductive one-country focused research as well as pseudo-universalising research that unreflectedly takes, for example ‘Western’ or ‘Scandinavian’ models as norm.

–By the keyword ‘changing’ we aim at underlining that it, in a world of rapidly changing social, cultural, economic and technical relations, is crucial to be able to theorise change, and that this is of particular importance for critical gender research due to its liberatory aims and inherent focus on macro, meso and micro level transformations.

–By the keyword ‘gender relations’, we aim at underlining that we define gender not as an essence, but as a relational, plural and shifting process, and that it is the aim of GEXcel research to contribute to a further understanding of this process.

–By the keyword ‘intersectionalities’, we stress that a continuous reflection on meanings of intersectionalities in gender research should be integrated in all GEXcel research. In particular, we will emphasise four different aspects: a) intersectionality as intersections of disciplines and main areas (humanities, social sciences and medical and natural sciences); b) intersectionality as intersections between macro, meso and micro level social analyses; c) intersectionality as intersections between social categories and power differentials organised around categories such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, age, nationality, profession, disability; d) intersectionality as intersections between major different branches of feminist theorising (for example, queer feminist theorising, Marxist feminist theorising, postcolonial feminist theorising etc.).

–Finally, by the keyword ‘embodiment’, we aim at emphasising yet another kind of intersectionality, which has proved crucial in current gender research – to explore intersections between discourse and materiality and between sex and gender.

## Specific research themes of GEXcel

The research at GEXcel focuses on a variety of themes. The research themes are the following:

### Theme 1: Gender, Sexuality and Global Change

On interactions of gender and sexuality in a global perspective.

Headed by Anna G. Jónasdóttir.

### Theme 2: Deconstructing the Hegemony of Men and Masculinities

On ways to critically analyse constructions of the social category ‘men’.

Headed by Jeff Hearn.

### Theme 3: Distinctions and Authorisation

On meanings of gender, class, and ethnicity in constructions of elites.  
Headed by Anita Göransson.

### Themes 4 and 5: Sexual Health, Embodiment and Empowerment

On new synergies between different kinds of feminist researchers' (e.g. philosophers' and medical doctors') approaches to the sexed body.  
Headed by Nina Lykke (Theme 5) and Barbro Wijma (Theme 4).

### Theme 6: Power Shifts and New Divisions in Society, Work and University

On the specificities of new central power bases, such as immaterial production and the rule of knowledge.  
Headed by Anita Göransson.

### Themes 7 and 8: Teaching Normcritical Sex – Getting Rid of Violence. TRANSDisciplinary, TRANSnational and TRANSformative Feminist Dialogues on Embodiment, Emotions and Ethics

On the struggles and synergies of socio-cultural and medical perspectives taking place in the three arenas sex education, critical sexology and violence.

Headed by Nina Lykke (Theme 8) and Barbro Wijma (Theme 7).

### Theme 9: Gendered Sexuated Transnationalisations, Deconstructing the Dominant: Transforming men, 'centres' and knowledge/policy/practice. On various gendered, sexuated, intersectional, embodied, transnational processes, in relation to contemporary and potential changes in power relations.

Headed by Jeff Hearn.

### Theme 10: Love in Our Time – a Question for Feminism

On the recent and growing interest in love as a subject for serious social and political theory among both non-feminist and feminist scholars.

Headed by Anna G. Jónasdóttir.

### Themes 11 and 12) Gender Paradoxes in Changing Academic and Scientific Organisation(s).

Theme on gender paradoxes in how academic and scientific organisations are changing and being changed.

Headed by Liisa Husu.

In addition, three cross-cutting research themes will also be organised:

- a) Exploring Socio-technical Models for Combining Virtual and Physical Co-Presence while doing joint Gender Research;
- b) Organising a European Excellence Centre – Exploring Models;
- c) Theories and Methodologies in Transnational and Transdisciplinary Studies of Gender Relations, Intersectionalities and Embodiment.

The thematically organised research groups are chaired by GEXcel's core staff of six Gender Studies professors, who together make up a transdisciplinary team, covering the humanities, the social sciences and medicine.

## Ambitions and visions

The fellowship programme of GEXcel is created with the central purpose to create transnational and transdisciplinary research teams that will have the opportunity to work together for a certain time – long enough to do joint research, do joint publications, produce joint international research applications and do other joint activities such as organising international conferences.

We will build on our extensive international networks to promote the idea of a permanent European institute for advanced and excellent gender research – and in collaboration with other actors seek to make this idea reality, for example, organisations such as AOIFE, the SOCRATES-funded network Athena and WISE, who jointly are preparing for a professional Gender Studies organisation in Europe.

We also hope that collaboration within Sweden will sustain the long-term goals of making a difference both in Sweden and abroad.

We consider GEXcel to be a pilot or developmental scheme for a more long-term European centre of gender excellence, i.e. for an institute- or collegium-like structure dedicated to advanced, transnational and transdisciplinary gender research, research training and education in advanced Gender Studies (GEXcel Collegium).

Leading international institutes for advanced study such as the Centre for the Study of Democracy at the University of California Irvine, and in Sweden The Swedish Collegium for Advanced Studies (SCAS at Uppsala University) have proved to be attractive environments and creative meeting places where top scholars in various fields from all over the world, and from different generations, have found time for reflective work and for meeting and generating new, innovative research. We would like to explore how this kind of academic structures that have

proved very productive in terms of advancing excellence and high level, internationally important and recognised research within other areas of study, can unleash new potentials of gender research and initiate a new level of excellence within the area. The idea is, however not just to take an existing academic form for unfolding of excellence potentials and fill it with excellent gender research. Understood as a developmental/pilot scheme for the GEXcel Collegium, GEXcel should build on inspirations from the mentioned units for advanced studies, but also further explore and assess what feminist excellence means in terms of both contents and form/structure.

We want to rework the advanced research collegium model on a feminist basis, including thorough critical reflections on meanings of gender excellence. What does it mean to gender excellence? How can we do it in even more excellent and feminist innovative ways?



# Editors' Foreword

The contributions to this volume are the result of the activities carried out within the frame of GEXcel's ninth research theme, *Gendered Sexualised Transnationalisations, Deconstructing the Dominant: Transforming men, 'centres' and knowledge/policy/practice*. The authors were among the presenters at the GEXcel Conference 'Men and Masculinities, Moving On Again! Transnationalising Flows, Technologies, Institutions, Theory' held on 25th–27th May, 2011 (see Appendix 2). Some of the conference presentations will be published in GEXcel Work-in-Progress Report 18.

This volume is of a work-in-progress character, and thus the texts presented here are to be elaborated further. The reader should also be aware that, as this is a report of working papers, some minor editorial modifications have been made to some papers, but the language of those contributed by non-native speakers of English has not been specifically revised.

We are grateful to all participants and presenters, to the chairs and rapporteurs of the workgroups, and also thank Berit Starkman, Claire Tucker and John Dickson for all their assistance in the arrangements for Theme 9 and the preparation of the conference from which this volume has been produced.

Alp Biricik and Jeff Hearn









# Chapter 1

## Gendered Sexualed Transnationalisations, Deconstructing the Dominant: Transforming men, “centres” and knowledge/ policy/practice – Introduction to the Research Theme

*Jeff Hearn*

*Linköping University, Sweden*

The GEXcel project was launched in May 2007 (see Volume 1 of this Work-in-Progress Report Series). The first theme, *Gender, Sexuality and Global Change*, was the main focus during the academic year 2007–2008 (<http://www.genderexcel.org/node/96>, also see Volumes 2, 3 and 4). In developing that theme, Anna Jónasdóttir wrote:

“The kind of feminist social and political theory I wish to promote in this theme needs to take men (in their various relationships to women as well as with other men) theoretically more seriously than has been common among feminist theorists. Also, since Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities has developed into a field of its own, a dialogue between the two fields would be good for both.” (Jónasdóttir, 2008:15)

Planning for the second theme, *Deconstructing the Hegemony of Men and Masculinities: Contradictions of Absence* (<http://www.genderexcel.org/node/101>; also see Volumes 5, 6 and 7), began during the first theme. The experience of these research themes has strongly informed the development of this research theme, Theme 9, *Gendered Sexualed Transnationalisations, Deconstructing the Dominant: Transforming men, “centres” and knowledge/policy/practice*. Thus this theme builds on these developments around the gendering of globalisation, sexuality and globalisation, the development of historical materialist political economy, and indeed critical studies on men and masculinities, along with interlinks and synergies with other GEXcel research themes.

## Deconstructing the hegemony of men and masculinities

Within Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities recent conceptual and empirical uses of hegemony, as in ‘hegemonic masculinity’ in the analysis of masculinities, have been subject to qualified critiques for more than 15 years (Hearn, 1996b). In keeping with this, the Theme 2 programme examined the shift from masculinity to men, to focus on ‘the hegemony of men’ (Hearn, 2004a). It addressed the double complexity that men are both a social category formed by the gender system and collective and individual agents, often dominant agents. It examined how the category “men” is used in national and transnational gender systems. These uses are both intersectional and embodied in specific ways.

Dominant uses of the social category of men have often been restricted. This has occurred in terms of, for example, class, ethnicity/racialisation and (hetero)sexuality, as explored in, for example, postcolonial theory and queer theory. Less examined is the construction of the category of men in terms of assumptions about: age, ageing and (dis)ability; nationality/national context; and bodily presence. Indeed, there have been a number of neglected or missing elements in some recent debates on and applications of hegemony to men and masculinities, including: relations of hegemony to “patriarchy”; relations of hegemony to “bodies”; relations of hegemony to the (changing) “form” of the social, cultural, and indeed the virtual; and relations of hegemony to moves away from notion of fundamental outlook of ‘society’ (Bocock, 1986), nation and the nation-state to the growing importance of the “transnational”.

Thus the Theme 2 programme examined how the hegemony of men is being (re)defined in relation to three intersectional, embodied arenas: in terms of problematising hegemony in practice, by way of these neglected arenas: first, (older) ageing and bodies, (dis)abilities; second, virtuality; and, third, transnationalisations. In each case these are arenas that can be seen as forms of absent presence, by marginalisation by age/death, (dis)embodiment, and disconnection from nation, respectively. Each presents reinforcements, challenges and contradictions to hegemonic categorisations of men. In each case these are arenas that can be seen as forms of “absent presence” (Hearn, 1998), by marginalisation by age/disability/death, (dis)embodiment, and disconnection from nation. Moreover, the theme of ‘contradictions of absence’ referred to these three arenas in which absence of some men (or aspects thereof) may both, and contradictorily, reinforce hegemony of men and potentially at least subvert that hegemony; absence acts as both a source of power and a way of undermining power. In the course of the development of Theme 2 the third of these sub-themes was renamed to be more precise and clear in

its attention to transnationalisations and transnational men (see Work in Progress Volume 7). Thus this sub-theme from Theme 2 in turn developed to become the focus of Theme 9.

## Gendered Sexualed Transnationalisations, Deconstructing the Dominant: Transforming men, “centres” and knowledge/policy/practice

Theme 9 focuses on a gendered, sexualed approach to transnationalisations, with a special interest in men and other “centres”. ‘Sexualed’ in this context refers to having meaning or structure in relation to sexuality, and is thus broader than some uses of both ‘sexual’ and ‘sexualised’ (Hearn and Parkin, 1987/1995). The theme simultaneously attends to deconstructing the dominant, that is making the One(s) the Other(s) (Hearn, 1996a). Dominant categories, that are themselves subject to gendered sexualed transnationalisations, are the “centre” of critique and deconstruction. More specifically, the theme is concerned to examine how the processes of transforming men, and other “centres”, and the implications of this for knowledge, policy and practice. Indeed to express the close relations of knowledge, policy and practice, this aspect is constructed as knowledge/policy/practice, rather than as three separate realms of activity.

Transnational processes operate beyond nations, across nations, between nations, and within nations. Various forms of transnationalisations, coupled with postcoloniality and global processes, have created new and changing material and representational hierarchies. This GEXcel research theme focuses on these various gendered, sexualed, intersectional, embodied, transnational processes, in relation to contemporary and potential changes in power relations (Ong, 1999; Westwood and Phizacklea, 2000; Pries, 2001; Pessar and Mahler, 2001; Hearn, 2004b; Vertovec, 2009). Importantly, it may be noted that transnationalisation refers to two different, if related, processes:

*moving across or between* two or more somethings, in this case, across national boundaries or between nations, as in migration or policy negotiations between sovereign states;

*metamorphosing*, problematizing, blurring, transgressing, breaking down, even dissolving something(s), nations or national boundaries – in the most extreme case, leading to the demise of the nation or national boundaries, as in blurrings of identity in migration or even blurring of policy responsibilities or responses between states (Hearn, 2004b)

Overall, Theme 9 draws on: feminist/profeminist studies; critical studies on men and masculinities (that are: by women and men, critical, explicitly on men in gender relations and intersectionality, historical, cultural, relational, materialist, deconstructive, anti-essentialist, placed within feminist theory and feminist studies, not a separate area), studies of globalisation, transnationalisation, postcolonialism; transnational feminisms (Grewal and Kaplan, 1994; Mohanty, 2003; Desai, 2006) and “Southern theory” (Connell, 2008; Meekosha, 2008). In one sense, this process can be understood as an attempt to apply some of the insights of transnational feminisms to men (Ouzgane and Coleman, 1998; Morrell and Swart, 2005) and ‘the political North’ and other “centres”. The One(s) are made into the Other(s) (Hearn, 1996a). These reversals and transformations are not only about the much cited need to relate, or “integrate”, theory and practice, but concern more complex relations of knowledge/policy/practice.

More precisely, this research theme addresses the relations between the construction of what may appear as “general” or generic social processes, and the deconstruction of what may appear as “specific” forms of the dominant. Such dynamics, and contradictions, are examined through and in terms of the possibilities of transformation and social change, rather than static description. In particular, the possible transforming of men and other “centres” is highlighted.

Transnationalisations take many forms and have many implications for men and gender relations (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994; Zalewski and Palpart, 1998; Hearn and Parkin, 2001; Griffin, 2005; Hearn and Pringle, 2006; Hearn, 2006; Esplen and Greig, 2008; Palpart and Zalewski 2008; Donaldson et al., 2009). They are the most acutely contradictory of processes, with multiple forms of absence for both men in power and those dispossessed through, for example, forced migration. Multiple transnationalisations problematise taken-for-granted national and organisational contexts, and men therein in many ways. Transnational processes occur in/through multiple transnational sites and arenas.

One key example of the impact of transnationalisation is transnational business corporations and governmental organisations, and the importance of managers in transnational organisations for the formation and reproduction of gender orders in organisations and societies. There is an almost total dominance of men at top levels of transnational corporate management, as well as sharp gender-segregations in their labour forces. In light of the globalisation of business life and expansion of transnational organisations, the concept of “transnational business masculinity” describes a new form of masculinity among globally mobile managers. Connell (1998) sees this as marked by “increasing

egocentrism, very conditional loyalties (even to the corporation), and a declining sense of responsibility for others (except for purposes of image-making).” (Connell, 1998: 16). It differs from “traditional bourgeois masculinity by its increasingly libertarian sexuality, with a growing tendency to commodify relations with women.” On the other hand, other studies have found other ways in which transnational men managers live (Reis, 2004; Hearn et al., 2009). Studies on senior managers, overwhelmingly men, are necessary to understand how the hegemony of men is reproduced and changed globally.

Another important aspect of transnationalisations are information and communication technologies (ICTs), virtualisation processes, image transfer and circulation, that in turn present sites for contestations of hegemony in terms of bodily presence/absence of men. The focus here is the positive, negative and contradictory effects of certain uses of ICTs upon men’s, and women’s, sexuality and sexual violences, as men act as producers and consumers of virtuality, represent women in virtual media, and are themselves being represented, even made dispensible (Hearn, 2006). These structural and agentic differentiations, with and without force, suggest multiply differentiated (trans)patriarchies (Hearn, 2009) that are stable and changing, fixed and flexible. Charting the particular, changing forms of these rigidities and movements of and around the taken-for-granted social category of men may be a means of interrogating the possibility of the abolition of ‘men’ as a significant social category of power. The implications of ICTs for the reformulation of social space and public (sexual) domains are examined.

Other transnational sites and arenas include:

- global finance, and the masculinisation of capital market trading and business media;
- militarism and the arms trade;
- international sports industries and their gender segregation;
- migration;
- sex trade, and sexualisation in the global mass media;
- transportation, water, environment, energy;
- knowledge production.

This research theme is specified through three overlapping sub-themes. The first two consider the implications of transnationalisations, applied, first, to the hegemony of men and other privileged “centres”, and, second, to knowledge production, including virtual knowledge production. The third sub-theme highlights new developments in critical studies on

men and masculinities in the light of these and other processes of substantive and theoretical change:

- (i) *the impact of transnationalisations in changing, critiquing and deconstructing privileged “centres”, including the hegemony of men.* It addresses the contradictory implications of transnationalisations for new patriarchal forms (“transnational patriarchies” or “transpatriarchies”) and the (de)construction of the hegemony of men’ and other privileged “centres”, such as “Europe”, “the North”, “white people”. This may, for example, include the interplay of men’s transnational privilege and transnational threat to (some aspects of) men, or other parallel processes.
- (i) *transnationalisations of knowledge, knowledge production and knowledge communities, including virtual knowledge communities.* This includes deconstructing dominant hierarchies of knowledge, representation and different sensory media, for example, changes in the relative valuing of the written word, spoken word, and the visual. This is important for the marginalisation, probably increasing marginalisation, of certain social groups in multicultural contexts of knowledge. The transnationalisation of knowledge production also has repercussions for both everyday ‘lived realities’ and the political development of global or transnational (pro)feminism more generally.
- (i) *new developments in deconstructing the hegemony of men and masculinities in terms of age/ageing, embodiment, virtuality and transnationalisations.* This sub-theme is a specific development of the work in GEXcel Theme 2, Deconstructing the Hegemony of Men and Masculinities. It addresses new developments in both substantive studies and theorisations on men and masculinities, and the sub-field of critical studies on men and masculinities. In both cases major emphasis is placed on positive critiques of existing frameworks, and of possible separations between this sub-field and feminist, queer and other critical gender and sexuality scholarship more generally. In this analyses, men may be subject to undoing, Othering and potential abolition as a powerful social category.

Applications from doctoral and postdoctoral scholars, focusing on one or more of the sub-themes above, were invited to become part of the research theme and the research environment. The selected Theme 9 Visiting Scholars were:

Sofia Aboim, Postdoc, Lisbon University, Portugal

Chris Beasley, Dr, University of Adelaide, Australia

Marina Blagojevic, Dr, Altera AB, Hungary, and Institute of Criminological Research, Serbia (not present at the conference)

Richard Collier, Professor, Newcastle University, UK

Karen Gabriel, Postdoc, Delhi University, India (not present at the conference)

Tonya Haynes, PhD candidate, University of the West Indies

Helen Longlands, PhD candidate, Institute of Education, London University, UK

Nil Mutluer, PhD candidate, Central European University, Hungary, and Fatih University, Turkey.

Marie Nordberg, Postdoc, Karlstad University, Sweden (Open Position)

Winifred Poster, Postdoc, Washington University, St Louis, USA

Ernesto Vasquez del Aguila, Postdoc, University College Dublin, Ireland

In addition, other Open Position Scholars were: Dr Tetyana Bureychak, Lviv University, Ukraine, and Dr Richard Howson, University of Wollongong, Australia. These visiting scholars alone in different ways are from or are based in Australia, Barbados, Chile, Hungary, India, Ireland, Portugal, Serbia, Sweden, Turkey, UK, Ukraine, and USA. The work of Theme 9 also builds upon a substantial pre-existing body of work and network of internal scholars at Linköping University within the Research Group on Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities formed in 2006. A substantial core of these researchers has been Internal Theme 2 Members (see Appendix 1). These have been supplemented by a group of invited Swedish External Affiliates of Theme 9 (see Appendix 1). In addition, numerous others have joined the events organised through the Theme. The Theme involved a Symposium held in January 2011, 'Re-thinking Transnational Dominance: Men and Other Creatures', (See Appendix 2), and a Conference, 'Men and Masculinities Moving On Again! Transnationalising Flows, Technologies, Institutions, Theory' in May 2011 (See Appendix 3). The latter was attended by citizens/participants from Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, the Netherlands, Turkey, UK, Ukraine, and USA. It was organised with plenary sessions and four workgroups on: movements and flows; institutions and organisations; technologies, virtualities and representations; and theorising and methodologies. Three plenaries were organised with three short presentations in each one on: What do you think are the key theoretical questions on transnational approaches to men and masculinities in relation to:

- movements and flows
- institutions and organizations; or
- technologies, virtualities and representations?

Reports have also been compiled of the individual statements from the GEXcel Scholars on their visits. These are all available in the GEXcel website.

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# Workshop A

## Movements and Flows

### Rapporteurs' report

The Movements and Flows workshop, chaired by Richard Howson and Nil Mutluer, was, during the three days of the conference, engaged in a number of critical discussions that were raised by the several papers included in this group. Although different topics were presented by the participants – ranging from migration flows and diasporas to crossborder displacement and narratives of the nation, from men's movements and transnational organizations to fatherhood images as a constituent of the ideology of the new man – the need to further reflect on concepts such as transnationality/transnationalization/transnationalism and the ways in which these processes challenge the theoretical and methodological ways of researching men and masculinities gave the group a common ground for a lively and extremely valuable debate. Of major importance to the richness of our ongoing discussion was that the group included people from ten different countries and with different disciplinary backgrounds, research interests, theoretical concerns and methodological approaches. Without doubt, an umbrella theme such as movements and flows comprised a variety of perspectives and subjects at the same time that it raised a number of thought-provoking points for further consideration.

### Theorizing transnationality

By and large, the main question that, in one way or another, cuts across all the papers reflects a degree of uneasiness with the plural and often quite fuzzy meanings of the transnational: what do we really mean when we use the terms transnationality, transnationalism or transnationalization? We agreed that it is necessary to move further in the field and provide new insights that might help us to conceptualize the 'transnational' in order to capture the whole variety of meanings and processes taking place under this umbrella-concept, which may include diasporas and networks; subjectivities and identities; cultural reproduction; material/capitalist circuits/ chains of commodities; a number of forms of political engagement (e.g. social movements), and even the circulation of ideas, concepts and knowledge. In this line of reasoning, a few problems must be dealt with, first and foremost, if we want to avoid using transnational/transnationalism/ crossborder dynamics and other related terms interchangeably and without providing any thorough definition of each one

of them. Indeed, there is no canonical discourse in transnationalization / transnationalism studies, though we may broadly relate it to the analysis of the social organization and consequences of the complex interconnectivity of crossborder networks in multiple fields of social practice. Hence, one important suggestion to clarify these concepts is to tentatively differentiate transnationalism from transnationalization.

Transnationalism can be understood as a concept, and broadly a theoretical perspective, that allows us to render importance to the entanglements between different levels and scales (the national, the international, the transnational), thus avoiding the old trap of standardization and non-critical assimilation of the Other. In short, as most scholars in the field would agree, transnationalism represents the descriptor/definition of a social category/reality while transnationalisation represents the process that is created and operates on people in particular situations. Transnationalization is thus intended to be operative in research enabling us to capture the wholerange of movements that are part of present day societies across the globe. This involves recasting movements as encompassing flows of different types: things, people, commodities, social movements, ideas and concepts. The major challenge is therefore to analyse processes of transnationalization and the conditions – often unconscious and unintended – in which they occur and generate a transnational social reality, that is to say, transnationalism. Whether we analyse migrations, social movements, international relations, and so forth, from a transnational perspective, it is crucial to go beyond a mere description and fully grasp the whole variety of processes (and, for instance, their consequences for identities and forms of belonging or dislocation) that trigger and uphold transnationalism. Without such a distinction we would be conflating different concepts and realities, and even losing sight of the many-sided flows that are a constituent of transnationalism.

In addition, the further conceptualization of these terms might help us to critically sort out complex notions such as ‘global’ or ‘globalization’, whether cultural or economic. In spite of referring to different dynamics, which are normally associated with a higher degree of (western-centric) universalization and a certain forgetfulness of the nation-state – and therefore of difference as a key historical process – we believe that is important to explore the connections between the global and the transnational. A number of arguments can and should be further explored in research. On the one hand, it is vital to understand to what extent processes of globalization influence the frequency, intensity, form, scope, formation or emergence of transnational networks, ties, activities and actors (individual, collective or state/institutional). On the other hand, exploring the retroactive effects of transnationalism/transnationalization

upon the global/globalization (for instance, through the acknowledgment of the role of the nation and its actors as sometimes protagonists of resistance and creative transformation) implies that our understanding of the 'global' becomes more complex, namely, in what concerns issues of power and inequality. Bringing gender, and particularly men and masculinities, into this field, which is here our main challenge, will certainly help us to broaden our views on transnationalism /transnationalization vis-à-vis the global and globalization.

## The space and time of the nation

Secondly, we questioned the role of the national level. A number of papers focused on the national level (whether analyzing the internal displacement of people, political struggles, social/men's movements or discourses, and so forth). However, even if the national level should not be completely overshadowed by the transnational (as the critical view of the connections within, between and across nations), exploring the links between national and transnational was of paramount importance. In fact, the nation has repeatedly come into the debate. We can perhaps understand and problematize the nation-state concept – and inherently the transnational, which implicates still the idea of nation – in a number of ways. From this perspective, it is vital, as we have agreed, to equate the nation not only with geography and territorialization but also with time. It is essential to develop a notion of nation-time that may complement the nation-space, that is to say, a perspective that allows bringing in historicity and temporality into the debate. To a great extent, the alleged fixity of a number of crossborder movements (e.g. migration processes) ought to be conceived as involving time-space connections insofar as they may be temporary or enacted in different time-spans and also comprise a multiplicity of geographical flows. In other words, there are multiple forms, in space and time, of (de)territorialization.

## Migrations and flows

Migration issues are centre-stage to the above-mentioned questions, as well shown in a number of papers. The debate generated around migration flows led us to formulate a rather critical view on assimilation and the nation-state. Closely following the aforementioned idea of temporariness, we believe that assimilation as a concept, a practice and a policy must be reformulated in order to respond to new demands and social processes. Migrations can hardly be linearly conceived as the dislocation of people from one national context to another, where they will be assimilated. Quite the opposite, the deterritorialization of people must

be connected to a deeper reflection on the politics of belonging / being / absence. The dislocation of people must also be related to power and more specifically to gender power. The ways through which the 'making of one into the other' often involves change but also the remaking of hierarchies through the enactment of gender power is extremely important to the critical study of men. Likewise, processes of migration, or in better terms of dislocation and circulation, apply also to ideas and concepts. As a result, the circulation of ideas and concepts, and their consequences, must be carefully analysed.

One very good example of the circulation of 'ideas' can be found in social and men's movements, whether we speak of fathers' movements, pro-feminist or conservative organizations throughout the world. Even if these movements are organized at the national level they involve ideas and concepts that are of a transnational kind. But, furthermore, they bring in the political dimension of movements and flows to the arena of men and masculinities. Different actors, claims for citizenship, institutions and nations may be involved in this remaking (or rescaling) of the politics of gender. As a result, we are in need of a transnational approach to grasp the whole range of political organizations and their effects at the national level. Indeed, it is important to further study the practices of men and the imaginaries of masculinity beyond the nation-state and take notice of the consequences of the transnational rescaling of a number of social processes, which are deeply connected to the (re)making of the gender order.

## Men and/or masculinities?

Another important remark must bring men and masculinities into the debate. We agreed that it is necessary to further reflect upon the connections between transnationalization processes, whether materially-grounded, subjective or discursive, and gender power, particularly in regard to men and to masculinities. Two main problems were raised in our workshop: firstly, the importance of acknowledging hegemonic masculinity as a transnational concept, which can be appropriated and used in different ways and applied to different social contexts. In this sense, hegemonic masculinities may be conceived as an 'open concept'. Secondly, we also believe it is worthwhile to conceptualize men and masculinities as not necessarily tied together. The transnational stance made it clear that we should think of men and masculinities separately (and as moving separately in the form of real people or transnational symbols, for instance). We have then to deal with different concepts and realities, even if they are related to each other.

## Methodological issues and knowledge production

All the above mentioned issues raise both methodological (how to study men and masculinities and transnationality / transnationalization) and epistemological questions (how to monitor the knowledge that we use in research, such as the northern concepts and categories often employed) and, more importantly, in which ways should we manage the knowledge that is produced and control, for instance, the effects of its reinterpretation in different social settings. The methodological concerns discussed in our workgroup have perhaps linkages to the other workshops, but we have agreed that they should be mentioned given the relevance of methodology to our debate. In fact, we have covered a number of topics, namely:

- the epistemology of research and the questions of power, insofar as it is vital to be aware of the researcher's position; for instance, the consequences of women researching men (but also of men researching men) came across the debate repeatedly;
- as a result of our debate on methodological aspects we awarded great importance to reflexivity, as a means to obtain reliable and valid data. In truth, we need to be aware of what kind of knowledge we are producing.

Finally, we would like to mention that throughout the workshop sessions, there was, within our group, an enthusiastic and challenging discussion on all the above topics. The democratic spirit of the debate between all participants highly contributed to widen our views on the subject at hand, and we believe that this lively environment, where a range of perspectives and empirical objects were presented, was extremely beneficial to the theoretical quality of our critical discussion.

Rapporteurs: Sofia Aboim, Liza Mügge, Richard Howson and Nil Mutter on behalf of the workgroup







# Chapter 2

## Transnationalism and Masculinities: Indian Transmigrant Students in Australia<sup>1</sup>

*Richard Howson*

*University of Wollongong, Australia*



### Introduction

Transnationalism and gender (masculinities) are important, if often invisible aspects of Australia's broad migration program. Both are also particularly significant to Australia's international education industry, which depends in no small part, on effective migration policy and practice, particularly since the recent coupling of the overseas student program with the skilled migration program (Koleth, 2010: 4). International education is Australia's largest services export contributing \$18.6 billion in export income to the Australian economy in 2009 (AEI, 2010[a]). Of this \$18.6 billion the vast majority (\$18.0 billion) comes from the financial contributions of students who have migrated 'temporarily' into Australia for the purpose of study. The growth in these temporary arrangements expose international students as a particularly important set of transnational migrants, transmigrants, or those people who live their lives across borders (see Grillo, 2007: 200).

To date, the application of transnationalism conceptually and practically in the migration literature has almost exclusively looked at transmigrants as those who have moved from one country to another with the intention of 'permanency'. The notion of permanency in much of the migration literature very often translates into processes of stability and fixity across both space and time leading to assumptions about assimilation and integration as key aspects of effective settlement. However, while transnational work within this field has begun a critique of these 'nation-time' processes with its modernist and unilinear assumptions

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1 This paper has a base in an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant Application submitted in March 2011 with other applicants: Michiel Baas, Chris Beasley, Michael Flood and Jeff Hearn. Any errors or inconsistencies in this paper are the fault of the author.

(Harney and Baldassar, 2007: 192) it has largely ignored the student transmigrant experience.

International students are a particularly problematic group with respect to these normative processes. Sawir et.al. (2008) point to this through surveys that detail explicit feelings of 'loneliness' as a result of *inter alia*, a lack of friendships, networks and cross-cultural relations. Migration policy allocates resources to programs that assist normative nation-time assumptions in permanent settlement. However, for student transmigrants similar access is reduced because their settlement experience is marked by 'temporariness' and 'in-betweenness' (Grillo, 2007; Baas, 2010). This temporariness and in-betweenness is made all the more important to overcome for two key reasons. The first relates to the shifting nexus between education success and the potential for permanent residency (see Baas, 2010; Birrell and Healy, 2010; Koleth, 2010 and also Hawthorne, 2010); and the second relates to the situation that Grillo (2007: 200) points to in which transmigrants do not experience a singular expected trajectory towards settlement but rather a multiplicity of *potential* trajectories [my emphasis].

This paper attempts to briefly outline some of the issues that are raised when consideration is given to the temporariness of student transmigration. Further, it does so in a way that recognises a key shortcoming of early analyses that is, a lack of focus on gender and in particular, masculinities (see Grillo, 2007: 200). It begins with an examination of the traditional definition of transnationalism that is, as 'the process by which transmigrants, through their daily activities, *forge* and *sustain* multi-stranded social, economic, and political relations that *link together* their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders' (Basch et al., 1994: 6). A key implication of which is an ungendered assumption of permanency in transmigrationary settlement. The aim then is to introduce into the transnational frame the nexus temporariness-gendered-transnationalism through which it may be possible to expose some of the problematics of transmigrant's liminality.

## Indian students as transmigrants

Transmigrant students must relocate and engage a process of settlement, often for short periods of up to 3-4 years. Following Baas (2010) and notwithstanding the changes to policy towards a more 'demand-driven' model for permanent residency (Koleth, 2010: 11-12), many Indian students seek permanent residency. Making the 3-4 years that they are in Australia studying, working and socialising formative but also uncertain given that transmigration opens up a multiplicity of trajectories

with respect to identities, ambitions and successes. This resonates with Bauböck's (2003: 700-701) argument that transnational migration involves the development of dynamic and often unstable identifications and practices that are part of the transmigrant's complex membership across both the source as well as the host country.

The Australian international education industry operates within a global marketplace and in November 2010 enrolled 617,171 students with 326,911 commencing and entering into Australian communities. The greatest source country was China with 27.1% share of the whole international student group, followed by India with a 16.2% share. However, India contributed the largest number of male students with 56,900 or 75.5% of all Indian students. China, by comparison, was the source for 46,070 male students or 47.6% of all Chinese students (AEI 2010 [b]). Notwithstanding the economic importance of this data, the sociological implications are also significant in so far as it crystallises the need to recognise the gendered, even masculine, nature of the student transmigrant population and then, the implications this has on the effective development of settlement strategies not just in sites of learning but also within the broader community. A lack of attention particularly to the gendered nature of transmigration has the potential to negatively affect the student experience, the growth of the Australian international education industry and the broader Australian community (see Deumert et al., 2005). This potential was realised in 2009 and 2010 through a series of violent attacks upon Indian (male) students. The situation prompted 'intense diplomatic efforts' to salvage Australia's international education reputation as well as various local responses that included the launch of taskforces on international student safety and wellbeing, development of a National International Student Strategy and a number of reviews on international student education. What remains unclear though, is how these male transmigrant students initially imagined themselves in Australia in terms security, accommodation, opportunity and success but equally important, how they considered their (gendered) identity, practices and relations as temporary transmigrants.

## Transmigrant masculinities

Gender and in particular masculinities have been identified as important, though often overlooked, factors in the transmigrant experience particularly within the processes of establishing new and complex memberships within and across societies (Pessar and Mahler, 2003; Grillo, 2010). In recent years, a relatively small number of researchers have explored men and masculinities within the framework of globalisation (see Connell and Wood, 2005; Beasley, 2008; Elias and Beasley, 2009).

However, there has been almost no specific attention given to examining transnationalism and masculinities. Connell (2005: 9) points out that research in a global context on men and masculinities as well as, men as subjects, remain in their infancy. This research emphasis is of particular importance to national industries such as international education where the growing interconnectedness of the world gives rise to ever increasing and diverse flows of individuals, money, commodities, images and ideas across previously less permeable borders (Mahler, 2007: 64). Nevertheless, in Australian migration policy much of what passes as settlement strategies remain 'macro' in focus and thereby seek to address national institutional issues such as, welfare, housing, health, security and work. However, much less developed are strategies that address 'micro' or personal issues that bring cross-cultural understandings of factors such as, gender and masculinities into play that give depth to the desired focus on self-reliance, personal skills and ability to engage mainstream services (see Hearn and Howson, 2009: 49).

Masculinities theory shows that to better understand men, it is important to understand the relationships between men and masculinities (see Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 841). In this transmigratory context, empowerment is key to the relation between men and masculinities and is enabled through men's engagement with certain hegemonic masculine practices and identities such as those organised under the rubric: success. The importance of success for men is implied in the arguments of Mincer (1978) and Tram Le (2006) where men are recognised as gaining the most from migration because it is they who usually engage hegemonic processes and through this engagement work towards success. Masculine identity then, assumes a crucial role in transmigratory experiences because of the emphasis given to building and realising the nexus temporariness/success/permanency. As Connell and Wood (2005: 358) asked: 'what holds people in high-stress, unhealthy, insecure jobs?' So too, one might ask: what motivates men to locate themselves for substantial periods of time in stressful, difficult, lonely, unhealthy and often insecure situations? The answer to both is the aspiration and belief in success manifested as money and power.

Thus success for the male transmigrant student, within a frame of temporary settlement, is not just temporally condensed but also socially magnified. This situation has significant outcomes for the construction and operation of the transmigrant student's sense of masculinity and identity. However, as Kimmel (2001) argues, while gender is embedded as an axiom in global and transnational processes it curiously renders masculinity invisible. This is sustained by a scholarship that when it does specifically bring gender into play it has tended to concentrate on

women as subjects of discrimination and marginalisation (see Pessar and Mahler, 2003: 814). Further, this approach exposes the positioning of men and masculinities as the universal norm, standing in for all subjects (see Kimmel, 2001). A consequence of this is that transmigrant men are assumed to unproblematically engage normative nation-time processes of assimilation. This is an assumption that on the basis of the recent violence, as discussed above, cannot be made. However, by recognising the effects that temporariness has on success and the importance of the latter for men, it becomes possible to shed new light on the multiple trajectories within transnationalism that impact on the male subject and in turn, give visibility to masculinity as a key trajectory. Further, as has occurred in analyses of race and ethnicity, gender analyses have begun to consider the particular (rather than universal) positioning of men and masculinities working together with the idea that men/masculinities is always 'relational' (see Connell, 2002: 54). This is of particular importance for transnationalism and masculinity because it requires not just consideration of relations and practices between men and men, and men and women but also, the relations and practices of men/masculinities between and across source and host countries and cultures.

Even more importantly, it sustains the argument Bhabha (1990) makes that identity does not emerge and operate in imaginary 'third spaces'. Similarly, transmigrant male student's identities and practices do not exist outside of the national context. The notion that men operate in a space apart from hegemony, or that transnationalism is effectively a deterritorialising process producing 'liberatory' and 'boundless' possibilities in a new land, underestimates the hegemonic imperatives imposed by that new land (Smith and Guarnizo, 2007: 11). Similarly, the idea that men move seamlessly and effectively between lands and cultures with the freedom to carry and practice masculinities as a deterritorialised identity and without concern is problematic. This raises the issue of the ways in which specific men navigate between the cosmopolitan and the local, between supposedly unbounded and bounded conceptions of masculinities. Recent debates around multiculturalism within Australian politics (Hearn and Howson, 2009: 53; Bowen, 2010) signal that Australia's own position on how it accommodates difference is far from clear.

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# Chapter 3

## The Male Domination of Transnational Migrant Politics

*Liza Mügge*

*University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Over the past decade the attention for gender in migration studies has been rising slowly (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999; Yuval-Davis, Anthias and Kofman, 2005; Donato, Gabaccia, Holdaway, Manalansan and Pessar, 2006; Schrover, Van der Leun, Lucassen, and Quispel 2008). Female migrants are no longer solely studied as passive followers of husbands and fathers, but as actors with agency of their own (Brettell, 2003: 153-196). Increasingly, the entire migration process is perceived as a gendered phenomenon (Donato et al., 2006: 6 citing several studies). Also in the subfield of studies on transnationalism, and more specifically its social dimension – think of transnational families, households and marriages – gender gradually becomes more integrated (Levitt, 2001; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007: 137-139).

Gender, however, is also significant outside these typically ‘female’ spaces (Mahler, 1998: 82-87; Al-Ali, 2002; Vertovec, 2009: 64-66). Nevertheless, in most recent ‘state of the art’ and ‘taking stock’ special journal issues and edited volumes on migrant transnationalism and diaspora, full contributions or chapters on gender are absent (e.g. Fibbi and D’Amato, 2008; Khagram and Levitt, 2008; Martiniello and Lafleur, 2008; Pries, 2008; Ben-Rafael, Sternberg, Bokser Liwerant and Gorny, 2009; Vertovec, 2009; Bauböck and Faist, 2010). Equally, gender goes unnoticed in empirical studies on diaspora- and transnational migrant politics (Shain, 1999; Ögelman, 2003; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Sheffer, 2003; for an exception see Aliefendioğlu, 2004; Brand, 2006; Esman, 2009). Confirming this pattern, gender is not considered in general studies on migrants’ political participation and their organizational networks in the receiving country (Van Heelsun, 2002; Schrover and Vermeulen, 2005; Vermeulen, 2006; Yurdakul, 2009). This paper argues

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1 I thank Anja van Heelsun for making the database of Turkish organizations in the Netherlands available.

that there are good reasons to bring gender into the study of transnational migrant and diaspora politics. After a short literature review, I analyse how transnational and diaspora politics of Turks and Kurds in the Netherlands is gendered on an institutional level. I will conclude with suggestions for future research.

## Bringing gender into the study of transnational migrant politics

The fact that gender is systematically ignored in both the field of transnational migrant politics as well as studies on migrants' political participation is arguably because, in the words of Mahler and Pessar, 'gender operates so "naturally" that it may easily escape our awareness. To measure its effects we must first see gender operating.' (Mahler and Pessar, 2006: 29). This may be particularly true for transnational politics, given that we are used to formal politics which traditionally has been male-dominated (Reynolds, 1999).

There are good reasons to bring gender into the study of transnationalism, and in particular its political dimension, because gender par excellence constructs power relations (see Mahler, 2001: 609; Mahler and Pessar, 2001; Pessar and Mahler, 2003; Brettell, 2006; Donato, Gabaccia et al., 2006). Existing scholarship suggests that migrant men and women's involvement in social networks and transnationalism takes very different forms. Taking stock of the literature, Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo (2005: 896) find that '[m]en appear to be more committed to the maintenance of public and institutionalized transnational ties than women, while women appear more committed to participating in the life of the receiving country'. Related to the receiving country Menjívar (2000: 157-193) shows that Salvadoran women play an important role in *informal* networks consisting of friends and family (also see Hagan 1998). In the case of Congolese women Nell (2003) shows that such informal networks operate almost invisibly. Those informal women networks, however, are crucial for the community since they facilitate the formation of *formal* networks of migrant organizations which are predominately directed by men. In a similar vein Fouron and Glick Schiller found that '[r]ather than being part of an explicitly political activity, women may often engage in impassioned politics within the domain of domestic activities and family rites de passage, such as weddings, funerals, births, and graduations' (2001: 571).

Yet, it is the institutionalized and public nature of migrants' organizational and transnational ties exceeding the level of the private sphere and the individual that structures transnational politics (Mügge, 2010).

The degree of institutionalization thus is expected to determine the way gender structures transnational politics. The next section shows how this plays out for Turks and Kurds in the Netherlands.

## Turkish and Kurdish immigration and organisation in the Netherlands

Migrants from Turkey are the largest non-Western migrant group in the Netherlands (388.967 in 2011).<sup>2</sup> Significant migration from Turkey was concentrated between 1964 and 1974 when the Dutch and Turkish governments had a labour agreement (Akgündüz, 2008). Labour migration predominantly included Turkish men. Many labour migrants opted for a permanent stay in the Netherlands and their wives and children followed. As a consequence already in 1972 half of the Turkish migrants were women (Schapendonk-Maas, 2000: 26). A similar pattern is observed in Germany (Aliefendioğlu, 2004), and it still holds today. Kurds were underrepresented in the first wave of labour migration in the 1960s as recruitment mainly took place in western and central Turkey where few Kurds lived. This changed in the early 1970s when labour was increasingly recruited from eastern Turkey (Van Bruinessen, 1999). Many Kurds arrived in the Netherlands after the 1980 coup in Turkey (Baker, Vervloet and Gailly, 2002: 162-167). As Kurds are not registered on the basis of ethnicity, official numbers for the Netherlands do not exist. Their estimated number is between 50,000 and 100,000 (ROB, 2001; Moors, Van den Reek Vermeulen and Siesling, 2009).

Compared to other migrant groups in the Netherlands, migrants from Turkey are very well organized: they have at their disposal a high number of organizations which are connected in dense networks with a low number of isolated organisations (Fennema and Tillie 1999; Van Heelsum, Tillie et al. 1999). Also, their organizational structures are more stable than other groups (cf. Mügge, 2011). Many organisations established in the 1970s and 1980s still exist (Mügge, 2010).

Between 1998 and 1999 the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) of the University of Amsterdam found 1,125 organisations among Turks (including Kurds) of which only five per cent (61) focus on women. The names of the organisations, their addresses, and the names of their board members were acquired from the Dutch Chamber of Commerce. This information was available for 69 per cent (773) of Turkish organisations. Five per cent of those organisations (40 out of

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2 Statline, Central Bureau for Statistics, <http://statline.cbs.nl/statweb/>, accessed 11 May 2011.

773) are directed by women. The grand majority of those organisations specifically target women (see table 1).

Table 1 Female director and type of organisation

Type of organisation	Number
Women	35
Religious	2
Cultural	2
Unknown	1
Total	40

The IMES analysed Turkish organisational networks on the basis of the interlocking directorates of organisations, meaning organisations were connected when one person was on the administrative board of two or more organisations. None of the organisations directed by a woman have a central position in the overall of Turkish organisations (see figure 2 in Van Heelsum and Tillie: 20). The Turkish organisational network is thus almost completely male-dominated. That said, some organisations, such as the conservative Islamic Milli Görüş, organise activities specifically by and for women (for examples in Germany see Sökefeld, 2008). Mirroring the position of women in Islamist political movements, this work has largely remained informal (White, 2002).

Using the IMES network as a starting point I identified the key persons in migrant organizational networks who maintained institutionalized ties with political actors in Turkey or diaspora. Since administrative boards are seldom transnational in the sense that people from both the Netherlands and Turkey additional research to expand and update the IMES network was needed. New data was collected in the Netherlands and Turkey through interviews with organisational leaders and elites, through my own observations during activities, by reading newspaper articles, websites, organisations' brochures and reports, and secondary literature where available. The new national and transnational ties I found were based on structural or sporadic cooperation, advice, memberships (among organisations and individuals), and kinship. During the interviews I asked interviewees to provide me with the contact details of homeland organisations with which they maintain ties. This more qualitative approach only led to a very small increase of organisations in the national network directed by women. Similarly, the transnational ties maintained between migrant organisations in the Netherlands and collective actors in Turkey are also for the grand majority run by men.

Only two organisations directed by women in the overall network have been transnationally active in the past or in the period under study: the Turkish Women's Federation in the Netherlands (HTKB) and the International Free Women's Foundation (IFWF). The federation HTKB was founded in 1977 and united eight women organisations. Although the federation still exists, its transnational activities and ties have diminished over time. IFWF was founded in 2001 and in the period under study was well embedded in a sub-cluster of European Kurdish diaspora organizations and the pro-Kurdish based in Turkey. The transnational involvement of both organisations was responsive to the violence of the Turkish state against the left, Kurds, women or both and mirrored the struggle of the leftist feminist and Kurdish feminist movements in Turkey (for a full analysis see Mügge forthcoming).

## Conclusion

This paper has shown that Turkish and Kurdish women have been underrepresented in formal and institutionalized forms of migrant- and transnational politics between the late 1970s and 2005. The only two organisations involved in transnationalism directed by women were women organisations. Their transnational ties mirrored the ideologies and activities of the leftist women's movement in the 1980s and the Kurdish women's movement in the 1990s and 2000s. Women have certainly been present in mainstream migrant organisations and gradually enter boards of administration. Systematic research on migrant and transnational politics in both women and mainstream organisations of second generation women is needed. To what extent do they reproduce homeland gender hierarchies? Are their strategies similar to feminist movements in the receiving societies, the countries or origin of their or parents, or different altogether? And finally, what are the consequences for gender equality when institutionalised migrant politics and transnational politics are male dominated?

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# Chapter 4

## 'Speaking *as men*': Critical Perspectives on (Abstract) Masculinity within the Theories and Practices of the Contemporary Italian Men's Network 'Maschile Plurale'

*Krizia Nardini*

*Utrecht University, The Netherlands*

\* Is there a possibility for a men's-word to express masculine experience in its partiality, in its aspiration to differ from norms, models of relationships, and historical representations of the self? Is there a possibility for a critique of this oppressive order, a critique thought and expressed by men in order to break up with the history of the masculine?  
(Ciccone, 2009: 10)<sup>1</sup>

### Introducing 'Maschile Plurale'

With this paper I would like to present part of my work as a research-master student at the Graduate Gender Programme at Utrecht University. My research master's thesis examines how the body of theories and practices adopted by the contemporary Italian men's network 'Maschile Plurale' relates to previous Italian female-feminist philosophical and political experiences. This research is situated within a theoretical project concerned with putting into question the onto-epistemological<sup>2</sup> coordinates of what the political feminist theorist Nancy Hartsock called *Abstract Masculinity* (Hartsock, 1987), namely: the unquestioned position of the white western heterosexual (...etc.). Man that became the universal and disembodied measure of the human in opposition to the 'embodied Others' of modernity (women, children, ethnic others, animals

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1 All translations are mine, unless indicated differently.

2 Karen Barad's terminology (2003). I will rely on her notion of onto-epistemology throughout this paper in order to show the relationality and intra-activity between ways of being and ways of knowing.

etc). The subject of *Abstract Masculinity*, i.e. Man as the ‘invisible gendered subject’ (Whitehead, 2004), has been widely criticized by feminist theories (Irigaray, 1985; Haraway, 1988) as what structured western-modern (phallogocentric) historical conditions on a social, cultural and epistemological levels.

Specifically, Italian 1970s-80s feminism developed the *socio-symbolic practice of sexual difference* (The Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, 1990) in order to blow up the gender-neutral, universal and disembodied subject of socio-political and philosophical phallogocentrism. Inspired by the thought and practice of 1970s-80s Italian feminism, being part of the men’s network ‘Maschile Plurale’ means first of all engaging with the group-activity of ‘speaking *as men*’ by ‘starting from oneself’ (*a partire da se*): that is, a practice similar to consciousness-raising (*autoco-scienza*), aimed at sharing personal experiences *as men* in order to name each and every one’s (male) sexed-embodied and gendered perspective (*prospettiva sessuata*). Giving voice to men’s silence about themselves *as men*, this practice allows them to deconstruct the socio-cultural dynamics of masculinity influencing their lives as *embodied-embedded subjects* (Braidotti, 2002). In this way men take distance from dominant representations and practices of masculinity and acknowledge their (onto-epistemological) partiality as situated subjects of experience and knowledge. Moving away from the traditional ideal of *Abstract Masculinity* as a neutral subjecthood (disembodied, fully rational and universal) is indeed understood not as a loss in terms of (male) identity and epistemic authority, but rather as the opportunity to reformulate alternative and multiple discourses and embodied practices of masculinities.

### **Doing ‘Maschile Plurale’**

In 2007 ‘Maschile Plurale’ became a national association, nevertheless for many years men have gathered in small groups in order to talk, share and discuss their personal experiences of masculinity. Most men who take part into the activity of ‘Maschile Plurale’ are between their 40s and 60s, identify themselves as heterosexual, come from an educated, middle-class background, have been directly or indirectly in contact with feminism (via friends, colleagues or partners) and are usually left-oriented politically. Sharing their disappointment and concern about traditional models of political activity as well as about dominant models of masculinity (aspects that are seen by them as interconnected and in a profound need of change), ‘Maschile Plurale’ was started as a ‘practice of reflection on the masculine’ (*pratica di riflessione sul maschile*) performed by a

few men both individually and in small groups. What initially put these groups together was a common disapproval of the phenomenon of male violence against women and the willingness to take a critical stand *as men* in reaction to it. This topic gradually gave birth to multi-layered, feminist-inspired critical reflections on different themes concerned with men's 'discomforts' in respect to dominant models of masculinity.

What emerged in the Eighties as an informal group practice among men willing to share and critically discuss their personal experiences and social role *as men*, gradually developed into a Network of men's groups located in different Italian towns. In September 2006, after the promotion of the 'National Appeal Against Violence on Women', 'Maschile Plurale' collected more than a thousand signatures of men and organized a significant number of public meetings, events and initiatives all over Italy, with the aim of raising awareness on men's responsibility in eradicating gender-based violence (with the slogan: *Come uomini, la violenza maschile ci riguarda*). In the spring of 2007, with the creation of the website [www.maschileplurale.it](http://www.maschileplurale.it), 'Maschile Plurale' was established also as a National Association based in Rome.

What is important in order to be recognized as *doing* or *practicing* 'Maschile Plurale' is the commitment towards the group-practice of sharing and discussing personal experiences *as men*, thus naming men as gendered subjects. Telling one's own experience and reflection *as man* refers both to the act of re-thinking masculinity as the object of reflection (men's practices and lives) and to the practice of situating men's sexed-embodied perspectives as speaking subjects; in both cases men acknowledge their own partial location in culture, time and space. Local men's groups gather on a weekly basis and, despite their different takes and approaches, they all agree on one basic rule: sharing their personal experience and discussing problems 'starting from oneself,' referring to one's own experience and partial view and therefore 'speaking *as man*.' My informants often addressed their commitment to "Maschile Plurale" as a *doing* (*il fare* "Maschile Plurale"<sup>3</sup>). In this way, next to a growing networking activity among Italian men's groups, "Maschile Plurale" is addressed as a collective (*plurale*) practice aimed at re-thinking and re-

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3 For example, observing during my fieldwork how men from different groups interact with one another, I could see that usually they ask each other 'How long have you been *doing* 'Maschile Plurale'? (*Da quanto tempo fai 'Maschile Plurale'?*). In doing so, I had the impression that they not only wanted to highlight the importance of - and their active commitment to - the *practice* of 'speaking as men'; but also, by referring to practical effects of re-thinking masculinity (personal change, cultural projects, national political appeals) they wanted to point at the generative aspect of this men's movement which is both *in the making* and aims at *re-making* men's practices.

formulating men's practices (*maschile*) while raising gender-awareness among men.

Being performed, in an informal way, either within the sphere of men's group meetings or in the individual study environment of academic research or sometimes in both contexts, the commitment of "Maschile Plurale" to re-thinking masculinity has developed in different parts of Italy without attracting the interest of public media. Nonetheless, different groups of men, establishing connection with each other and sharing each other's reflections and practices, started organizing public events and projects in addition to, and as a result of, their own weekly meeting activity. Gradually, this practice of reflection attracted and it is still attracting more men for different reasons: some of them were/are interested in speaking about themselves in a self-reflective and introspective manner; still others were/are more willing to take this moment of self-reflectivity in the direction of political/cultural critique; some were/are interested in sustaining a network of men's groups, others wanted/want to focus on the group-practice as a moment for self-understanding and generating alternative ways of thinking (epistemology) and practicing (ontology) male socialization and relationships among men. The coexistence and overlap of different perspectives within men's group, instead of leading to fragmentation and distance, allowed them to diversify their approaches and, thanks to a common affirmative take on each other's differences, also to engender a rich "reflection on *the masculine*" (*riflessione sul maschile*) emphasising and giving visibility to the plurality of masculinities (*maschile plurale*).

### "Speaking as *men*": A voice for one's own

One thing the Italian men's association 'Maschile Plurale' cannot do without is men's silence. Indeed, the point of departure for any critical reflection on masculinity consists for them in the interrogation of men's *silence*, namely men's difficulty to find words with which one's own experience *as man* could be expressed. As Stefano Ciccone and Claudio Vedovati – among the first members of 'Maschile Plurale' – wrote in an article entitled *Un'altra maschilità, un'altra esperienza di se'* from 1997:<sup>4</sup>

Male-word exists and travels the world, but is hidden behind an apparent neutrality. Men do speak under the protection of social roles, of a knowledge that pretends to be neutral: science, politics, law, medicine. There is even an excess of male-word at the foundation of ethics, norms and techniques that function as instruments of control over bodies. This word and this presence are just the other side of a *profound silence*, a

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4 Translated into English: "Another masculinity, another self-experience".

difficulty of being within relationships and depart from them in order to give meaning to the world. It is a silence about oneself (Ciccone and Vedovati, 1997: 2; emphasis mine).

Recognizing the relevance of 1970s-80s Italian feminist practices such as the *partire da se*, men's groups of 'Maschile Plurale' base their group-practice on the interrogation of one's own sexed-embodied experience *as men*. What in English could be translated as 'starting from oneself', the Italian *partire da se* points at the personal dimension of one's embodied experience as the locus of power-relations, hence it highlights the political significance of 'speaking *as men*' as the moment in which men acquire gender awareness and critically analyse their own gendered practices.

Thus, by collectively analysing and discussing personal experiences of being/becoming within relationships, men's groups bring to the light each and every one's lived sexed-experiences and desires *as men*. Importantly, this self-reflective practice means first of all braking through the totalizing silence that traditionally characterizes the subject of *Abstract Masculinity*. Connecting men's silence with the power/knowledge nexus, Ciccone formulates the problem as follows:

A neutral (*subject of*) discourse about the world would not be possible without keeping the *silence* about himself; that ostentation of word (*knowledge*) about everything is the condition for not-seeing and not-showing its own partiality (Ciccone, 2009: 11; emphasis mine).

In accordance with Ciccone, Vedovati wrote: 'we can better define this *silence*: it is not an absence of male-knowledge on oneself, but rather a modality of its very knowledge' (Vedovati, 2007: 129; emphasis mine).

This peculiar kind of (male) silence, being at the foundation of traditionally-western phallogocentric power/knowledge postures, refers to a neutral, disembodied, a-historical Subject of knowledge that denies sexual difference in favour of a sexually-undifferentiated *Abstract Masculinity* from which universal truth-claims are made possible. In this way, 'men's silence does not contradicts the rooted dominance of male-word in every field of knowledge – an excess of words – but, on the contrary, it lays its very foundations' (Vedovati, 2007: 129).

The ‘silence about oneself’ is not only to be understood on an epistemological level, as a power/knowledge dynamic, but also on a personal and psychological level: as men’s difficulty to speak about themselves, to enter into a dialogue with other men about their own private/personal lives, in other words: to find ‘a voice for one’s own’. That is how, through ‘speaking *as men*’, ‘Maschile Plurale’ is simultaneously diagnosing masculine silence as a condition of determined power/knowledge relations, and turning it into its own critique: starting from it, visualizing it, filling it up with men’s voice and awareness about themselves. As a matter of fact, as Sandro B. (member of the men’s group of Bologna) pointed out while talking about the group-practice:

for men it is a very difficult thing to speak about their personal life, even more difficult it is to share it within a group of other men. Being there, sitting down together and looking into each other’s faces while talking about oneself, it is something that, really, provokes a change in your life. Primarily because it transforms the way men use to relate to one another (interview with Sandro, 21st October 2010).

Consequently, the decision to speak-up *as men* through the self-reflexive (feminist) practice of *partire da se*’ does function as a manifold transformative strategy. While questioning the onto-epistemological modes of power/knowledge centred on the subject position of *Abstract Masculinity*, this strategy allows men to approach men’s practices from a critical and gendered perspective and to deconstruct normative notions of masculinity.

Therefore, deconstructing the roots of men’s silence, not only ‘speaking *as men*’ gives the voice to personal, historically located, sexed-embodied visions of men’s experiences, but also it opens up the room for further processes of re-inventions of the male-embodied self. As Ciccone affirms in his book on the reflections of the group ‘Maschile Plurale’:

The choice to speak-up *as men* has not meant the voluntary commitment toward the affirmation of a ‘gender-guilt’, but rather it represented the opportunity to open up a room for freedom within our *speaking-ourselves-as-men* as well as within our conflicting experiences with norms and modes of relationships not more meaningful to us (Ciccone, 2009: 17; emphasis mine).



This way out from men's *silence* offered by the group-practice of 'speaking *as men*', starts from and leads to interesting personal, onto-epistemological outcomes.

## Becoming visible: the 'evidence of experience'

The questions concerned with men's silence must also be addressed in the case of men's *invisibility*, namely: how come that, in a male-dominated culture, men's experiences stand as silenced and invisible (primarily to men themselves)? As we have seen earlier, for the same reasons why men can difficultly "speak" their own gendered - thus partial - perspectives, they are - as embodied-embedded subjects of culture - *invisible* to themselves (Bellassai, 2001). This kind of *invisibility* is due to the traditional conflation of *Abstract Masculinity* with gender-neutrality and human universality. Therefore, one of the aims of "Maschile Plurale" is to make masculinities *visible* as sexed-embodied experiences within Italian culture. Indeed, as Ciccone notes in relation to previous feminist experiences:

what became *visible*, what was expressed, has been the difference thought by women; masculine experience has remained *unspoken*, confused with the normative patriarchal system and its historical representation that denies and hides its partiality (Ciccone, 2009: 10; emphasis mine).

Importantly, men's *visibility* comes to the fore in the same fashion as the practice of "speaking *as men*" does: not rooted within an identitarian politics of recognition<sup>5</sup>, but rather aimed at interrogating how-questions such as '*how* men live within the world and *how* they proceeded in rebuilding the past, *how* they transmitted memory and *how* they signified that very world' (Vedovati, 2007: 142; emphasis in the original).

Accordingly, the point of departure toward en-gendering visibility *as men* lays in the practice of *partire da se'*, that is, starting from the domain of one's embodied experience. Men's corporality, thus, enters the discussion necessarily and inevitably, first of all because the traditional equation "white-heterosexual-masculinity = universal" also includes *disembodiedness* as fundamental aspect in the constitution of modern vision of subjectivity. Consequently, the practice of 'speaking *as men*'

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5 The practice of "Maschile Plurale" (within one group, as a network of men's groups and as a national association) is not aimed at sustaining "male identity" or "men's rights" in opposition to "women's rights". As I show in this paper, "Maschile Plurale" has a particular relationship with Italian feminism and shares with it theoretical and political approaches.

during consciousness-raising groups cannot do without a self-reflection on men's corporeality. Re-thinking masculinity therefore becomes, more specifically, re-thinking men's relationships with their bodies, emotions and sexuality. A reflection that leads men to (re)engage with and reinvent these aspects of life traditionally marked as feminine: corporeality, emotionality, affectivity, parenting care, domestic work. That is why 'Maschile Plurale's collective work not only aims at questioning but also at re-thinking and reformulating men's gendered practices as they are inscribed, both in a broader cultural sense (epistemology) and at the level of their individual embodied practices (ontology), within their own personal experiences *as men*.

### Questioning *Abstract Masculinity*: men doing feminism (Italian style)

In the process of critical reworking the historical experience of male identity and its identitarian models, central elements have been the political and existential *encounters* with women involved in feminist activism and the dialogue with the thought and practice of feminism. In its own theorizing masculinity, 'Maschile Plurale' borrows important conceptual and practical elements from Italian feminist thought of sexual difference (AA.VV, 1990). As a matter of fact, the terminology used and the emphasis placed by the members of 'Maschile Plurale' on addressing men as 'sexed-embodied subjects' (*soggetti sessuati*) - in order to recognize their partiality and be able to voice a 'reflection on the masculine' (*riflessione sul maschile*) - do testify onto-epistemological connections between 'Maschile Plurale' and Italian sexual difference feminism. In particular, recognizing the relevance of the feminist socio-symbolic practice of consciousness-raising, men's groups of 'Maschile Plurale' found their group activity on the interrogation of one's own *sexed-embodied* experience *as men*: tracing back one's own gendered history (with its coexisting moments of *potestas* and *potentia*)<sup>6</sup> and addressing one's own experience as partial and historically located. In this way, the critical reflection of 'Maschile Plurale' aims at situating men's partial perspectives and gendered practices in order to deconstruct the dominant neutrality and universality claimed by *Abstract Masculinity* (ontological and epistemological level).

Many important elements link Italian Feminism with the reflection and praxis enacted by 'Maschile Plurale.' Evidently, within these Italian (pro)feminist contexts, the practice of the *partire da se'* has been pivotal

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6 Braidotti's terminology, 2002.

in the process of giving the *voice* and allowing *visibility* to emerging socio-cultural trends and subjectivities. In fact, with the emphasis on a self-reflective understanding of one's own experience and sexed-embodied subjectivity, this group-practice has been of central importance in both contexts, although in different, not symmetrical, ways. Relying on the Italian theorization of sexual difference feminism, both strategies conflate into the political project of eradicating phallogocentric cultural and epistemological postures. For this reason, they do not share the same point of departure in relation to phallogocentrism.

Locating this concept within Italian 1970s-80s feminist practice, the *partire da se'* of consciousness-raising groups and feminist theorizations was meant to bring to light one's own (female-embodied) difference in order to give *voice* to women holding an invisible position within the (dominant) phallogocentric society and culture (onto-epistemology). In the case of the members of 'Maschile Plurale', the focus on starting from one's own personal experience is at the core of 'speaking *as men*': a self-situating practice that allows men to search for un-heard words to express themselves and to gain visibility as embodied-embedded subjects (outside of the gender-free masculine *silence*). Accordingly, what men see as necessary is the political gesture of stepping outside the very centre of phallogocentrism constituted by normative (universal and disembodied) *Abstract Masculinity* and situating themselves (and the history of the masculine as well) within their partial perspectives.

## Partial perspectives: Some onto-epistemological outcomes

In criticizing the universalizing voice of *Abstract Masculinity*, 'Maschile Plurale' diagnoses a 'lack of male word' (*assenza di parola maschile*), namely men's difficulty of expressing themselves as sexed-embodied and partial subjects. Thus, the very peculiarity of 'Maschile Plurale's' reflection emerges from the aim of giving men the voice for 'speaking *as men*' *starting from themselves*; for overcoming the silence that, on an onto-epistemological level, allows *Abstract Masculinity* to take its own gender for granted and to speak as a neutral/universal position. 'Maschile Plurale', with the group practice of 'speaking *as men*', wants to provide a room for voicing men's partial locations so as to break the silence that prevents men from *engaging* with their-own-selves as sexed-embodied subjects of experiences and knowledges. Indeed, The concerns with a social order centred on the domination of the unmarked and unquestioned category of the white-western-heterosexual Man are connected, on an onto-epistemological level, with the critique of the universalized (and yet

white-wester-heterosexual-male) speaking position that take his own location for granted and pretends to ‘speak for others’ in name of the supposedly neutral voice of reason (Ciccone, 2009: 11; Seidler, 1989, 1993).

Epistemologically, men’s practice of ‘speaking *as men*’, by acknowledging the embodied-embedded nature of their located experiences, does constitute a great challenge to traditional visions of knowledge. As we have seen, this practice gives the voice to men’s “profound silence” about themselves, in this way it gives *visibility* to their historically determined, gendered experiences. As a result, normative masculinity is historicized and located within its particular cultural and geopolitical contexts; at the same time, men gain awareness of their own partiality. By gaining *visibility* as gendered subjects, ‘Maschile Plurale’ members can deconstruct traditional aspects of masculinity (white-heterosexual and yet, universal), become aware of its partial perspective. Therefore, through sharing and looking at their own experiences with critical-gendered eyes, the members of ‘Maschile Plurale’ want to stress their own partiality as embodied-embedded subjects. In this way, they seem to support a vision of knowledge very close to *Third Wave situated epistemologies* (van der Tuin, 2009).

Therefore, if the starting point for a deconstructive and creative approach to men’s practices consists in the interrogation of men’s *silence* on themselves, a vital aim of the reflection of ‘Maschile Plurale’ is the acknowledgment of men’s own partial vision through ‘speaking *as men*.’ Indeed, Ciccone illustrates it in the following terms:

The *gaze* we have produced on our lives, on institutions and on relationships does not aspire to a new systematization of thought, or a new general theory, or a new norm, but, on the contrary, it is a *gaze* that recognizes itself as *partial* and that uses its *partiality* as a key to *see* and *understand* (Ciccone, 2009: 11; emphasis mine).

Evidently, the effort aimed at engendering men’s awareness of their partiality, together with the emphasis on men’s partial gaze ‘to see and understand’ (i.e., to gain knowledge on) their lives, reminds me of Haraway’s call for ‘situated visions’ and ‘partial perspectives’ (Haraway, 1988). Thus, as men are concerned, the moment of critique and deconstruction of abstract masculinity is followed (and at the same time made possible) by a responsible situated vision over one’s own processes of embodiment and embeddedness into located relations of power.

Concluding, ‘Maschile Plurale’ can be considered to be a contemporary Italian *men’s movement* in the most literal and broadest sense of the term: a collective activity (both practical and theoretical) performed by

men that, *moved* by common concerns and passions as well as by different personal needs and problems, are willing to take action together in order to make a change in gender/power relations, starting from their own lives. In doing so, men perform an ongoing activity that is, per se, *in motion*; that is, indeed, *directed towards* the *engendering* of other *processes* of ‘doing’ (ontology) and ‘thinking’ (epistemology) men/masculinities differently, with the aim of *activating* transformations at a personal, cultural and epistemological level. Indeed, with ‘speaking *as men*’, by naming men as gendered and acknowledging one’s own partiality *as man*, the network of ‘Maschile Plurale’ is trying to make these changes happen.

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## Workshop B

# Institutions and Organisations

The papers presented under this Workshop B, “Institutions and Organisations”, were grouped in three empirical themes: *masculinities*, *fatherhood*, and *sex trade*. Different constructions of masculinity were discussed in relation to each issue, for example in relation to a paper on how a range of academic texts portray masculinities in Sweden, UK and India and in a paper on the debate on “women’s quotas” in the German media. These discussions also involved the paper interrogating the concept of complicit masculinities in the context of men in a large Swedish transnational company. The different constructions of men and masculinities emerging from these papers fed into the discussions on fatherhood and fathering initiated by the papers on men and fatherhood within large corporate law firms, within the financial services sector in London and in organized so called ‘father’s spaces’ in Swedish pre-schools. Sex trade was discussed in relation to a study on discourses of gender and prostitution in prostitutes’ narratives, a study on how the codes of conduct in Swedish companies address commercial sex in business settings and a project targeting young men in Belgium and Argentina and their attitudes towards buying sex.

There were, of course, many issues that reappeared within the different discussions. One issue concerned perceptions of men’s *sense of loss*, both in terms of loss of privilege as a result of feminism, quotas and other gender equality measures but also the sense of loss of other dimensions as a result of current gendered perceptions of work and parenthood.

The conversations also highlighted the *interconnection of the lives of men, women and children*, in particular through care relationships. This was also linked to discussions of the *interconnectedness of domestic and public spheres*, and how Western organizations not only reproduce local gender inequalities but also reproduce *global inequalities* by, for example, constructing careers and parenthood in ways that depend on the work of other less privileged women. Another recurrent issue concerned how *ideology of individualism* and related *neo-liberal economic and cultural imperatives* affect the work and ‘personal lives’ of men and women across society, whether among prostitute women or transnational businessmen. Our discussions further highlighted how this ideology contributed to the *normalization of exploitation and privilege*.

A theme that became apparent throughout the workshop was the *importance of naming the ‘invisible man’*, that is, the privileged man so

often absent/invisible within both academic and other discussions of institutions and organisations. A case in point was provided by the paper on young men and prostitution that highlighted the difficulty of shifting our attention from the prostitute women to the clients of prostitution. The group also found it important to name the role of *complicit and homosocial men* as well as *loyal, heterosocial women* in the reproduction of inequalities.

The papers all provided empirical illustrations of how material and discursive practices are interwoven and interact with gender and other social inequalities, reproducing these inequalities and, importantly, creating possibilities for change. The different papers all documented recurrent patterns of inequalities but also showed that there are indeed differences between local contexts both in terms of discourses and material conditions. Much of our discussions centred on how power operates through perceptions of gender that are themselves shifting in complex and often contradictory ways, the embeddedness of gender within social practices and how changes in perceptions can be linked to changes in practices and vice versa.

Recurring issues that also emerged from Workshop B relate to broader concerns explored elsewhere at the conference. Noting that the conference theme was set up as experimental and open ended at the outset, the papers reflected the inevitable diversity of the ways in which the 'transnational' is being conceptualized in work on men and masculinities. It was clear from the papers that there are *multiple transnational sites*, but discussion suggests further interrogation is needed of how these areas might interconnect. Discussion of themes emerging in the papers also noted concern whether the study of transnationalisations might itself in some ways reinforce certain (e.g. eurocentric) norms. What became clear in our approaches to Institutions and Organizations was that there were also *differences in the way hegemonic masculinity is conceptualized*, with varying perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the concept. The papers further explored, to degrees, the concept of the 'hegemony of men' in approaching transnational masculinities. At a broader level, papers noted the continued dominance of sociological frameworks and the tensions that can exist with, for example, sex/gender critiques derived from queer theory. The papers considered the politics of the study of men and masculinities, noting a diversity of approaches to masculinities, men and power in these studies of institutions and organizations. Underscoring some discussion here was the issue of whether a key concern should be how power reproduces itself, and not necessarily 'men' or masculinities itself.



Finally, the group deliberated on the importance of *individual agency* in processes of change, by for example challenging men's homosocial and women's heterosocial practices as well as recognizing researchers as change agents, and on the need for *spaces for critical reflection* in our private lives and in work life in order to be able to challenge established norms and practices.

Rapporteurs: Charlotte Holgersson and Richard Collier on behalf of the workgroup.



# Chapter 5

## 'Fathers' Spaces': Making Room for Fathering Between Care and Privileges

*Tobias Axelsson*  
*Örebro University, Sweden*

As Andrea Doucet states in her research on stay-at-home fathers, 'the care of children is eminently social and occurs not only between carers and cared-for, but within larger sets of social relations within which caring gets done and within which it is perceived and judged by others' (Doucet, 2006b: 697). This implies that research on gender and parenting should take into account spaces in which situated parenting practices and relations between parents take place (Marsiglio, Roy and Fox, 2005). Influenced by these general statements, this paper focuses on *parents' forums* or *meeting places for parents* – that is physical and/or virtual spaces gathering parents *as parents*. More specifically, a certain kind of parents' forum will be explored: '*fathers' spaces*' for men on parental leave in Sweden.

In parents' forums parents can share experiences and provide each other with support. Also, they provide parents with a space where they can spend time together, especially while children are young and are cared for mainly in domestic settings (Berg and Zetterström, 1989; Frank, 2007; Vedeler, Martinussen and Thyrhaug, 2008). Parents' forums include, for example, family centres (Socialstyrelsen, 2008), various social movements for parents (Collier and Sheldon, 2006; Crowley, 2008), and different internet communities (Brady and Guerin, 2010; Chan, 2008; Drentea and Moren-Cross, 2005; Madge and O'Connor, 2005; Sarkadi and Bremberg, 2005).

'[I]n a field such as caring for children, which is strongly divided by gender' (Brandth and Kvande, 2009: 186), it is not surprising that parents' forums appear as gendered in that they are used mainly by mothers and are influenced by maternal ideologies. As a counter-reaction to this female gendering of public parenting spaces (Dimmock and Burchell, 2010), different initiatives for, with, and by fathers have been started. Such initiatives are based on the notion that fathers have somewhat different needs than mothers in a societal climate in which 'female' and



‘maternal’ norms related to parenting, rather than ‘male’ and ‘paternal’ ones, are predominant. These initiatives can vary considerably, but what is common to them is that they all organise men collectively *as fathers*.

## Organising men as fathers

One can distinguish between political and social movements involving fathers on the one hand, and educational programs and social work directed to fathers, on the other. The first main group includes for example fathers’ rights groups and pro-feminist fathers’ movements. The second main group includes parents’ classes and social work directed to fathers in need of certain kinds of support: fathers who are violent (Featherstone, Rivett and Scourfield, 2007: 111-114; Rivett, 2010), ethnically and/or socioeconomically disadvantaged (Wilcox and Bartkowski, 2005), or divorced (Owen and Pullen, 2003). Also, services for fathers can be targeted to fathers in general, which is the case with ‘fathers’ spaces’ in Sweden.

Initiatives for, with, and/or by fathers can be provided by the state and/or the civil society. Their aims can shift widely, from creating a responsible fatherhood based on conservative family values (Gavanas, 2001, 2004), to influence family legislation (Eriksson and Pringle, 2006; Flood, 2010), and to provide social support and care-oriented fathering practices. Some of the initiatives can be quite hostile to women/mothers. Others don’t take a clear stance toward women/mothers and remain ambivalent, whilst some declare very positive attitudes toward women/mothers. Sex role thinking is common, and rather than promoting gender equality, or feminist parenting/fathering (Balbus, 1998) for that sake, initiatives for fathers are frequently based on the notion that promoting engaged fatherhood should be based on a will to improve relations between fathers and children (Eriksson and Pringle, 2006).

As I see it, the organising of men as fathers risks to reproduce men’s privileges if it is not rooted in feminist understanding of fathers’ greater amount of freedom of choice in caring for small children (see Bekkengen, 2002). But it is also possible that spaces designed for fathers can support men in developing their caring skills toward small children (Wilcox and Bartkowski, 2005). Moreover, I find it likely that relations between fathers in ‘fathers’ spaces’ are rooted in a caring social climate rather than a harsh and competing one.

The organising of men as fathers is deeply embedded in *gendered tensions* – that is conflicts, dilemmas, and possibilities.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the aim of this paper is to identify gendered tensions occurring and emerging in

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1 The definition of ‘gendered tensions’ is inspired by Pease (2008).

‘fathers’ spaces’, by observing the situated practices and intra-personal relations among fathers. Hopefully, this contributes to a growing interest among politicians, professionals, activists, and researchers in ‘services for fathers’ (Featherstone, 2004: 146).

## ‘Fathers’ spaces’ in a Swedish context: parental leave and parental support

Sweden is, alongside with its Nordic neighbours,<sup>2</sup> considered to be a ‘father friendly’ country (Hobson, 2004; Smith and Williams, 2007), giving men the same formal obligations and, above all, the same parental rights as women (Eriksson and Pringle, 2006; Leira, 2006). For example, Sweden has a publicly funded, well paid, long lasting and flexible *parental leave scheme* encompassing fathers as well as mothers (O’Brien, 2009). In the gender equality debate, men’s take-up of parental leave has often been seen as a foundation for more equal gender relations (Gullvåg Holter, 2007; Klinth, 2002; O’Brien, Brandth and Kvande, 2007), although this standpoint has been criticised for conflating improvements in the father-child dyad with equalizing power relations between women and men (Bekkengen, 2002; Leira, 2002, 2006).

In Sweden, men’s take-up of all parental cash benefit days<sup>3</sup> was 22 % in 2009 (Statistics Sweden, 2010: 38). This high take-up of parental leave days among men (at least internationally speaking), suggests that being a caring father – to put a caring orientation toward small children into daily practise – is not in conflict with dominant ideas about contemporary masculinities (Ekenstam, 2007; Gíslason, 2007:101). Rather,

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2 Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Norway.

3 Försäkringskassan [*The Swedish Social Insurance Agency*] is the administrative authority responsible for the social insurance in Sweden. The agency explains the parental leave insurance more fully in the following way: ‘Parental cash benefit for the birth or adoption of a child is available for a total of 480 days per child. For 390 days, the benefit is based on parents’ income, though the minimum amount payable is SEK 180 per day for parents with low or no incomes. For the remaining 90 days, the insured person receives an amount equivalent to the lowest level, which is SEK 180 per day. If the parents have joint custody of the child, both are entitled to half the total number of parental cash benefit days. However, one of the parents may transfer parental cash benefit days to the other parent, with the exception of the 60 days that are reserved for each parent. The benefit is payable for different portions of a day – whole, three-quarters, half, one-quarter or eighth. Parental cash benefit can normally be claimed up to the child’s eighth birthday or the completion of the first year of school. The compensation is just under 80 per cent of the income qualifying for sickness cash benefit (SGI), and maximum compensation is based on 10 price base amounts. In 2008, maximum compensation amounted to SEK 872 per day’ (Försäkringskassan 2009: 19).

in the Swedish setting, taking a period of parental leave has been incorporated as ‘normal’ in fathers’ views of themselves (Chronholm, 2004).

‘Fathers’ spaces’ also need to be contextualised in relation to *parental support*, a policy area and a professional activity aiming primarily to ‘promote children’s health and psychosocial development’, but also to create ‘contact and fellowship’ between parents (SOU, 2008: 24, my translation).<sup>4</sup> Parental support in Sweden is funded by public means and is based on the idea of universal prevention (this is it shall be directed to all parents). Selective and indicated prevention exist though (Socialstyrelsen 2008: 14), as is the case with services for fathers.

The most important (state-supported) parents’ forums aiming to create ‘contact and fellowship’ in Sweden are *family centres* and *open preschools* (SOU, 2008: 32–38). In family centres – often gathering under the same roof antenatal clinics, child welfare centres, open preschool, and other social preventive services – open preschool is normally functioning as the joint meeting place for parents (Socialstyrelsen 2008: 10, 28). When the open preschool system was started in Sweden in the 1970s, it was functioning as a supplementary form of child-care, but nowadays it has taken the social function of a meeting place in which parents (on parental leave) and children can see each other (together with staff who mostly are preschool teachers) (Berg and Zetterström, 1989; Frank, 2007; Skolverket, 2000, 2010). In 2004, there were 470 open preschool settings. Almost all of them are public, provided by municipalities, and a majority of them are standing by themselves (that is they do not collaborate with other parental support instances), but it is also common that open preschools exist within family centres (Skolverket, 2005: 28–33).

As a response to the prevailing orientation toward mothers within parental support, and in line with the goal of improving relations between fathers and children, several *open preschool settings have started ‘fathers’ spaces’*.<sup>5</sup> It is hard to say how common this is, but according to my own calculations based on statistics from The National Board of Health and Welfare at least 20 open preschools for fathers should exist in Sweden (Socialstyrelsen, 2008: 16, 20, 22, 24). The most common

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4 In the latest governmental official report on parental support, *Föräldrastöd – en vinst för alla* [Parental support – a gain for all], parental support is defined as ‘a broad spectrum of activities which parents can take part in and which aim to promote children’s health and psychosocial development’. This overall goal is divided into three intermediate goals, stressing that ‘[p]arental support shall contribute to: Deeper knowledge about children’s needs and rights; Contact and fellowship; To strengthen parents in their roles as parents’ (SOU, 2008: 24, my translation).

5 In Swedish, these services for fathers within open preschool are for example called *Pappapass* [daddies’ shift], *Pappis* [daddy + the latin suffix -is], or *Pappaöppet* [open for fathers].

way of organising ‘fathers’ spaces’ is to have one day a week reserved for fathers, while the open preschool is generally open for all parents the rest of the week.

## Theory

My analysis applies a doing gender framework (West and Zimmerman, 1987), and is thus concerned with how gender is played out as a relational and social process in fathers’ situated interaction. Also, I take into consideration that parenting practises, by stressing their spatial and relational dimensions, stretch far beyond the private/domestic sphere as well as the parent-child dyad (Doucet, 2006a, 2006b; Marsiglio, Roy and Fox, 2005).

In addition to these general assumptions, my analysis draws on Patricia Yancey Martin’s theorising of *liminality*, a concept which has been used in studies on how men are mobilising masculinities at work and how this is perceived by female colleagues (Martin, 2001). Liminality refers to a human state and a set of actions and behaviours which occur ‘behind the line of full awareness’ (Martin, 2001: 606). Since ‘gendering practises [often] are done unreflexively’ (Martin, 2003: 344), men’s ever so well-meaning practices can still do harm to women (Martin, 2006: 255) and, I would like to add, other men. However, practicing gender is not done solely nonreflexively or unintentionally: it is also done with some degree of awareness and intentionality. Martin expresses this by stressing the importance of paying attention to ‘the border between liminal and full awareness’ (Martin, 2001: 610).

Martin has applied the concept of liminality in studying gender-mixed workplaces, in which men’s liminal awareness of their gendered ways of acting is creating and recreating male privileges. Applying this concept in ‘men’s only’ settings creates some methodological and analytical constraints as well as it provides opportunities. Men’s collective mobilisation is in Martin’s analysis seen as a way of doing masculinities in relation to both female and male colleagues. In the case of ‘fathers’ spaces’ one has take into account that it is an *explicitly gendered* milieu for male parents.<sup>6</sup>

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6 When claiming that ‘fathers’ spaces’ are explicitly male gendered, one should also bear in mind that most people working in parental support professions are women. It is very likely that this has consequences for the gendering of ‘fathers’ spaces’. However, the presence of female workers at ‘fathers’ spaces’ is not inquired in this paper.

## Methodology

The paper builds on observations in two ‘fathers’ spaces’ in two Swedish cities. Both ‘fathers’ spaces’ are organised within open preschools located in family centres. A first period of observations (twelve occasions) in a ‘fathers’ space’ was carried out in late 2009, and a second period (thirteen occasions) was carried out in the beginning of 2011.<sup>7</sup>

The number of visiting fathers varies from a handful to around 25 from time to time. Almost all of them are on parental leave together with their children (often one child between 1 and 1½ years old). The group is quite homogeneous regarding age, ethnicity, nationality, and family circumstances. White and Swedish born fathers around 30 or in their mid-30s living in heterosexual nuclear families are overrepresented, even though one of the observed ‘fathers’ spaces’ is located in a neighborhood where almost half of those living there are born outside of Sweden. While the majority of the visiting fathers are employed, a few are not. Likewise, both men from white collar as well as blue collar occupations are represented. Finally, some fathers prefer to visit parents’ forums for fathers only, while others also visit gender-mixed ones as well.

During the fieldwork, I was paying attention to topics of conversation, embodied practises (who is doing/saying what to who?), and in advance determined activities/non determined but recurrent activities. Also, one important element of the observations has been to capture what is not being said or done.

### A general picture of ‘fathers’ spaces’

‘Fathers’ spaces’ are very child oriented settings. Both of the ‘fathers-spaces’ I have visited have plenty of room for children’s play, as well as facilities like toys and books, nursery rooms and resting-places for children, well-equipped kitchens and dining areas, and comfortable chairs and couches where fathers can relax and talk to each other. A common scenario when a ‘fathers’ space’ opens in the morning is that a few fathers are taking a seat on the floor while their children are playing with various toys or interacting with each other. At the same time as the fathers’ bottoms are hitting the floor one can almost feel the fathers’ relief being expressed in a joint exhalation. During the stay, which often lasts a few hours from the morning until lunch time, children are mainly playing and eating. My impression is that children are getting cared for in a bodily and talkative sense, and that the atmosphere feels welcoming, safe, and calm.

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7 Individual interviews will be conducted during 2011.



To generalise a bit, talking to each other, while drinking coffee and being bodily and/or mentally present in the children's play, is the main activity going on within 'fathers' spaces'. Common topics of conversation are children's development and (bad) habits, the problem of getting a child care placement when the period of parental leave is over, and the 'fathers' space' as such. To a lesser extent, working life, houses, sports, and experiences of being on parental leave and/or starting working again are being discussed. It is quite rare that family relations outside of the father-child dyad are mentioned. Wives, partners, the children's mothers, grandparents, and other family members are seldom talked about, especially not in the whole group.

### Liminality, situated activities and intra-personal relations

Firstly, since 'fathers' spaces' are directed explicitly to fathers (unlike some other gender segregated or 'men's only' settings) the visiting fathers have to deal with this in more or less reflexive ways. It is rare that they speak about themselves as men or fathers in a critical manner, but it happens, as for example when a group of fathers is discussing the most suitable time to take parental leave. When Jim declares that it would be nice to stay at home with his child during the Winter Olympics, this is followed by intense laughter from Mikael and Carl. In an ironic manner, the fathers are making fun of prejudices and presumptions related to men's take-up of parental leave and interests for sports. The conversation illustrates that the phenomenon of 'fathers' spaces' has to be commented and reflected upon by its visitors. By being *reflexive* about men's take-up of parental leave, Jim and his fellow fathers show *awareness* of the somewhat awkward gathering of fathers they take part in, and, perhaps, also of men's greater possibility to choose a proper amount of engagement in caring for children.

Secondly, it is essential to demonstrate one's involvement in children's actions and wellbeing. Like Johnny and a few other fathers, you can occupy the floor by lying down on your back with your hands under your neck while children are climbing on your body. During the talks between the fathers you can simultaneously keep an eye on your child's movements in the room, and, if or when a conversation stops, you can engage in a joint and silent study of the children's interplay, in which looks and facial expressions among and between fathers reveal feelings of contentedness. In a conversation between Niklas and Lars concerning children's refusal to eat, feelings of frustration are being expressed. While Lars goes on telling that he and his partner have seen a child psychologist to get advices directed to them as parents, Niklas confirms Lars's story with insight.

By showing genuine interest in one's own children, and by taking other fathers' perspectives on their relations to their children seriously, a child-oriented atmosphere is created, making it possible for men to relate to each other as main providers of child-care. This may downplay gendered differences within parenting and can make men more confident in caring for children. Those fathers who may feel uncomfortable in gender-mixed meeting places for parents do not have to worry for being seen as tokens or as feminised men. However, the child-centred interaction mode among the fathers should not be seen as a revolutionary feature within masculinities or as a gender equaliser. Rather, I suggest that the child-centeredness being expressed among the fathers should be understood as an *unreflexive* gendered practice reinforcing bonds among fathers and between fathers and children.

A third and final example from the observations concerns what is not being said and done. As already have been stated, wives, partners, children's mothers, grandparents, and other family members, are rarely been spoken about. Family relations in general and female family members in particular are mentioned in some cases, but they do not appear in a striking way. Rather, it is the other way around. This relative invisibility, or 'non-mentioning' of women/mothers, is a characteristic feature in the conversations taking place at 'fathers' spaces'. But related to this, it is important to add that I have not observed any hostility toward women during the observations (although attitudes based on gender difference are being expressed). It is always hard to grasp what non-mentioning indicates and means, and since I have not conducted any interviews yet I have to be a bit careful when analysing it. However, a somewhat preliminary argument can be put forward. 'Fathers' spaces' are, to some extent, functioning as an alternative space for caring practises toward children and, possibly, as a 'family free' space. Such a space can make it easier for some men to do (female coded) parenting, in spite of, or maybe because of, the absence and the non-mentioning of women.

## Concluding remarks – care and privileges

The most prominent gendered tension in the organising of men as fathers, as it is played out within 'fathers' spaces' in Sweden, appears to be the one between *care* and *privileges*. Clearly, 'fathers' spaces' provide men on parental leave with a room for developing and discussing caring practises towards children, contributing to a view of child-care as an unquestionable part of fathering. I find this important and sympathetic. However, observing the situated activities and intra-personal relations within 'fathers' spaces' reveals that they are not based on an understanding of or an analysis of men's privileges to choose how much and in

which way they want to be involved in different parenting practices. This is a conflict that has to be understood and taken up by politicians and professionals; it is a dilemma that has to be conceptualised within a feminist understanding of fathering in relation to mothering. Finally, one also has to acknowledge that ‘fathers’ spaces’ have some potential for supporting caring relations between fathers and children, and, hopefully, among men in general.

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# Chapter 6

## Fathers on the Move? (Ex)Changing Experiences of Fatherhood in Italy

*Francesca Crosta*

*University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy*

*Brunella Fiore*

*University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy*

*Elisabetta Ruspino*

*University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy*

### Introduction

This paper focuses on fathers and changing fatherhood identities in Italy. The aim of this paper is twofold:

1. to discuss the plurality of fatherhood experiences;
2. to discuss some aspects of the relationships among fathers and between different generations of fathers.

The social, economic and cultural transformations that are taking place in Italy (changes in the labour market; globalisation, secularisation, migration flows, the feminist movement), in particular the changes in female identities, increasingly and inevitably tend to involve male partners, workers and fathers.

How are Italian fathers reacting to these major demands being made on them? Are they adapting to the changes in women's identities and needs? Is there a greater willingness to share household and care duties? Are contemporary fathers different from their own fathers?

We will try to answer these questions by using the empirical material emerged from a small group of semi-structured interviews with married and lone working fathers living in and outside the city of Milan (non probability, purposive samples). The results of the interviews enabled us to outline various paternal profiles (Crosta, Fiore, Ruspini, Zajczyk, 2007; Zajczyk and Ruspini, 2008):

- a) "traditional" fathers;
- b) fathers in "passive" or in "active" transformation;
- c) "post-transformation" fathers.

These are key issues in the gender equality debate. As Lamb (1983) wrote, one particularly crucial issue in the area of (contemporary and transnational) social and family policy concerns the rights, opportunities, and responsibilities of fathers.

## The Italian context

The Italian situation today appears to be a mix between tradition and “fluid” or “late” modernity (Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 2000).

In Italy (and especially in the Southern part of the country), despite the progressive postponement of first marriages and the decision to have children (also observable in the rest of Europe), traditional behaviour patterns and influences of a cultural nature are still quite strong. Marriage is seen as the prevalent form of union; leaving the parental home coinciding with the formation of a couple (Dalla Zuanna, 2004; Rosina, 2007). As a consequence, births out of wedlock are relatively few among all age groups. Cohabitation rarely occurs and when it does, it is very often for a limited period, prior to marriage and seldom involves the birth of children.

In Italy, the transition process to adulthood takes on a particular shape. The tie binding parents and children is a peculiarity in the Italian model. This relates to the heightened importance attributed to children and the intense support given to them – continuing even after they have married – in terms of emotional support, closeness and availability of time. In Italy, young adults of both sexes (especially males) live with their parents until they get married and are maintained by them as long as they stay within the family – even in families with a single breadwinner – whether the young person has a separate income or not. This phenomenon has come to be known as the *famiglia lunga* (the “long family”) (Scabini and Donati, 1988). We also mention the strong emphasis on the quality of intra-family care and on the priority of direct care by wives and mothers. The network of social relationships between extended family, kin and neighbourhood – that rests upon personal connections, affective links, networks of exchange and non-cash economy – still constitutes a safety net against poverty and social exclusion.

Demands for change and challenges have multiplied even in a familistic<sup>1</sup> context like Italy and today constitute an eventful horizon for the

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1 By familism we mean a cultural value that describes a strong attachment and loyalty to one’s family. This includes a strong reliance on family for material and emotional help. In a familistic culture, the norms and traditions of the family are transmitted to the younger generation, and usually people perceive these norms to be fair and legitimate. If family is seen as the crucial foundation of society, the sense of society is – specularly – not very strong, nor is the sense of the state.



“traditional” division of work between genders – polarised between the concentration on male adults of financial responsibilities and the concentration on women of family duties and those of reproduction – and for the hegemonic, patriarchal, one-directional male model. The changes in female identities, increasingly and inevitably tend to involve male partners, workers and fathers. The latest generations of women are well aware of the need for cultural training to achieve a satisfactory life. They achieve higher performances, their school careers proceed more smoothly, and they consider study more and more important; at the same time, they have high expectations regarding their entry in the labour market. In the Nineties women’s employment rates continued to grow and an essential equality with male rates was reached in the younger groups. This means that in families with young parents, both the father and the mother are (or were before the birth of their child) in paid employment as well as coping with their housework and caring tasks. As the supply of informal female carers has decreased, a significant trend is the employment of migrant female workers (many from Latin American and Eastern European nations) for home-based elder care, a development supported by institutional, political, cultural-social, and economic contexts within the country (see, for example Lyon, 2006).

We should also recognise the growing assumption of responsibilities by fathers – in particular among the younger generations – after the birth of their children (see for example Rosina and Sabbadini, 2005). A new phenomenon is also emerging on the cultural and symbolic level: the movement for fathers’ rights, as part of the more general men’s rights movement. In this area we find the groups for the defence of “fathers’ rights”, aimed at re-conquering the paternal role in the right to custody of children after marital separation and – in some cases – proposing a reformed image of fatherhood compared with the traditional model.

## Methodology and paternal profiles

The empirical material making up the base of our observations is composed of a small group of semi-structured face-to-face interviews with married and lone working fathers living in and outside the city of Milan<sup>2</sup> (non probability, purposive samples). These interviews were carried out within the project “Pariteia-Promoting gender equality in active European citizenship”,<sup>3</sup> aimed at promoting a balanced male and female

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2 Our interview analysis (based on face-to-face interviews) sets out to pinpoint ongoing tendencies, dynamics and transformations in the typical urban context of the Milan metropolitan area, which is often ahead of new social trends.

3 <http://www.pariteia.org/>

participation in the following fields: Employment market and professional life; Family and care-taking responsibilities; Managing decisions and power in public and private spheres.

We chose to interview fathers sharing the experience of parenthood, but differing in other features, so as to cover a wider range of situations. Ten fathers were interviewed in and around Milan, of whom five are married or living with the mother of their children, four are separated and one is a widower. Of the five single parents, two are in a relationship with a new partner with whom they do not share a house, and three are currently without a relationship. The age of the fathers ranges between 27 and 48 years. They are all employed: Five of the fathers work in offices, two work in the catering sector, two are engineers and one is an educator. The level of education ranges from a university degree, a high school diploma to a “middle school” leaving certificate. Five of our interviewees have only one child, four have two children and the widower interviewed has three. There are four children under the age of 3, while the others range between 3 and 19 years of age.

The face-to-face conversations were carried out in such a way that the interviewee was free to follow the flow of his thoughts, emotions and feelings with a limited number of inputs from the interviewer and with a limited number of interruptions. Our aim was to enable the fathers to express themselves as freely as possible (in their own words and language) on the subject of their own personal view of the aspects which were subjects of the interview, i.e. the amount of time devoted to care of their home, their children, their relationship with the children’s mother.

The analysis of the interview material enabled us to outline the following, empirically based,<sup>4</sup> paternal profiles:

- a) “traditional” fathers;
- b) fathers undergoing “passive” or “active” transformation;
- c) post-transformation fathers.

These categories should not be interpreted rigidly and schematically, but help us to see some of the basic underlying features in the on-going transformations of fatherhood. The creation of categories of fathers is thus aimed at simplifying a complex situation with blurred outlines, where one type tends to overlap another, with some interesting contradictions.

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4 In our interviews, we focused on the following themes: family organisation, paying particular attention to the sharing of housework and care tasks; relations between the parents; the father’s role in the relationship with the child; the relationship between our fathers and their own fathers.

In **traditional fathers** we find those men who almost completely reproduce a model still dominated by the conviction that their only duty/obligation lies in ensuring the financial wellbeing of their family and children. Although there may be a conflicting relationship or rupture with their own fathers, this does not prevent these fathers from being still completely centred on the work dimension and little on affective presence and care for their children. This type of father does not seem to reflect on the changes going on around him, which may affect the work situation of his partner and the difficulties of conciliating life and work times. He sticks to his position to the extent that his role is and continues to be that of a father-man who admits no compatibility or conciliation with the roles of the mother-woman (Ventimiglia 1996). The division of roles for these fathers remains a cornerstone in the management of children and the home. As in the Parsonian family (Parsons and Bales 1955), the father is responsible for a series of tasks and functions which are different from those of the mother; they cannot be considered as interchangeable, and are done at most only to help the mother, and not as a strict but fair sharing of household chores and childcare.

The following interview extracts seem particularly representative of this type of father:

I must say the one of the weapons used, alas, by women and mothers is this, that is they say: you are a father and you have never taken an interest in your child... well, this is one of the phrases you often hear... isn't it? No, it's not true... when you have time... let's look at Monday to Friday. As I was saying, first the alarm rings at 6 and you leave home at 7... if you want someone to earn a few euros in the family... and the mother works part time, and nowadays people working part time have limited duties and therefore an equally limited pay... so you have a pay packet, quite enough for some expenses and not for others... so you as a man, you as a father... I repeat: you either come from a well-off family or you are self-employed which can give you time and money... from Monday to Friday... Saturday and Sunday too ...again, you devote the time you have...you don't grab your child by the hair and take him out... (separated father, 37, two children, business agent, high school diploma).

I don't want to be a male chauvinist, but for a woman, motherhood... I am a man and so I'll never be able to feel this, will I? And in a way I envy them because in any case the relationship between a mother and her child is... definitely different and certainly more... how can I say? ... more attached viscerally...

closer and stronger than that between a father and child, and it cannot be otherwise because you carried it for 9 months and you gave it birth and we can't do anything... and the bonds are greater, but this is nature, I don't think you can invent who knows what in order to say or anyway to put into practice that man and woman must have the same rights and the same duties in this, because nature has provided differently (separated father, 37, two children, office worker, high school diploma).

**Fathers in “passive” or in “active” transformation.** Most of the fathers we interviewed belong to this category. Fathers undergoing “passive” transformation are those who submit to the transformation without desiring it. Unlike traditional fathers, their identity is less centred on work, but they are still convinced about the division of roles according to gender. For these fathers, the problem is that they feel “forced” to change their traditional view of the father-mother-children family, because they see that their own reference model demands re-formulation, above all as a result of the demands for revision coming from the needs of their partner. These fathers are however more concerned with having a relationship with their children which goes beyond mere support of a material kind. In several cases of separated fathers or widowers, the initial feeling of being lost and disoriented – due to the de-structuring of a rigid traditional model – leads to an increase of “quality” time spent together. The parental function and relationship with the children, which had previously been delegated to the mother, seems instead to be re-launched by the chance of a more exclusive, deeper relationship with their children:

One thing, for example, I couldn't do was put the children to bed on certain occasions, the result was the children only wanted to go to bed with their mother, so when I became a widower I rediscovered all these things, and from a certain point of view, even in the tragedy, I was allowed this privilege, I mean that things I couldn't do before I managed to achieve, although this isn't the most appropriate term... it was also a good rediscovery. Before, certain things were only done by my wife and then I started to do them all myself. If there's one thing I've noticed it's that in having to be a father and a mother, sometimes there are also advantages, in the sense that if the child doesn't have two reference points, it's just you, so he asks you for everything, I need this, this has happened, please explain, so you create a relationship, a more intense bond with the children (widowed father, 41, three children, office worker, high school diploma).

Fathers in “active” transformation are those who seek to detach from the model of their own father, trying with great difficulty to construct a more affective relationship with their children and their partner. These fathers seem to focus not only on the quality of time spent with their children, but also on the number of hours, and they are willing to question behaviours, choices and consolidated expectations. Unlike the fathers in passive transformation, who seem disoriented by the change, this type of father is ready to take up the challenge and attempt to leave behind a model, that of the father who has no family responsibilities except of a financial nature, to take up another able to give more satisfaction.

An abyss... yes, an abyss... I mean... my father is work, work, work, work and more work and that's all. He has never done anything in the home and... but for God's sake, I don't blame him at all... because 50 years ago that's what it was like he had his role and he kept to it.. although he was I think attentive... I mean he took part in decision making... I mean the important ones, right? Well, even if he took part, but it was always our mother who took us, wasn't it? But at the same time he was also attentive to us... I have some very pleasant memories of time spent with my father, but very, very few (Separated father, 37, two children, office worker, high school diploma).

I am better with my son. When I was little I never played with my father. I care more for my children. He spent time with us when he was on holiday, otherwise he worked and then took care of the garden (Married father, 30, one child, engineer, degree).

... there is more physical affection ... definitely... I missed out on that, especially from my father... so zero cuddles, kisses, hugs... very few, and I discovered this with my son... but maybe, I don't know... maybe I wanted a child for this reason... definitely (Separated father, 39, one child, office worker, degree in philosophy).

**Post-transformation fathers** are those who “since they were young” have been socialised to become a present, responsible father. The fathers of these fathers were active men, collaborating with their partners and willing to deal with the relationship with their children. To a certain extent they might be considered the sons of “fathers in transformation”, where the change from an authoritarian-institutional fatherhood to a more relational-interactive one is seen not only in the interviewees but also in their fathers.

I used to cook at school and here again my Dad taught me something, but since it was my father who cooked at home... yes all the men in our family... (he laughs)... times have changed in any case, it's not like it used to be when fathers just sprawled on the sofa... a thing I never saw my father do... and the mother did the cleaning... no, I don't agree with that (Married father, 27, one daughter, fast-food assistant, catering diploma).

These fathers show a greater serenity and less anxiety in their relationship with their children, and less difficulty in handling the relationship with their partner. This type of father is less likely to base his reasoning on gender stereotypes in the upbringing of the children, decidedly detaching from the idea of a father with certain specific functions. They also seem willing to become more used to the bodily care of others in a way that improves the quality of relationships and does not lead to dominance (Hearn, 1999).

## Some conclusions

Even if our interviews do not enable us to generalise about the results, the main impression we may draw from our research is that the lives of these fathers is marked by often contradictory experiences. Here traditional aspects are mixed and overlapped by the desire to experience full, satisfying fatherhood going well beyond financial support.

Diversity of fatherhood models is evident. Father involvement is a multifaceted and complex experience. The “fathers in transition” want to spend time with their children and they are willing to negotiate with their partner. They consider themselves to be “ready to take up the challenge”. “Post transformation fathers” have passed the phase of negotiation and see domestic tasks as something as something not problematic or exceptional. Usually these men grew up in a family where a “responsible” father was present.

However, the desire to keep a distance and be “different” fathers does not seem to be easily achieved. Many of our fathers have to come to terms with the (traditionally male) difficulty of having to look inside himself, recognising his weaknesses and knowing how to deal with them (not only in himself, but also with his partner, friends and parents: Dériu, 2005). Several fathers, when asked if they ever compared their upbringing of their children with other fathers, answered that they did not know many. This is a further aspect which results in the lack of reference points, and also makes it difficult to compare friends or acquaintances sharing the same experience.

Well... let's say among my friends, the people I see, to tell the truth there aren't very many people who have children, and the few I have compared myself with, we are quite similar on the whole, but we don't have many samples to make statistics... so I don't know... that is, quite honestly I can't answer this question because most of my friends have girlfriends or are married but they haven't any children and so.... (Married father, 35, one child, engineer, degree)

I don't know any fathers... at work there are two, but they're old... I couldn't compare with them (Married father, 27, one daughter, fast-food assistant, catering diploma).

I also compare with Silvia (his wife)'s upbringing, I mean... I haven't got many friends who are also fathers... the friends I had before I became a father are still not fathers... I have a few friends... I do have a few friends who are fathers, and I have compared notes with them... we have different ideas, some are more like me, but I have never found anyone who thought the same as me... everyone has his own way of being a father, in a way (Married father, 27, one child, educator, degree in sociology).

Following Kathleen Gerson (1993), many fathers have moved away from the breadwinner model. At the same time, she suggests that an alternative model of fatherhood had not become dominant. The basis for breadwinner model of fatherhood has thus been attenuated, creating much uncertainty about what it means to be a "good" father (Waller and McLanahan, 1999).

Fatherhood is a complex experience: this complexity is a challenge facing researchers and policymakers as they attempt to conceptualize, study, and promote fathers' involvement with their children.

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# Chapter 7

## Prostitution: Some voices of young men from the south and the north

*Patrick Govers*

*“Le monde selon les femmes”, Belgium*

### Introduction

Considering prostitution from a theoretical gender point of view implies that at least two kinds of difficulties, of methodological and more political nature, have to be faced. The methodological difficulties lie in the relative absence of the prostitute’s clients in sociological and anthropological studies (Roux, 2009; Chejter, 2010). More over, when researchers, in their talks with male clients or men, try to focus on the prostitution’s client, very quickly the focus is changed to the prostitute herself, and the male client’s face disappears from the stage (Hart, 1994).

With regard to the global political arena, the situation is even more delicate: two feminist positions are at stake. One which aims at criminalizing the commercial sex industry, specially the criminalization of the demand of prostitution (this approach is supported by, for instance, the European women lobby).<sup>1</sup> The latter which is the opposite position: the “sex work” is legitimate work (this approach is supported by groups like “*Global alliance against trafficking in women*” and “*Network of sex workers project*”). These groups defend women’s rights to self determination, work and self expression (Mottier, 2008; Harcourt, 2009; Jeffreys, 2010).

Dealing with these issues is not very easy. Nonetheless, there is a social and political emergency to do so. As an activist member of a feminist NGO, I have to cope with these issues because today, in Belgium, the debate is particularly very virulent. As in the rest of Europe, the Belgian politician has to take a position on prostitution. Broadly said, two main policies can be distinguished in the E.U. nowadays. One that legalizes prostitution (as is the case in the Netherlands and Germany) and another that seeks to criminalize the client (as for instance in Sweden (Mans-

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1 Concerning the feminist approach of prostitution in Argentina, see Susana Beatriz Gamba (2007:270-274). For a very short summary of the debate around feminism and prostitution since the nineteenth century in Europe, see Veronique Mottier (2008: 49-74).

son, 2004). But between these two attitudes, there is another one which seems to emerge. I propose to call it, for the moment, the pragmatic stand. It combines three kinds of arguments: a) in an ideal world there will be no place for sex worker; b) but unfortunately men have natural sexual necessities; c) that's why it is better to tolerate prostitution and to open prostitute centers (called Eros center) that will be administrated by a social NGO.<sup>2</sup>

## The starting point of the project

As a feminist NGO centered on development education, "Le Monde selon les femmes" has relations with NGO's and professionals from the South. Among these contacts, the collaboration with Silvia Chejter, feminist Argentinean sociologist and professor in the University of Buenos Aires, is a very old. Four years ago, Silvia Chejter undertook with her students an inquiry focused on the prostitution's client in Buenos Aires.<sup>3</sup> It is this inquiry that served as an impulse to reflect on a development of a strategy campaign about prostitution. Rapidly, the NGO staff agreed that the political position to be held would be the abolitionist position and that men implication in the campaign would be an important target to achieve.

This is the starting point of the project to develop an audiovisual material that would reflect the young men's point of view but in a specific way, that is to say, clearly militant: to question the men and their role in regard to prostitution.<sup>4</sup> Before explaining what has been the methodology used to make it concrete, it is important to say a few words about the assumptions that underlined the work undertaken. Firstly, a strong belief shared by the NGO is that, without the implication of men, it would be impossible to reach a broad audience and gain visibility in the public space debate. In other words; it is essential to politicize work with

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2 The pragmatic stand enlightens that the prostitute center will improve the working conditions of sex workers as recognizing in the same time that there will still exist an underground prostitution. It is important to add that this is not science fiction: the project is nearly to start at Liège, Belgium.

3 The inquiry lasted two years (2006-2007). 115 prostitution's client, aged between 21 and 78 years old from different social class living mostly in Buenos Aires, were interviewed. The analysis of the empirical corpus, as Silvia Chejter (2010: 8) wrote it, is a militant lecture focused on the prostitution client discourse.

4 This approach is rooted in the theoretical feminist point of view according to what male informants interviewed on prostitution's client, avoid facing up to the issue of responsibility (Angie Hart, 1994: 64).

men on masculinities.<sup>5</sup> Second, it is important to assure that the debate which has to be initiated by the young men will be suitable for a critical feminist analysis.<sup>6</sup> Third, the commitment about the necessity to control by and in association with feminist organizations is highly valorised as a main ethical principle of the project.<sup>7</sup>

To conclude, it is important to mention the limitations of this kind of project. Apart of materialistic preoccupations, we knew before initiating the project that it would be impossible to encompass a very broad spectrum of representations referring to men and prostitution. This prior intellectual feeling lead us to be especially very careful of preventing any stigmatized speech which effects would be counterproductive. Nonetheless as it came out, even if we succeeded to address oneself to the men's responsibilities, we are aware that the main focus of the two video clips is the hegemonic masculinity with its topics upon men as driven by sex and the relations linking prostitution and the more global context of extreme commoditization which seems to overlap the entire human experience.<sup>8</sup>

## How to organize workshop about prostitution's client with young men?

The decision to go forward with the project has been taken in the beginning of January 2010. But we really started to work on the project in June 2010. At the same time, we decided to organize three groups of young men: in Buenos Aires, Brussels and Paris. The first thing we had to

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5 As Connell expressed (Emily Esplen and Alan Greig, 2008: 21) "studying the historical and contemporary forces that continue to shape gender ideologies and their practices is a critical aspect of politicising work with men on masculinities. Such studies reveal not only the reality of gender change but also the necessity of working for such change not merely through personal change work with individual men, but also through political engagement with structures of male power."

6 Basically, it refers to the fact of power relations between men and women, in others words; the recognition of the existence of a socio economical system called patriarchy, or more accurately, transpatriarchies (concept used by Jeff Hearn 2009: 1), "to speak of the structural tendency and individualised propensity for men's transnational gender domination".

7 See Jeff Hearn (2000: 259), Emily Esplen (2009).

8 See Ken Plummer (2005: 186) who described a male hegemonic model of sexuality as "An essentializing narrative has taken hold that portrays men as driven by sex; focused on their penises; in persistent need of orgasm; and often as borderline, if not actual rapists". See also Jeff Hearn (2008: 37) who expresses that "Sexualities persist in relations with other social phenomena, social experiences, and social inequalities – around gender, class, ethnicity/racialization, embodiment and multiple intersexualities".

cope with was the manner to communicate upon the project presented as a two days workshop on men and prostitution. How do we have to communicate upon it? How do we have to diffuse the information to recruit young men? Which type of criteria do we have to use for the selection of young men interested by the workshop?

What everybody agreed upon (i.e. the person in charge of the project in the NGO – Pascale Maquestiau and Patrick Govers- and Silvia Chejter) was that the invitation for the workshop had to clearly mention the purpose: to deliver a clear message on the specific feminist point of view about prostitution, opposed to legalization. The invitation also had to underline that the participation of young men was very important for the debate on this topic. Upon these bases, the invitations (via email) were sent in the three places. Regarding to Buenos Aires, Silvia Chejter was in charge to contact people. She did it via her network, especially her students and close friends. In the case of Paris, it's Grégoire Théry, president of "Le Nid"<sup>9</sup> association who managed to forward the invitation. And in the case of Belgium, the Belgian young film director diffused the invitation.

As a result of this networking, the Buenos Aires workshop included seven young men. Two are Silvia Chejter's students, they took part at the prostitution's client inquiry and thus they manage sociological and political view of the topic meanwhile the other participants didn't have specific knowledge on the topic. Nonetheless they were all, in some way, committed to the socio economical realities of their country. The Paris workshop had to be cancelled because of a lack of enough participants. The Brussels workshop brought together five people. The profile of these participants is very diverse; nobody had specific knowledge of the subject. A few reasons can explain this weak participation, among these: to speak about prostitution for young men remains something uneasy, the workshop duration to have two days left isn't especially common for young men.

One more thing has to be said regarding the organization of the workshop: the means to hold it and to produce the video clip. We had really a very small budget; mainly we counted on a subvention (6000 euros) from the Belgian women men equality Institute. Although the budget was very short, we arrived to produce a video clip of high quality

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9 Le Nid is a French NGO which aim is to abolish prostitution. For a critic insight of this NGO, see Lilian Mathieu (2004: 173-174).

level. We were lucky to count on two professional film directors<sup>10</sup> as also professional material for the recording and the assembly work. Also, we had the opportunity to have access to very nice space to achieve the workshop: a small theatre (Buenos Aires)<sup>11</sup> and a very nice sunny private house (Brussels).

## Welcome to the land of free individual choice

Nowadays the victimization discourse is regarded as politically incorrect. Instead of this, the celebration of the free individual choice is becoming very popular. The victim is perceived as a loser and nobody likes to be considered as such.

In a recent TV talking show about prostitution and the public space, this kind of logic was at work.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the presence on the TV stage of a disabled person emphasized the fact that people with disabilities (as well as elders) have the right to sexual life. From this point of view, it was argued that it would be important to reconsider the legitimating of sex worker, understood as a professional with specific skills, able to assure access to sexuality for handicapped and elders.

In the last twenty years, both in the West and in Asian countries, prostitution has been used as a tool of economic development. As so far we have entered in the humanitarian governance, say, to display morals feelings in contemporaries' policies (Fassin, 2010), we have to be pragmatic. That is why giving the management of prostitute centers to social NGO's is something upon what politicians might agree rapidly.

¡Yo no!

## Afterwards

A few weeks after the GEXcel conference, I received good news: the municipality of Liège gave up the idea of opening in the town an eros center administrated by a social NGO. For sure, as a feminist friend told me, this was the result of feminist lobbying. But in the same time I thought about what we had debated during the workshop. Amongst many interesting discussions, I remembered what Anna Zobnina said

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10 In Argentina, Santiago Martin Alvarez was the film director. He has a huge experience in the realisation of participative video clip for the UNICEF. Also he is teaching in the audio visual department of the University of Salta (northern part of Argentina). Concerning Belgium Boris De Visccher was the film director assisted by Santiago Martin Alvarez.

11 Teatrino "La Escalera" (avenida Juan B. Justo 889, Buenos Aires)

12 The program is called "Controversy" and it takes place on Sunday midday. See RTL TVI of the seventeen of April 2011.

about feminism in regard of prostitution: the difficulty to go past the dichotomy abolitionist versus regulationist. Also, the fact that the presentation of the two clips “Stop prostitution” during the final session of the conference has raised controversy reminded in my head as something very puzzling. All in all, I decided to review some literature. The following text has to be considered as an interpretative essay to situate, more consciously as a social scholar and activist, the audiovisual material presented during the workshop.

After reviewing the literature, it seems to me that the complexity of debates on prostitution is related to the fact that a) they are part of a broader struggle for the definition of a good exercise of sexuality, b) they are closely related to other issues such as public health, public order, migration, drugs, c) they deal with contradictory representations of the prostitute, d) they question the limits of the state competence field. In other terms, prostitution encompasses not only methodological and political aspects but also political and moral economy issues.

Besides the large consensus nowadays about the importance of the development of the sex industry (Hearn, 2006; Agustín, 2007; Bernstein, 2001, 2007; Holgado and Fernández, 2008; Hubbard, 2008;<sup>13</sup> Juliano, 2008) there is a huge radicalism regarding to the posture towards prostitution viewed as something to be abolished or as something to deal with. The expression “carceral feminism”<sup>14</sup> used by Bernstein (2007) in her analysis of the movement for the slavery’s abolition is a good example, among many, of this radicalism. As Laura Agustín (2005) and Jacqueline Sánchez Taylor (2001) emphasize, this radicalism does not really help to improve the understanding of prostitution and the shift in contemporary sexual behaviour.

Nonetheless, it permits to unravel a very interesting paradox: on the one hand there is a growing movement towards the criminalization of prostitutes and clients and on the other hand the development of the industry of sex is a reality in much of the Western European cities (Bernstein, 2001; Holgado Fernández, 2008; Hubbard et al., 2008). Taking into account this paradox seems to be crucial to me if we want to be able to investigate the mayor transformation that occurred in our societies in these ultimate decades. In Giddens’ words (1993: 96) “the transforma-

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13 In his article Hubbard uses the expression adult entertainment.

14 By “carceral feminism” Bernstein (2007 :143) means “...the commitment of abolitionist feminist activists to a law and order agenda and ... a drift from the welfare state to the carceral state as the enforcement of apparatus for feminist goals”. See also Holgado Fernández (2008:9) who underlines the “patriarchal behaviour” of abolitionist feminists in their struggle against other feminists who stand close to the sex workers.



tion of intimacy is about sex and gender but it is not limited to them... what is at issue here is a basic transition in the ethics of personal life as a whole”.

These few reflections can be summarized by the following question: how to construct a common theoretical framework which permits to social researchers and activists to transcend radicalism?

I do not pretend here to answer this question, only to prepare the ground. In this view, four points seem to be useful as milestones towards a real dialogue.

First, it is important to take into account the historical context of prostitution whether to redraw the evolution of prostitution or to analyse the social movements around it. In fact, it will allow us to reveal eventual contradictions in the practise of social movements dealing with prostitution<sup>15</sup> but also it will enhance our understanding of different concepts as sexual citizenship in regard of the ICT,<sup>16</sup> as the shift from a relational to recreational model of sexual behavior.

Secondly, there is a need to collect more empirical data about clients and prostitutes. If today we have more empirical data about clients as a result of new investigative projects as, for example, LICIT<sup>17</sup> in Barcelona, the lack of empirical data is still a reality. For instance, we do not know who the clients of adult entertainment are (Hubbard et al., 2008). To this purpose, agreement on a specific methodology is necessary. In this case, a qualitative methodology seems to be more appropriate in regard of the main objective: a deep understanding of the client agency. More broadly, what is at stake is to analyse cultural and social contexts of sexuality (Trachman, 2009).

Thirdly, as Sanchez Taylor (2001:761) puts it “It is important to work towards developing a theoretical framework that can accommodate the complex and contradictory interplay between gendered, race and economic power”. In other words, the common theoretical framework has to be grounded in a critique of late capitalism commodification (Bernstein 2001, 2007b; Hearn 2006; Holgado Fernández 2008; Hubbard et al. 2008; Jeffreys 2010).

Finally, I think that is also crucial to reach a consensus about the fact that it is useful to distinguish different realities of women (and men).

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15 Analysing the contemporary abolitionist movement through the historical lens is, in this sense, especially interesting. See Bernstein (2007a); Mathieu (2004); Agustín (2007).

16 It will be very valuable to intertwine Hearn and Bernstein analysis of the impact of the ICT on the sexual behavior of men and women.

17 LICIT: Investigation and cooperation lines with migrant sex workers (Holgado Fernández 2008).

This insight has been enlightened after the investigative work realized in Barcelona. Amongst different standpoints established by the research, one seems to me fundamental:

“It is essential to recognize, in the analysis and in the political practices, the reality of women who decide, consciously and deliberately, to work as prostitutes, from the reality leading by women who suffer violence and exploitation in the context of prostitution. Realities totally different which require radically distinct interventions” (Holgado Fernández 2008:14).

Maybe, this ultimate milestone is the most problematic but I am convinced that, without an agreement about it, it will be impossible to develop a broader level of understanding.<sup>18</sup> From this point of view, I am tempted to relocate the audiovisual material “Stop prostitution” as part of these interventions led to struggle against violence and exploitation in prostitution context.

## Acknowledgments

I want to thank all the participants in the workshop for their reflections which have been a real incentive to go further in the exploration of this thematic complexity. I also thank Nathalie Schippers, social researcher in the public health department of the University of Liège for her commentaries and her helpful linguistic knowledge.

## Annex:

### How to run a workshop with young men about prostitution’s client?

I was in charge of the workshop methodology. The inspiration to build it came from two documents: one that concerns men and addiction (how to work on a specific topic with young men)<sup>19</sup> and more theoretical one that aims to empower people (how to construct a message that can be used as a tool in the public space debate).<sup>20</sup> Based on these docu-

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18 For instance: the interest of Hubbard’s hypothesis (2008: 377) about “the role of adult entertainment in normalizing new forms of masculinity and femininity, the exoticization and the encouragement of sex-related tourism and migration”.

19 ASECEDI (2009). This guide contains a few exercises to stimulate the speech and the debate among men participants.

20 Majo Hansotte (2009). The concept of citizenship intelligence draws upon the Habermasian theory of communication. It articulates four types of intelligence (narrative, deconstructive, perceptive and argumentative). The final objective aims at leading a group of people to structure its wondering, to express it in an artistic manner and to disseminate it in the public space. For more informations, see Hansotte Majo (2005) *Les intelligences citoyennes*, Bruxelles: Edition de boeck.

ments, I wrote the methodological guidelines for the workshop which principal objective was clearly identified as the production, at the end of the second day, of a video clip named “Stop prostitution”.<sup>21</sup>

Before starting the first session, we oriented the main consigns that characterized the two days workshop: mutual respect (we are not here to compete with one another) and “no obligation”, i.e., if somebody does not want to do an exercise or does not feel at ease to do it, nobody has the right to compel him to do so.

The following summarizes the course of the two days workshop.

### First day session

Three specific objectives for the first day:

- to create “enchantment”, the illusion to form a peculiar group, a spirit community even if everybody knows that it is artificial;
- to define a collective conceptual frame on gender and male identity construction;
- to imagine collectively a strong message committed to prostitution abolition.

#### Part one: towards enchantment

To reach enchantment, three kinds of exercise were proposed: choosing an object, the anonymous ball and the female/male attributes.

- a. Choosing an object (objective: to start the session and to present oneself to the others)

This exercise requires different objects that are displayed on the ground or upon a table. Every participant takes one object and then presents himself and explains why he has chosen this particular object.

- b. The anonymous ball (objective: to speak out on the general topic (prostitution), to get to know the group, its own opinions about the general topic; to start building a collective reference)

The realization of the exercise requires sheets of paper and pencils. Everyone is sitting in a circle in a way that everyone sees each other. The facilitator guides the participants to write on a sheet of paper what they have in mind when they hear the word prostitution. Participants have to express themselves by a few words (two or three maximum). Then, every participant screws up the sheet of paper to form a ball. After that, one participant throws his ball to another participant watching him in the eyes. This participant catches the ball and ties up the ball with his own sheet of paper and so on.

In the end, the facilitator disarms the ball, reads the words written by every participant and afterwards he does the ball again. The ball symbolizes the collective construction of the group world vision.

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21 More precisely, to film a material that would serve for the assembly work. The assembly work took a few days in the case of the Argentinean video clip and a little bit more for the Belgian video clip.

- c. Female and male attributes (objective: to create a collective frame wherein it is possible to reflect on gender relation and identity construction; to visualize female gender discrimination)

This requires a large sheet of paper divided in two parts: one with the female symbol and another with the male symbol. First, the facilitator asks the participants to express what they have in mind about male and female attributes. The “rain ideas” technique is used; the participants are oriented to spell out ideas but in a very quick way that doesn’t allow any space for debate or controversy. Second, the facilitator erases the male and female symbols and asks the participants: In all these attributes, which one is more appraised actually in our society?

In the course of the discussion, the facilitator indicates for each attribute a plus (+) or a less (-). The decision about the attribute value has to be consensual.

Part two: towards the construction of a collective message

- a. Visualization of a DVD “Not for sale”<sup>22</sup>

The participants watch the documentary and at the end new activity starts.

- b. Actuation bar (I)

From a specific support, the facilitators perform a dialogic situation as if they were in a bar. This is why it is important to create a warm environment favourable to a conversation between two friends.

In the case of Buenos Aires, the facilitators developed a dialogue from sentences said by the prostitution’s clients published in Chejter’s book. In the case of Brussels, we used dialogues between two men who were going to a brothel.<sup>23</sup>

- c. The further methodological step is to guide the participants to address in words their feelings after the documentary and the performance. To achieve it, participants write on paper words and questions. The facilitators stick these papers on the wall to make them clearly visible.

- d. Actuation bar (II)

The facilitator asks if any participant wants to perform a dialogic situation.

- e. Afterwards, we guide the participants to draw pictures of their feelings concerning what they experienced in their body and mind after having visualized the documentary and the dialogical performance. Once the drawing activity undertaken, the facilitator invites participants to explain their drawing if they feel.

- f. Actuation bar (III)

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22 It is a documentary about prostitution realized by Marie Vermeiren in 2006 with the support of the European Women Lobby. Duration: 22 minutes.

23 These dialogues came from a documentary “The prostitution’s clients” realized by Hubert Dubois and Elsa Brunet in 2006. Duration: 52 minutes.

The facilitator asks if any participant wants to perform a dialogic situation.

Part three: presentation of some audiovisual material.

In this third part, the facilitators help the participants to make a video.

– how to structure a message

From the visualization of a few video clips, the participants have to agree on one word that would summarize the content of the video clip shown.<sup>24</sup>

– how to perform a message

The facilitators present some audiovisual material previously selected in order to indicate the participants various ways of performing and editing a message.<sup>25</sup>

Part four: towards a collective message about prostitution from young men's point of view

The last part of the session is dedicated to the construction of the bases of the collective message. To do so, we used the "rain ideas" technique. Then, the participants have to choose collectively afterwards amongst all the words written on the mural paper a few ones that will be used to shape the video script. Before ending the first workshop session, the facilitators guide the participants to elaborate, for the next session, a few ideas for a video script around the selected words.

### Second day session

The second day workshop starts with the socialization of the participant's ideas of the video script that they reflected on. One of the facilitators summarizes each of the participant's ideas for video script through a concept. The next step is to agree, among all the participants, on the concept that will be developed. It is like that that "Yo no" (Not me) has been selected as the leading concept that underlines the message "to be a client is to be an accomplice".

The concept of the video clip serves as the superstructure for the script. But the work that follows requires a lot of debate and consensus among the group. We must create the sentences, i.e. the content of the video clip and we must also imagine the way to film. In that part, it is very important to rely on a professional film director who has experience with this kind of mini video clip. Without their support, it would have been totally impossible to achieve the workshop objective.

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24 For this exercises, we used video clip made by Santiago Martin Alvarez called «Un minuto por mis derechos » sponsored by UNICEF and Kiné foundation.

25 Amongst the video clips: Amnesty international campaign, VIH/Aids, publicity spot.

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# Chapter 8

## ‘When in Rome ...’? On Multinational Companies, Codes of Conduct, and Commercial Sex

*Charlotte Holgersson*

*Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden*



### Introduction

This is an empirical paper exploring linkages between corporate codes of conduct and commercial sex based on interviews with directors in charge of HR and sustainability issues in eleven large Swedish multinational companies. The paper reports on the companies’ work with codes of conduct (the official set of rules that outline proper practices for the company) and to what extent these codes address commercial sex, e.g. visits strip clubs or brothels on business travels and in other work settings. The paper also reports on the interviewees’ own experience of incidents involving consumption of commercial sex in work-related situations and how the interviewees discuss the limits of the codes of conduct. The ambition is to initiate a discussion regarding norms and values regarding commercial sex in Swedish organizations.

The interviews have been conducted as part of a larger on-going research project exploring the linkages between commercial sex and “ordinary” work organizations, i.e. that do not have sexual entertainment as their primary goal (Hearn and Parkin, 1987). This project is positioned within the field of gender and organization, departing from an understanding of organizations as inherently gendered and sexuated. Organizations are constantly produced and reproduced in, and through, social processes in which gender is embedded and constituted (e.g. Acker, 1992; Ely and Meyerson, 2000; Wahl et al., 2001/2011; Halford and Leonard, 2001; Hearn and Parkin, 2001). Furthermore, sexuality and organization are both related to power and to each other in a dialectic way (Hearn and Parkin, 1987, 2001). Although patriarchal gender relations mark most organizations, gender relations are continuously challenged and re-established and thus in constant change (Hearn and Parkin, 2001).

The purpose of the project is to contribute to a rather neglected area within research on gender and organizations. Research on organization,

gender and sexuality has mainly studied so called subordinated sexual organizations (Hearn and Parkin, 1987). There is also a body of literature on exploitation organizations, i.e. organizations where sexuality is exploited for the benefit of managers and owners either commercially or sexually (Ibid.). This literature mostly focused the women providing sexual services and the organization of the transactions, and few have studied the clients. There are however very few studies that problematize commercial sex in relation to subordinated sexual organizations. One exception and a main reference for this present study, is Jyrkinen's (2005) study of policies and policy practices on commercial sex in Finland. Jyrkinen finds that few organizations have explicit policies on commercial sex, few interviewees had reflected on such issues and they referred to the organization's ethical rules. Moreover, the common ethical rules concerning sex trade were not very clear and if they existed, they were not necessarily followed. According to Jyrkinen, the lack of policies may not only fuel the sex trade but may also become a problem for the functioning and image of both public and private organizations.

In the following, the empirical material will be briefly presented. Some findings will then be presented under the headlines: How are the codes of conduct formulated and implemented? Do the codes of conduct address issues of commercial sex? Have the interviewees handled cases involving commercial sex? What are the limits of the code of conduct? In a final section, some directions for further analysis will be discussed. The reader of this paper is asked to keep in mind that this is work in progress.

## Empirical material

The empirical material includes interviews with directors in charge of HR and sustainability issues in 11 large multinational companies with headquarters in Sweden. It also includes the codes of conduct of these companies.

When selecting interviewees for my study, I wanted to focus on Swedish companies that had operations in several countries and where issues of ethics and gender equality were on the agenda. I was not interested in interviewing companies that were clueless of such issues. In order to identify companies I studied the websites of the companies listed on the Stockholm Stock Exchange with headquarters in Sweden. In total, 53 companies were examined, focusing on the information concerning sustainability on the company website. After reviewing the websites, they were re-examined again and the information was rated regarding corporate social responsibility, environment, gender equality and code of conduct. The scores attributed were Small, Medium and Large. Small represented no or very little information. The companies with a couple

of standard phrases were attributed the rate Medium and the companies with more specific information and more ambitious tone were attributed the rate Large. There were a total of 18 companies that had the rate Large on corporate social responsibility, code of conduct and gender equality. These rates only say something about the information posted on the website and does not necessarily say anything about the corporate culture or actual practices in the organizations. It was however a way of selecting companies that would probably have something to say about commercial sex, gender equality and code of conduct.

The next step was to put together a letter of invitation to the HR managers in these companies. A fair amount of time was spent trying out different wordings. The aim was to write a letter that conveyed the purpose of the interview without alienating the prospect interviewee. It was therefore important to emphasize that I wanted to discuss their code of conduct, gender equality and the purchasing of commercial sex in different work-related settings. It turned out that Only one HR director of the 13 that were initially contacted answered that he had nothing to say in the matter since the company had withdrawn all their business from markets where they had problems complying with their code of conduct. After having explained that it was precisely that kind of information that was interesting, the HR director agreed to the interview.

Out of the 18 companies that received high scores, 13 were contacted during Spring 2009. Due to time constraints, five companies were saved for a second round of interviews. Out of the 13 HR directors that were contacted, one declined the invitation and one did not respond despite two reminding letters. Three of the HR managers forwarded the invitation to the senior executive in charge of sustainability issues within the company. In sum, 11 persons were interviewed, four women and seven men. They were all white and have Swedish origin. They held either the position of director of HR and/or sustainability. One interviewee was head of competence development and responsible for training managers and employees within the company in issues of ethics and gender equality. Another interviewee was head of public affairs and involved in the company's sustainability audits.

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>W1</b>	Woman	ICT	Head of Corporate Human Resources
<b>W2</b>	Woman	ICT	Senior Vice President, Head of Group Human Resources
<b>W3</b>	Woman	Banking	Head of Competence Development
<b>W4</b>	Woman	Materials	Head of Group Human Resources
<b>M1</b>	Man	Engineering	Vice President, Corporate Sustainability
<b>M2</b>	Man	Engineering	Vice President, Public Affairs for the Group
<b>M3</b>	Man	Banking	Head of Group Human Resources
<b>M4</b>	Man	Materials	Head of Group Human Resources
<b>M5</b>	Man	Materials	Senior Vice President, Human Resources & Sustainability
<b>M6</b>	Man	Engineering	Senior Vice President, Human Resources
<b>M7</b>	Man	Construction	Executive Vice President, Human Resources

The interviews were between 1-1,5 hours long. They were recorded and transcribed verbatim. For interview questions, please see appendix 1.

This paper is the first step in the analysis of the entire empirical material. So for this paper, I have chosen to examine the transcripts with a couple of questions in mind: how the companies work with their codes of conduct, how are they implemented in different countries with different legislations, are issues of commercial sex addressed, have the interviewees handled cases involving commercial sex, what are the limits of the code of conduct, i.e. what extent does the company have the right to control their employees' behaviour. While reading the transcripts I have also paid attention to how the interviewees discussed the difficulties in judging what behaviour was suitable and unsuitable, since this was a recurrent topic in the interviews that related to the issue of implementing codes of conduct across national borders. The companies' codes of conduct have also been examined.

When reporting on the preliminary analysis, I have selected quotes from the interviews as illustrations. If not indicated otherwise, the quotes are chosen because they are representative of a certain line of reasoning

among the interviewees. I have translated the quotes from Swedish to English.

This paper is only work in progress and therefore I ask the reader to handle the information with care and not to quote the text without my permission.

## How are the codes of conduct formulated and implemented?

All the companies represented in this study have codes of conduct on a group level. The codes are often divided into different sections. There is usually also an introduction about the company's mission, e.g. providing excellent services or goods or conducting a profitable business, and some basic principles, such as "add value", "respect the individual" and "fair business". Sometimes it also mentions the company's adherence to principles such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ILO convention and those formulated by the UN Global Compact initiative (although these may also be mentioned in other sections of the document). Then there typically follows a section regarding the company's behaviour on the market, for example not being involved in corruption, bribery and cartels; and a section regarding employees with principles such as providing a safe and healthy work environment, taking a stance against discrimination, recognizing employee rights to join unions and banning child labour. In addition, the codes include a section declaring the company's mission to conduct business in an environmentally sustainable way. Sometimes the codes have specific sections address the company's relationship to other stakeholders, such as clients, suppliers, sub-contractors shareholders and society at large or the community.

All companies have processes for disseminating the codes of conduct to managers and other employees. The codes of conduct are for example discussed in management development courses, introductory courses for new employees and managers. Some of the companies put the responsibility on the management level to spread knowledge of the codes of conduct to the employees. Several interviewees stress the importance of managers understanding and following the codes of conduct since they are seen as role models.

Some companies also disseminate the codes of conduct directly to all employees, e.g. when signing their employment contract they have to take part of the codes or have a compulsory course carried out electronically for all employees. Most companies also have processes for following up on the dissemination of the codes.

An important part of the implementation of the codes of conduct is also putting in place a reporting and auditing system. Most of the companies have a so-called “whistle blowing”-program in order to encourage persons to report on breaches of the code. Some of the companies have very advanced auditing and reporting systems for all sustainability and social responsibility issues.

The companies represented in the present study all have operations in a number of countries. The majority of the interviewees claim that the codes of conduct are valid throughout the whole company, irrespective of country and legislation. In several cases, the code of conduct was in some respects perceived to be superior to national legislation.

Another interviewee, explained that since dealing with commercial sex at work was not in accordance with the company’s policies, it did not matter if it was legal and illegal in a country. However, if it were legal in a country, it would probably not be reported to the same extent as in a country where it was considered illegal.

## **Do the codes of conduct address issues of commercial sex?**

Although none of the codes of conduct explicitly address the issue of commercial sex, all interviewees argue that it is beyond doubt that it is completely against the codes to consume any form of commercial sex. One interviewee explained that buying sexual services in work-related situations was not explicitly addressed in their codes or in their gender equality policy but his conviction was that it was completely against the company’s values. Other interviewees claim that it is not mentioned explicitly in the codes of conduct since it has never been an issue for top management, although this does not mean that incidents have not occurred.

Several argue that buying commercial sex in work-related situations, either with the company’s money or with the employee’s own money, exposes the employee for the risk of blackmail. This implies that the employee has acted irresponsibly and against the interest of the company, thus violating the codes of conduct. One interviewee said that buying commercial sex in work-related situations would violate the company’s code of “showing respect” which means treating others the way one wants to be treated oneself.

## Have the interviewees handled cases involving commercial sex?

Out of the eleven interviewees, four had handled cases involving commercial sex (two in their present position and two in their previous position). Several among the other seven interviewees commented that even if they had never had to handle such incidents themselves, they were aware that such things did happen. One interviewee explained that the company he worked for had stopped doing business in countries where it was difficult to follow the company's codes of conduct. They had found that the conditions for building businesses were too difficult in markets where the business culture involved corruption and prostitution. There were not even any economic arguments for staying in these markets since the costs of trying to create stability and control were too steep.

Another interviewee recalled an incident when he, in a previous position, was on a trip in Asia arranged by the managing director of a subsidiary company. After a dinner the managing director brought the whole group, consisting of both men and women, along to a porn club. The interviewee described the managing director as an authoritarian but popular person who, like a pied piper, could get people to follow him wherever he liked. As HR-manager, the interviewee said that he was not going to enter the premises and that he did not think the managing director should do so either. He had explained to the managing director that he would suffer for this in the future because if he would get people to follow him in to the club he would probably not get them to follow him when he actually needed them in the company's operations. This resulted in a long discussion in which the interviewee was accused of being too proper. The rest of the group had been quite silent and the interviewee was not sure how to interpret this silence but he is convinced that some felt rather uncomfortable going to the porn club. Since many were quite young, he believes that they just went along because they were insecure and wanted to please the managing director. The interviewee also believes that the managing director was not aware of how unethical his behaviour was perceived since the managing director had worked many years in Asia where this kind of behaviour was normalized.

Yet another interviewee had also had to handle cases where employees have visited porn clubs on the company's expense in Sweden. These visits were discovered when doing audits. The persons were given a written reprimand. This interviewee says that she always acts swiftly and forcefully because it goes against her own perception of human rights and of how business should be conducted.

When asked how interviewees had handled or would have handled a case where an employee had bought some kind of sexual service in rela-

tion to work, the most common answer was either immediate dismissal or strong written reprimand. A couple of interviewees said that probably it would not be the only reason for dismissing a person but it would definitely be the last straw. Several interviewees argued that it was important to act forcefully, especially if it was a person in a management position since managers' behaviour is very influential.

There were a couple of interviewees that also discussed the difficulties in assessing what was suitable or not. One interviewee argued that the limit between when someone was on duty or not was rather easy to identify, but what was more difficult was the character of the situation. A couple of interviewees evoked dance performances at corporate events as examples of the difficulty in judging what is suitable and what is not suitable. One interviewee remembered an incident where the company had brought together 300-400 managers to Europe to talk about the company's values. There were quite a number of women among these managers he recalls. At the final dinner they were entertained with a cancan show. He did not perceive that there were any sexual connotations to the performance, but a couple of women left the premises. The president of the company was very upset and the organizers of the event received a reprimand. According to the interviewee, this had been a turning point after which more attention was paid to female managers and their perceptions.

Another example was told an interviewee who recalled a dinner during a business trip to Turkey where women performed a belly dance. Her male colleagues had felt very uncomfortable and reacted strongly while she had found the performance most enjoyable. She concluded that depending on what you associate certain things with affects your interpretation and all this very much depends on the context.

## **What are the limits of the code of conduct?**

The interviewees were asked about the limits of the code of conduct – what is the scope of the company's demands on employees' behaviour? Several interviewees say that it is a delicate issue and not always clear-cut. All assert that when employees are on a business trip, they are always on duty. Most interviewees argue that the demands on managers are higher than on other employees since they have the responsibility of being a role model and are more exposed to scrutiny.



## Some reflections

The aim of the study is to provide a basis for further discussions regarding the linkages between multinational corporations and the sex industry as well as multinational corporations as arenas for the reproduction and change of gendered power relations. Following reflections are to be seen as tentative issues for further analysis, discussion and research.

Although the interviewees all claim that it is clear that consuming commercial sex in work related settings is not in accordance with their companies' values and codes of conduct, the arguments were not entirely straightforward. Some argue that consuming commercial sex exposes the company and the individual employee to the risk of blackmail and can therefore be seen as a breach of the codes of conduct. Others argue that it could be seen as bribery to invite and be invited to a strip club or brothel and it is therefore a violation of the code forbidding bribery. Although a few mention that it was just not decent behaviour to buy commercial sex, no one immediately mentioned that consuming commercial sex could be seen as a violation of human rights or of the company's commitment to gender equality (although when asked if they considered this as an issue of gender equality, several interviewees answered that this indeed was an issue linked to gender equality). This calls for further analysis of the different types of arguments (e.g. utilitarian, human rights) and what the consequences are of the different lines of reasoning.

Considering that the arguments are not clear-cut and commercial sex is not explicitly addressed in the codes of conduct themselves or when disseminating them, and that the companies operate in countries with differing legislations regarding prostitution, the scope for interpretation is wide. It is therefore not unreasonable to imagine that the codes of conduct can be interpreted differently depending on both the national context and the individual interpreting the text. Thus, the lack of policies explicitly repudiating commercial sex can both directly and indirectly fuel the sex industry (cf. Jyrkinen, 2005). On the other hand, there is a potential for change if these companies take an explicit stance in issues concerning commercial sex.

It is interesting to note that the interviewees' had all a taken-for-granted attitude when claiming that consuming commercial sex was not in accordance with the codes of conduct. It is as if it is self evident that such activities are not part of normal practices in organizations. If such activities would take place it is either due to a manager having "wrong" values or due to a (business) culture that accepts commercial sex. I would however like to further analyze in which way the interviewees explain why incidents occur. Of course it would also be interesting to make a cross-cultural analysis of the norms and values in other multinational

companies with headquarters in other countries where e.g. prostitution is legal.

In relation to this, it is worth considering the relation between the codes of conduct and national legislation. Most codes of conduct claim that the company is to respect national laws, but sometimes the codes of conduct differ from national laws. In this case, it is the codes of conduct that overrule the national laws. The principle of codes of conduct overruling national laws may be desirable (from a feminist perspective) if the company code of conduct forbids consumption of commercial sex, but under what circumstances does such a principle contribute to the expansion of the sex industry and counteract a more equitable society?

These are of course only a few reflections based on the empirical material presented in this paper. Further questions will be posed and by relating to existing research, the discussions will be deepened in a future version of this paper.

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## Appendix 1 Interview questions

- 1) Can you tell me a little about the background to your codes of conduct?
- 2) How do you work with your codes?
- 3) Do your codes or any other policies address purchasing of commercial sex, e.g. visits to strip clubs or hiring escort services in relation to corporate entertainment, events or business travel?
- 4) How far does the company's responsibility for the conduct of employees go, e.g. after work, when travelling?
- 5) Have you ever handled an incident of this type?
- 6) Which managers or specialists handle these types of questions? Does top management hear about such incidents?
- 7) How do you work with these codes in different countries with different legislation?
- 8) Is this seen as a question of gender equality? What do you think?
- 9) How do you work with gender equality across national borders?
- 10) 4 mini-cases are presented as basis for reflection. The cases are based on empirical data collected within the framework of the larger research project. The interviewees are asked to discuss what they recognize, what they do not recognize and how they would react.

