ABSTRACT

EUROPE-WIDE CRITICAL STUDIES ON MEN: THEORETICAL, SUBSTANTIVE, POLITICAL AND PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

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Over the last twenty years or more there has been a substantial development of the critical studies on men and masculinities. More recently there has been increasing social science and humanities research on men and masculinities that moves beyond the earlier sex role models and places questions of power more centrally.

These questions have been at the heart of the EU Research Network on Men in Europe (2000-2003), a 10-nation (plus 4 affiliated nations) network of feminist and pro-feminist researchers researching collaboratively on men’s practices in the countries involved. The network’s main foci are men in relation to home/work, violences, health, and social exclusion. This panel reviews and represents individual and collective reflections on the major theoretical, political, substantive, and practical issues arising in the conduct of the project, and the general development of the academic field. Theoretical issues include the extent to which research on men’s practices can be separated from other sociological fields; national and cultural contextualisation of the problematisation of men and masculinities; and the development of appropriate comparative measures. Substantive concerns include the relationship of men’s power and privilege throughout the countries, and the intersection of structural change in work and employment, violence, relative ill-health and social exclusion of some men. Political and practical issues that are important in the development of Europe-wide critical studies on men are also explored.