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.
Men are facing a challenge to share the responsibilities of family life and child care more and more as women have become an important part of the labour market. In the Nordic countries, possibilities for fathers to take a leave from work and care for their children have been guaranteed by the welfare state with various forms of economically compensated parental leave.

In the beginning of 2003, following the example of other Nordic countries, a new "father's month" of parental leave was introduced in Finland. If the father takes the last two weeks of the parental leave period, he gets two extra paternity leave weeks as a bonus. Being a leave for both mothers and fathers, the seven-month parental leave has mainly been taken by mothers. The bonus weeks are now used as an incentive for more fathers to take parental leave.

In order to understand the cultural and structural gendered dynamics of the take-up and sharing of parental leave between mothers and fathers in Finland, we collected a survey data in 2001/2002, consisting of 1413 fathers and 3300 mothers of children born in 1999.

In the paper, I look at factors related to the decision making of who will take leave such as having information of the existing possibilities; discussion or lack of it between spouses; calculations on the economic consequences of taking leave as well as possibilities and needs for a break from work and the degree of support at the workplace. I discuss the sharing of leave from a gender order perspective: how power relations between men and women in society as well as in the family are related to the take-up of parental leave.
ABSTRACT

DOMESTICATING MASCULINITY AND MASCULINIZING DOMESTICITY IN CONTEMPORARY U.S. FATHERHOOD POLITICS

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Since the mid-1990s, the self-proclaimed "Fatherhood Responsibility Movement" has managed to establish fatherhood at the center of U.S. national politics. This movement claims that fathers have become marginalized in "the family," with catastrophic societal consequences. Increasing rates of female-headed households as well as shifting conditions for work, family formation and care have allegedly contributed to the redefinition of "the family" into "mother and child." According to the Fatherhood Responsibility Movement, fathers are thus marginalized and "the family" has become "feminized." In response to this perceived situation, the Fatherhood Responsibility Movement seeks to reestablish the necessity of men in families, constituting fatherhood as specifically male in differentiation from the feminizing connotations of family involvement. However, by "masculinizing" fatherhood, proponents of “responsible fatherhood” engage a century long dilemma that is at the heart of constructing particularly male versions of parenthood: how do you masculinize domesticity and at the same time domesticate masculinity? The Fatherhood Responsibility Movement deals with this dilemma by converging on three longstanding and overlapping arenas for masculinization: heterosexuality, sport and religion. Simultaneously, these arenas are longstanding sites for competition and contestation between asymmetrically positioned constituencies of men. This paper aims to discuss the ways that the Fatherhood Responsibility Movement's masculinization strategies, while allowing constituencies to meet on common ground, also threaten to confuse and divide the movement.
ABSTRACT

The father as the hero of the day

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"We have a new guy at the marketing department, a young man, around 28 years old. He has a rather high-pressure job in the company, being a marketing manager, but he has taken a lot of responsibility for his children. He started by saying that he doesn’t work longer than four o’clock, because he must fetch his daughter. This was indisputable and everybody was very surprised and assumed that he would not stay long - that was their attitude. He was much more challenging than I ever was”.

This story is about a young man in full career, who openly expressed his parental responsibility. The young father was manager at the marketing department at a multi national company, one of the departments under the hardest pressure. He left meetings, saying that he had to fetch his daughter at the daycare centre. Fathers a little older than he spoke about him with respect and almost a little awe. Women said that he was worth his weight in gold.

In this paper I shall explore how men and woman discuss and construct ideas about change towards gender equity in relation to parenting. In the above presented discourse fathers who openly showed fathering practices at the workplace were seen as a main figure in the change for gender equity. Fathers in couples who to a great extent shared care work were described by their spouses as clever, whereas women working equally hard were not spontaneously described as a “ever mothers”. In the stories about “clever fathers”, they appeared as clever in comparisons with other men they knew, with men in general and with older generations of men and they were not in comparison with women.

My discussion derives from two anthropological studies one about working mothers and fathers, the other about young adults and from some recent articles from the mass media. The paper explores how change is constructed in relation to structures and politics and to agency.
ABSTRACT

THE REPRODUCTION AND CHANGE OF MALE DOMINANCE
IN POSITIONS OF POWER

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In Sweden, as in many other countries, most managers are men. In 1993 the Swedish government commissioned an inquiry1 in order to find out to what extent men dominated management positions in Swedish business life at the time. The empirical material consisted of an extensive survey among organizations and interviews with people that worked with the issue of increasing women at executive levels (in the study referred to as change agents) (Höök 1995, Wahl 1995). Descriptions given by these agents supplemented the statistics from the survey and enhanced the picture of the work for change. Nine years later a follow up inquiry2 was commissioned in order to once again measure the distribution of women and men at different organizational levels and the existence of work for change (see Regnö 2003a, 2003b).

This paper is based on the findings from the 2003 inquiry “Male Dominance in Transition. On Management Teams and Boards” (SOU 2003:16). In the first section of the paper, the empirical findings from the survey (Regnö 2003a, 2003b) and interviews with change agents (Höök & Wahl 2003) will be presented. Then, the more theoretical discussions following the themes of women executives in a historical perspective (Svanström 2003), women and corporate boards (Karlsson Stider 2003), management and gender (Holgersson 2003a), young managers (Linghag 2003), and work for change (Höök 2003) will be summarized. The paper ends with a discussion drawing on the results of the different chapters.

1 SOU 1994:3 “Mäns föreställningar om kvinnor och chefskap” (published in English with the title “Men’s perceptions of women and management” (Wahl 1995)) included contributions by Anna Wahl and Pia Höök.
2 SOU 2003:16 “Mansdominans i förändring” (Male dominance in transition)
Are there only ugly men buying beautiful women in prostitution? - The intersection of money, power and potency in the prostitution encounter

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This paper is based on a qualitative study in which 26 male heterosexual clients of prostitutes in Germany were interviewed. The interview material gives insight in how prostitution not only is a space to exercise or live masculinity but also a space in which masculinity is produced and reproduced in particular ways - for instance, the neglect of characteristics typically associated with being female (such as emotional and relational sex), the experience of a strong male sex drive, the connection of male sexuality with vision, and the cultural link between male sexuality and money. In my presentation I will focus on the last issue, the link between money, power and potency. Money has been theorised as being a powerful means – not only in prostitution. I will argue, however, that money creates ambivalence in the context of prostitution. This ambivalence is based on the historical background of money in Europe that links it very clearly to the issue of potency/castration as well as the fact that money is not a factual exchange value but a social medium for exchange. Furthermore, it implies that men who go to prostitutes pay for a service that otherwise they could not have. For this reason, some men are emotionally depending on the fantasy of a mutual relationship. This need creates a mystery on the side of the prostitute that is related to the mystery of the female orgasm in general (one can never be sure of what she really feels).

The relationship of money, power, and potency is not a linear one. In order to recognize it one has to gaze into different layers of social relations as well as cultural history. Additionally, it shows how money is gendered not only in quantiative but also in qualitative terms, which makes it an important part of the reproduction of gender identity through prostitution.
In an analysis that uses both aesthetic and culture theoretical arguments, this paper discusses the Austrian artist Günter Brus’ radical body actions of the 1960s as indications of a masculinity-project. The paper argues that Brus’ expressionist and dynamic body actions, which are usually read as neo-avant-garde scandal seeking happenings at the edge of a bourgeois society, may point to more profound culturally significant implications of body and even gender. The analysis interprets the skin as metaphor for a masculine shield that Günter Brus seeks to break in his actions. Finally, the male body is discussed in light of the latest research on masculinity.
ABSTRACT

BEING A FATHER AFTER MARITAL DISRUPTION – CHANGES OF ROLES, PRACTICES AND IDENTITIES

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The Czech Republic is the country with high divorce rate, substantial tolerance of divorce in public opinion goes along with that. Since more than 90 percent of children stays after divorce in sole maternal custody and 60 percent of fathers in a few years after divorce maintains no or just irregular contact with child, fatherhood after divorce may be regarded as a "voluntary" institution. How men after divorce manage the loss and handle dropping out of everyday contact with their children and in what way they redefine their fatherhood? Which changes the father’s role, identity and parenting practice is undergoing? Qualitative study conducted among Czech divorced fathers is showing crucial meaning of two - partly interwoven factors that affect the fathers’ identity and involvement with children. The first one in play is attached to the respondents representation of parental roles, in particular those regarding the gender division of labour and gender differences of mothers’ and fathers’ roles. The way fathers construct their parental identity develops from those representations; ether in opposition to female and mothers’ values or in more indifferent way. Secondly, the crucial is the relation they have to their child - which may be direct, child-centred or mediated by the child’s mother and in that way dependent on the unity of the couple. In the first case, we deal with the personal type of fathers’ identity, in the second with marital type of fathers’ identity. Innovative fatherhood strategies after divorce are undertaken by man who accept in essence the similarity of parental roles and who are able to establish personal fathers’ identity thus may be in direct dyadic relation with their child. Men trying to maintain satisfactory and meaningful relation to children after the split of the couple are constantly balancing in-between involvement and disengagement, between too frequently contrasting elements of fathers’ identity and masculine identity.
ABSTRACT

DO NEW TIMES REQUIRE NEW MEN?

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Estonia is undergoing rapid economic and social changes. I aim to study the macro level changes through the lens of discussions of “close” values on a micro level. My main approach is discourse theoretical and social constructivist, so this designates both a theoretical and methodological approach.

I interpret the findings from my participant observations, in-depth interviews and field work from a semiotic angle. Informants statements on masculinity and couple-relations are seen as signs or representations, in the system of representations and statements that is the discursive formation in process.

The starting point for my conversation interviews with new-generation Estonians, from a “cultural elite” is masculinity. The conversations drift between gender stereotyping and representation in movies and pop-culture, discussing how we were brought up by our parents, what masculinity means in couple-relations and gender equality. Informants also discuss official reports and statistics on wage differences according to sex, questions of parental leave and domestic violence. I have found that informants relate to at least three different discourses for gender relations: They discuss along lines of “Soviet” respective “Western” stereotypes and they talk also of a “Nordic Ideal” for gender equality.

Informants use these discourses for different levels of analysis and explanation, e.g. the “western” representation of Barbie and Rambo is used to describe gender stereotypes as commercialized and globalized, while the “Nordic Ideal” is related to as used by Estonian politicians as a means of EU-adaptation and legitimization of Estonia as Nordic or Scandinavian country rather than an Eastern state. Whilst informants are reflecting upon certain features of gender as constructions, there are at the same time features of gender and gender relations that are seemingly perceived as natural or inherent.

My aim is to show how informants in conversations use, produce and reproduce discursive features representing gender equality to make sense of their personal relations as well as of national and international politics.
ABSTRACT

“I’M NOT SO MASCULINE. I TRY TO USE MORE OF MY FEMININE SIDES.”
- Reproductive and subversive gender formations among male Swedish pre schoolteachers, hairdressers and nurses.

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In Men’s Studies masculinity has been linked to men and femininity has often been constructed as the opposite pole to masculinity (for example Connell 1995; Ekenstam et al 1998; Kimmel 1997; Kuosmanen 2001; Nilsson 1999). The term masculinity has been used to describe men’s lives, experiences and discourses and concepts that constitute male subjects. The term has been criticised for classifying men like subcultures and thereby miss the hybridisation of discourses and cultural flows that both reproduce and change gender orders (Demetriou 2001; Nordberg 2000, 2002). By using the term masculinity it is possible to study masculinity norms as a concept both linked to and free from the male body. But, as the sociologist John MacInnes (1998) has point out, is the term masculinity also problematic and restricted because it is mainly associated to men. Jeff Hearn (2000) argues for abandon the term and focus on men’s practices.

In Women’s Studies is often femininity in the same way linked to women and masculinity looked upon as a problem. Due to this, in my opinion, unhappy dualism is the imagination that’s reproduce men and women as two totally different categories upheld. When femininity is constructed as an opposite pole to masculinity has femininity mainly in analyses been seen as something that men distance them selves from and defines one self as opposite to (e.g Kimmel 1997). The often unproblematised link between men and masculinity in Men’s Studies has contribute to that men’s materialisation of femininity, ”male femininity” and women’s materialisation of masculinity, ”male femininity”, has been mostly unnoticed in Critical Studies on Men (Gardiner 2002; Halberstam 1998, 2002). The sociologist Lisa Adkins (2002) argues that people in the labour market to day are expected to perform both masculinity- and femininity concepts and to daily move between both concepts. Adkins high light that new concepts of gender hierarchies are emerging in late modernity that are difficult to analyse with the gender theories that often is used today.

This paper, taking point of departure in Halberstams and Adkins discussion and Judith Butlers concept of gender as performative and produced by discourses, discusses how men working in non traditional occupations use the concepts of masculinity, femininity and how heterosexuality as a hegemonic norm is structuring there gender formations. The discussion is based on 31 interviews with men and women working as pre school teachers, hairdressers and nurses in Sweden and field observations at eleven workplaces collected between 1996-1999. The aim is to develop new analysis concept of men’s gender formations in late modernity and some suggestions are made.

The results from the empirical study shows that men in non-traditional occupations both use the concepts of masculinity and femininity to reproduce hegemonic gender formations and to subvert them. In the construction of an male identity some concepts of femininity be in great demand, while other concepts concerning dressing, soft movements and tasks that also is linked to the stereotype of homosexual men as effeminate are seen more problematic because of the heterosexual hegemonic norms.

Referenser


Nordberg, Marie 2000: "Hegemonibegreppet och hegemonier inom mansforskningen”. I: Per Folkesson, Marie Nordberg & Goldina Smirthwaite (red.) *Hegemoni och Mansforsknings Rapport från Nordiska Mansforskningsworkshopen i Karlstad 19-21/3 1999*.


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Abstract

Contested scenes of civilized masculinity

A feminist re-reading of Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morals*

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The work of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche has been taken up by many feminist poststructuralist scholars. Especially his concept of ‘genealogy’ makes it possible to link the creation of meaning to the struggle for power and thus to the question of hegemony. But in all those readings of Nietzsche, the question of how the numerous ethnic and gendered references in the *Genealogy of Morals* has rarely been addressed.

In my reading of this text, I approach the highly ambivalent notion of the subject not only as a scene of negotiating the question of modernity and (christian) morality. I try to show that embedded in Nietzsches notion of the modern subject one can also find a contested scene of civilized masculinity. Thus, Nietzsche’s struggle against human ‘domestication’ in modern society can be read as an attempt to come to terms with the concepts of civilization and masculinity that had been shaped and reshaped in the discourses of his time. Whether or not this allows us to read Nietzsche as an early critic of Andro- and Eurocentrism or rather as their exponent will be the guiding question of my paper.

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