



Men, Masculinities, and Violence

edited by Alankaar Sharma and Arpita Das

Graduate Journal of Social Science November 2016, Volume 12, Issue 3

Editors:

Arpita Das, University of Sydney, Australia

Remi Joseph-Salisbury, Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies, University of Leeds, UK

editors@gjss.org

Guest Editors:

Alankaar Sharma, University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, USA

Arpita Das, University of Sydney, Australia

Copy Editor:

Nadia Hai, Carleton University, Canada

Web Editor:

Michael En, University of Vienna, Austria

Layout & Design Editor:

Boka En, University of Vienna, Austria

Cover Image:

Devon Endsley – www.devonendsley.com

The Graduate Journal of Social Science (ISSN: 1572-3763) is an open-access online journal focusing on methodological and theoretical issues of interdisciplinary relevance. The journal publishes two issues per year, one of which is thematic and one of which groups innovative and instructive papers from all disciplines. GJSS welcomes submissions from both senior and junior academics, thus providing a forum of publication and exchange among different generations engaged in interdisciplinary research. GJSS is published by EBSCO publishing.

For subscription inquiries, requests, and changes, please contact editors@gjss.org.

All the content and downloads are published under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs 3.0 license.





Contents

Contributors	4
Editorial: Men, Masculinities, and Violence	
<i>Alankaar Sharma and Arpita Das</i>	7
Involving men in ending violence against women: Facing challenges and making change	
<i>Michael Flood</i>	12
Why Study Men and Masculinities? A Theorized Research Review	
<i>Tal Peretz</i>	30
Militarization of Sikh Masculinity	
<i>Aakriti Kohli</i>	44
The Invisibility of Men’s Practices: Problem representations in British and Finnish Social Policy on Men’s Violences Against Women	
<i>Stephen R. Burrell</i>	69
Photo Series: Making Men and Man-Kind	
<i>Damien Schumann</i>	94
Doing violence: Some reflections on research, affects, and ethics	
<i>Mia Eriksson</i>	119
Counselling as an intervention strategy for men who use violence in their intimate relationships	
<i>Elzette Rousseau-Jemwa, Lynn Hendricks & Kerryh Rehse</i>	128
“Man Up”: Observing the Social Construction of Boys’ Masculinity	
<i>Elan Justice Pavlinich</i>	147
Loving Conqueror: Psychologization of Masculinity in Contemporary Kerala	
<i>Ranjini Krishnan</i>	152
“When they found out I was a man, they became even more violent”: Autoethnography and the rape of men	
<i>Gcobani Qambela</i>	179
Introducing perpetrator counseling in Western Balkan countries: The challenge of gender-transformative action in a patriarchal society	
<i>Maja Loncarevic and Roland Reiszewitz</i>	206
Thank you, reviewers!	222

Contributors

Aakriti Kohli, an alumna of Delhi School of Economics and Tata Institute of Social Sciences, is an Assistant Professor at the University of Delhi, and teaches gender, media and cultural studies. Her documentary films also intersect with her research on identity and culture. Her paper has emerged from her thesis on Martial Masculinity in Punjab.

Damien Schumann is a photographer/filmmaker who is inspired by social issues and human justice. Considered a visual anthropological study, Schumann strives to produce pro-active work for advocacy, communications and social mobilization purposes. His work can be viewed at www.dspgallery.com.

Elan Justice Pavlinich is a presidential doctoral fellow at University of South Florida's Department of English, where he teaches feminist approaches to fairy tales and he writes about queer approaches to Old and Middle English literature.

Elzette Rousseau-Jemwa is a research psychologist currently supervising research at Midrand Graduate Institute/University and the Project & Study Coordinator at Desmond Tutu Foundation, University of Cape Town. Key research focus areas include Intimate Partner Violence; HIV; masculinity; sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Gcobani Qambela is a graduate student working on masculinities, sexual and reproductive health. He teaches with Organization for Tropical Studies and Duke University, and works as a researcher on a multi-year MIT study. He cofounded Sakha Ingomso Lethu focusing on education outreach for youth in rural, township and peri-urban areas.

Kerryn Rehse holds a Master's degree in Social Policy & Management from the University of Cape Town. She has been working within the Gender-based Violence sector for the past 5 years and is currently coordinating the policy advocacy and communications for MOSAIC Training, Service & Healing Centre for Women.

Lynn Hendricks is a registered research psychologist currently working at the Centre for Evidence Based Medicine at Stellenbosch University in Cape Town. Other activities include Directorship of Research Ambition (Pty) and executive committee membership for the Division of Research and Methodology, Psychological Society of South Africa.

Maja Loncarevic is a social anthropologist and development practitioner with thematic focus on gender, human rights and health. She is specialized in the field of work with perpetrators. She has worked as the head of the thematic unit 'migration and health' at Swiss Red Cross, and program manager for Bosnia-Herzegovina at Swiss Development Cooperation. Currently she is responsible for Western Balkan programs at IAMANEH Switzerland.

Mia Eriksson holds a Ph.D. in Gender Studies and works as a lecturer in Gender Studies and Sociology at Linnaeus University in Växjö. She is also a poet and her chapbook *A Day in the Woods* will be released in the fall of 2016.

Michael Flood is an influential researcher on men, masculinities, and violence prevention. He is the lead editor of *Engaging Men in Building Gender Equality* (2015) and *The International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities* (2007). Dr Flood has had a wide-ranging involvement in education and advocacy.

Ranjini Krishnan is a doctoral student at Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore. Her doctoral work tries to engage with the erotic economy of the intimate human exchanges. Her broad research interests include documenting and analyzing the interactions between sexual, cultural and the psychological in contemporary India. She can be contacted at ranjinilakshmi@gmail.com.

Roland Reisewitz is a social worker, perpetrator counsellor and president of *agredis.ch*, a specialized service for perpetrator counselling in Lucerne, Switzerland. He has several years of experience in counselling of violent youngsters and men, implementation of training programs for youngsters and adults, and training and development of perpetrator counselling services in the Western Balkan region.

Stephen Burrell is a postgraduate researcher in the School of Applied Social Sciences at Durham University, based in the Durham Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse. He would like to thank Professors Nicole Westmarland (Durham University) and Liisa Häikiö (University of Tampere) for their support with this research project.

Tal Peretz is an assistant professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at Auburn University, studying intersectionality and men's anti-sexist and anti-violence activism. He is the co-author of 'Some Men: Male Allies and the Movement to End Violence Against Women' (Oxford), with Michael Messner and Max Greenberg.

Editorial: Men, Masculinities, and Violence

Alankaar Sharma and Arpita Das



The link between masculinities and violence is not unexplored. Many social science scholars, particularly in the last 25 years, have focused on studying and exposing the connections between masculinities and different forms of violence. Why, then, did we choose ‘Men, Masculinities, and Violence’ as the theme for this issue? The answer is simple: because we don’t live in a post-patriarchal world yet. Men’s violence, whether directed at women, people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, or other men, is inextricably linked to hegemonic and toxic masculinity. It is with the intention of contributing to the existing body of academic knowledge on masculinities and violence, especially by younger and early-career scholars, that we had issued our call for papers and artwork on this subject.

Addressing gender and gender-based violence is structural work wherein focussing on one aspect of the structure would not help if the other aspects were left unattended. It is important to recognise and address all different dimensions of the structure for interventions to be comprehensive and sustainable. Working with men, masculinities and violence is therefore not a substitute for working with women on preventing violence, but complementary. For too long work on gender-based violence has been initiated by women working with other women on recognising and addressing violence through a variety of strategies. It is important therefore to recognise the multi-faceted nature of working on gender and gender-based violence by also focusing on men, their roles, their own and society’s ideas of masculinity, the relationships they share with themselves and others including other men.

In the development sector there is a growing interest in working with men, which has manifested in the form of campaigns such as the ‘He for She’ campaign initiated by UN Women for solidarity on gender equality issues. On one hand there



is a growing acknowledgement of the need to get more men involved in working on gender equality; while on the other hand, there is also a growing body of criticism of such efforts, for example diverting limited funds for these campaigns especially when the women's rights sector is already under-funded, and the effectiveness of such campaigns towards the difficult work of reducing gender inequalities and addressing structural basis of oppression. Against such a background, it becomes increasingly important to examine some of the concepts around work on men, masculinities and violence.

This thematic issue is an attempt to contribute to a nuanced and critical understanding of the interconnectedness of men, masculinities and violence, especially by younger and early-career scholars. We are glad and excited to present this collection of eight peer-reviewed academic papers, one invited article, one creative writing piece, and two photo essays. We are also proud of the geographic and sociocultural diversity reflected in the papers and artworks in this issue; scholars and artists represented in this collection are based in seven countries, and their contributions relate to a wide variety of geographic regions and social contexts.

We open the issue with an invited article by Michael Flood, who is a renowned scholar and activist in the field of masculinities and gender-based violence. In this piece, Flood explores the need for involving men in ending violence against women. He highlights the intrinsic ways in which men's violence against women is linked to gender inequalities and posits gender equality as a solution, and emphasises the need to focus on structural inequalities as integral to meaningfully addressing violence against women.

Peretz discusses the idea of studying men and masculinities as a process of 'studying up,' and as a form of resistance. Although he acknowledges the implicit ways in which men are part of all knowledge production except those labelled explicitly feminist, he argues for the need to study men and masculinities because men as superordinate categories often go unmarked; and emphasises the need to study men, as they form a definite part of the gender relational structure, in order to be truly inclusive and intersectional, and to dispute the naturalness and hierarchy of these social structures. Peretz further mentions that social structures that stall gender equality have more to do with masculinity than femininity, and thus the study of men and masculinities is an important one for feminist projects.

Eriksson explores the experience and ethics of doing research on violence fo-

cusing on the affective relationship between the researcher and the research material, the ethical implications of such research and the politics of reading; and the methodology of writing. This is especially interesting as men and masculinity has also been associated with the lack of emotion or affect and this article makes an important contribution in looking at a researcher's own experience of doing work on masculinity and violence, and using 'emotional data' and 'text as felt' as part of the research experience.

Burrell focuses on violence against women, and discusses that although there are clear victims, there is a distinct invisibility of men's practices, as violence against women is usually viewed as a problem of women, a problem without perpetrators or context, almost as a gender-neutral and agentless problem with diffusion of responsibility, and a problem of 'the other'. He does this by examining the policy approaches of the UK and Finland governments vis-à-vis men's violence against women. This study is also interesting as it talks about two regions diverse in contexts and with different histories in women's movement building.

Two papers in this collection highlight the different ways in which the idea of masculinity is constructed, and how it manifests in two different contexts in India. Kohli discusses the idea of the 'dominant', 'brave' and 'martial' Sikh masculine identity and explores how the historical construction of masculinity intersects with contemporary discourses on Sikh identity and masculinity within the diaspora in the UK. Kohli explores how the conceptualisation of the Sikh Khalsa identity has its origins during colonial times when the performance of the Sikh identity was in projecting an image as warriors in order to seek legitimacy from military in the war effort. Kohli discusses the complex ways in which not only the Sikh identity has been privileged in its representation as warriors over other communities during colonial times, but also that the Khalsa identity has been privileged as 'the Sikh' identity. Kohli problematises this by discussing the social construction of the Sikh identity by the British due to ideas of the 'ideal' soldier as loyal, obedient and therefore subservient. This paper is especially interesting as it juxtaposes the identities of being a military warrior and being obedient and loyal. In another paper, Krishnan discusses the idea of the 'loving conqueror' and the psychologisation of masculinity in contemporary Kerala. The author explores 'aadyarathri' or the 'first night' as a distinct vantage point when the masculinity of the male partner in a heterosexual marital context becomes a point of surveillance and is constitutive in

the making of a gendered male within the Indian context. This paper is an interesting contribution to how ideas and conceptualisations around masculinity within different sociocultural contexts manifest themselves.

Two papers within this issue explore counselling as a strategy to address men's violence against women in two disparate geographical and sociopolitical contexts. Loncarevic and Reisewitz focus on the psychosocial counselling of perpetrators and perpetrator treatment programs in Western Balkan countries including Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania. The authors discuss the culture of silence around violence of war and how that impacts men and their masculinities in different ways such as men being unable to regain positions as bread-winners and heads of families in post-war situations. They highlight the need for perpetrator programs in such scenarios to adopt a gender transformative approach and provide alternate forms of masculinity, focusing not only on their lived masculinity, but also paying attention to their vulnerabilities thus creating a space for a deeper understanding of masculinity. In another paper, Rousseau-Jemwa, Hendricks and Rehse explore counselling as an intervention strategy within the South African context. The authors work with the idea of violence as a manner in which a man responds when his masculinity is threatened or challenged and therefore originates from a place of 'frustrated expressions' with men struggling to deal with and manage their anger and frustrations. Ideas around masculinity act as a barrier to seek support thus increasing their isolation and inability to deal with their emotions. The author therefore argues for the need for counselling services with inculcating a context of trust, providing counselling to men as 'clients' and not as 'perpetrators', pushing men to accept responsibility for the violence and acknowledging the violence that emerges from conventional social constructions of masculinities.

Qambela presents an autoethnographic account of rape and discusses that it is not just women who are victims of violence, but also men who are raped and assaulted by other men. Qambela discusses men's dominance over other men in a post-conflict setting drawing upon his own experiences of fear and vulnerability.

In his creative writing piece, Pavlinich presents a narrative of the social construction of boys' masculinity through a number of markers, symbols and signs.

Besides the academic papers and personal narratives in this issue, we are very happy to present the two photo series by photographer Damien Schumann included in this issue. The first photo series, titled 'Man-Kind', reflects Schumann's

interest in social construction of masculinity, and explores the notion of 'alpha male' by studying men's performances to attain and sustain their idea of masculinity. The second photo series, 'Making Men', studies the relationship between fathers and sons and invites the readers to contemplate the influence fathers have as 'masculine role models' on their sons' lives.

We are grateful to several individuals who have helped and supported us in bringing out this issue. We are very thankful to all the peer-reviewers for their willingness to review papers for this issue and for their generous feedback to the authors. We are thankful to Dr. Michael Flood for giving us permission to include his keynote address from a recent conference, as an invited article in this issue. We would also like to thank Devon Endsley for letting us use her excellent photograph for the title cover of this issue. Finally, this issue would not have been possible without contributions and support from members of the GJSS editorial team, namely Nadia Hai, Michael En, and Boka En. A special word of thanks for Nadia Hai as this issue marks the end of her tenure as the GJSS copy editor; on behalf of the GJSS editorial team we thank Nadia for her contribution to the journal.

We hope you enjoy reading these papers and artwork as much as we enjoyed editing and putting together this issue. Happy reading!

About the editors:

Alankaar Sharma is a social work researcher and educator focussing on sexual and gender-based violence, gender and sexuality, men and masculinities, child sexual abuse, and anti-oppressive social work. He is currently conducting a phenomenological study on men's experiences of sexual violence, and consults with civil society organisations on resource development and capacity building. Email: alankaar.sharma@gmail.com.

Arpita Das is a PhD student in gender and cultural studies at the University of Sydney. Her academic interests include gender, sexuality, intersex issues, disability and biopolitics. She has worked as an activist and practitioner in South and South-east Asia on gender-based violence and sexuality rights. She holds a Masters in Social Work from India and a Masters in Women's & Gender Studies from Europe. Email: arpitadas07@gmail.com.



Invited article

Involving men in ending violence against women: Facing challenges and making change

Michael Flood

Keynote address, White Ribbon Conference (*Global to Local: Preventing Men's Violence against Women – Research, Policy and Practice in One Space*), Sydney, 13–15 May 2013

I have long argued that men have a positive role to play in ending men's violence against women. And I've worked to foster men's involvement and to build networks of profeminist men. Indeed, I've been something of a 'cheerleader' for men's violence prevention. I've identified the principles which guide men's involvement in violence prevention. I've written at length about the strategies which are most effective and the standards for best practice in this field (Flood, 2005, 2014, 2015a, 2015b).

But rather than being a cheerleader today, I want to do something different. I want to highlight some hard truths, some of the challenges of this field. Because of that same fundamental belief, that hope, that we can make progress in ending violence against women.

I will focus on three key points:

- Men's violence against women is fundamentally linked to gender inequalities.
- Men's involvements in violence prevention are shaped by these same gender inequalities. Putting this another way, these same gender inequalities pose challenges for engaging men in change.
- Gender inequality is the problem, and gender equality is the solution.

First, I will look *outwards* – outside the White Ribbon Campaign and other violence prevention efforts, towards Australian society in general. After this, I will look *inwards*, at the field of violence prevention itself.



Men's violence against women is fundamentally linked to gender inequalities.

Men's violence against women both expresses and maintains men's power over women.

Let's start with the most basic point, that there is a crucial link between violence and *power*. Men's violence both maintains, and is the expression of, men's power over women and children. Men's violence is an important element in the organisation and maintenance of gender inequality. In fact, rape and other forms of violence have been seen as paradigmatic expressions of the operation of male power over women (Miller & Biele, 1993). Violence is targeted at and inflicted on women as a gender. Men's violence serves a *political* function, of subordination. There are ways in which all men benefit from some men's violence against women. And many men collude or are complicit in some men's violence.

Men perpetrate violence against women because they believe in gender inequality. Men assault and control their wives and partners because they believe that men should have status and authority over women, that they have a right to punish 'their' women; and that violence is a legitimate form of punishment (Adler, 1992). Men pressure and coerce women into sex because they believe in gender inequality: that they are entitled to access to women's bodies; that women are malicious and dishonest; that men should be strong and forceful and dominant.

Another way of putting this is that there is a crucial link between men's violence against women and *sexism*. Men's use of violence in intimate relationships "is particularly reinforced by sexism, the ideology of male supremacy and superiority" (Gamache, 1990).

Taking a global view, rates of men's violence against women are higher in societies in which manhood is culturally defined in terms of dominance, toughness, or male honour. Rates of violence against women are higher in societies with rigid gender roles.

Men perpetrate violence against women because of gender inequalities of power. Men's domestic violence in families and homes is only understandable in the context of power inequalities. In fact, it can be seen as a development of dominant-submissive power relations that exist in 'normal' family life (Hearn, 1996).

Again taking a global view, cross-culturally, male economic and decision-mak-

ing dominance in the family is one of the strongest predictors of societies showing high levels of violence against women (Heise, 1998).

This means that violence against women isn't a problem of a tiny number of mad, bad men. It's a problem of normal men, of men like me and other ordinary men. And a problem of the ways in which normal men have been taught to behave, the ways normal men have been taught to see women, and the normal ways in which we learn to behave.

Men's violence against women has social and structural roots.

Common explanations of men's violence against women show both an *individualist* and a *culturalist* bias. They focus above on attitudes held by individuals. These same biases then are visible in prevention strategies, again focused largely on shifting individual attitudes.

There are two issues here. First, the problem is not only individual attitudes, but social and cultural norms and ideologies. When it comes to sexual violence and sexual harassment for example, the problem is, in part, the social norms and ideologies through which male aggression is expected, girls and women are seen only as sexual objects, males' sexually coercive behaviour is normalised, and girls and women are compelled to accommodate male 'needs' and desires. These social norms means that sexual coercion actually becomes 'normal', working through common heterosexual norms and relations (Flood & Pease, 2009).

The second issue is that explanations of violence also must also be grounded in social relations and social structures. We must move beyond a strictly *cultural* emphasis in both explanation and intervention, recognising that 'violence has much deeper roots in the structural foundations of interpersonal relationships (and societal arrangements in general)' (Michalski, 2004).

In scholarship on violence against women, one contemporary trend is an increasing critique of approaches focused on individual and particularly psychological determinants of men's violence against women, and an emphasis instead on the social and structural foundations of this violence. There has been in recent years a resurgence of perspectives highlighting how structures of gender inequality shape violence perpetration and victimisation, both at the level of entire societies or communities and at the levels of relationships and families.

If we do not understand men's violence against women beyond individual violence, we will misdiagnose the problem and thus misprescribe the cure. We will fail to understand the true character of men's violence against women, we will fail to address its real causes and foundations, and we will fail in our efforts to reduce and prevent it.

I want now to extend these points, in several ways.

Individual men's use of violence is enabled by wider gender inequalities.

When an individual man hits an individual woman, or pressures her into sex, or sexually harasses her, his actions are only made possible because of a wider web of collective or structural conditions: patterns of gender inequality, structured inequalities in power, the social relations of peer groups, collective ideologies and discourses of gender and sexuality, organisational cultures, and institutional conditions (Stark, 2010).

When a man sexually coerces his girlfriend, he does so in part because his male friends think that this is okay, and some of them are doing it too. He's got close ties to abusive peers, and they're supportive of his dominating and coercive relations. He has what the research literature calls rape-supportive social relationships.

When a man sexually harasses a woman at his workplace, he does so in part because his colleagues and superiors turn a blind eye to harassment, there is no strong formal or informal commitment to a respectful workplace, and whistleblowers and victims are ignored or punished.

Recent work by Evan Stark and others brings us back to two key insights of early feminist work: First, men's violence against women in relationships and families should be understood particularly in terms of dynamics of power and control, what Stark calls 'coercive control'. He highlights that the abuse many women suffer "typically [involves] frequent, even routine, but generally low-level assault; and [includes] a range of tactics in addition to threats or physical force" (Stark, 2010). Often,

coercion is accompanied by a range of tactics designed to isolate, intimidate, exploit, degrade and/or control a partner in ways that violate a victim's dignity, autonomy and liberty as much as their physical integrity or security (Stark, 2010)

Second, this coercive control is made possible because of wider gender inequalities. Evan Stark emphasises that men's use of coercive control against women exploits persistent gender inequalities, and that this control both expresses and maintains gender inequality. This means that women's use of controlling behaviours against men is unlikely to work in the same way, with the same meanings or impact, as men's controlling behaviours against women. Men's use of coercive control against female partners is enabled by persistent gender inequalities (Stark, 2010). A man is more able to control his wife or partner because he can exploit her roles as a housekeeper, wife, and mother. Because she does most of the unpaid work in the house, while he is free to advance his career. Because she has been socialised to feel responsible for his emotional wellbeing, his sexual interests, and so on.

And make no mistake, a man using coercive control and abuse against his wife or partner may gain *benefits* from this. His abuse of her has a payoff for him, in terms of the emotional and material resources he gains, personal service, sexual exclusivity and access, and the reinforcement of a gender identity built on entitlement (Stark, 2010).

Men's violence itself may be practised collectively.

Not only does MVAW have collective or structural roots, but this violence itself may be practised or perpetrated collectively. Think for example of group or gang rape, of street sexual harassment, or other forms of violence against women, practised by groups of men acting together or colluding in their violence. For example, rape sometimes is practised as a means to and an expression of male bonding, as interviews among convicted rapists document (Scully, 1990).

Men's violence against women has a collective impact.

Men's violence against women has an impact not just on individual women, but on women *as a group*. Men's violence is a threat to women's mobility, self-esteem and everyday safety. This violence imposes a curfew on women. Sexual violence and other forms of violence act as a form of social control on women, limiting their autonomy, freedom and safety, and their access to paid work and political decision-making. Men's violence thus has the general social consequence of reproducing forms of men's authority over women. Men's violence against women also thus has

an impact on men as a group, in that it sustains the power and authority of men as a group.

Implications for prevention

Men's violence against women is fundamentally *collective* and *structural* in its causes, its workings, and its impact. This has some obvious implications for prevention.

To stop violence against women, we must address collective causes. We must address 'the structural conditions that perpetuate violence at the interpersonal and even societal level' (Michalski, 2004).

The state of the field

Now I want to turn our focus *inwards*, towards the field of violence prevention itself. I'll return to the theme of gender inequalities soon. But first, I want to briefly offer a stocktake of the field.

Just one historical point first. The presentation earlier today referred to White Ribbon's "ten-year history" in Australia, but in fact this is a 21-year history. The White Ribbon Campaign was first taken up in Australia in 1992, by a network of profeminist men's groups.

Good news: Some significant achievements: numbers, organisations, partnerships, policy support, community goodwill, evidence of effectiveness.

I will start by acknowledging the good news – that men's violence prevention has 'runs on the board', significant achievements. I discussed these in detail in the report released by the White Ribbon Foundation in 2010, *Where Men Stand* (Flood, 2010).

Briefly, increasing numbers of men in Australia are taking part in efforts to end violence against women. Some powerful, traditionally male-dominated organisations and workplaces have taken up the cause of preventing and reducing men's violence against women. There are now some important partnerships between women's and men's networks and organisations. Male involvement in violence

prevention has some real policy support, on state and national policy agendas. There is substantial community goodwill towards our cause. And there is a growing body of research evidence that, if they're designed and implemented well (and that's a big 'if'), violence prevention efforts among men and boys do make a difference.

More good news

There are other positive trends I've noticed.

There is increased regional and global networking. You already know this about the White Ribbon Campaign. But another aspect of this is the emergence of regional and international networks and organisations in the last decade. I'll mention two. First, MenEngage, a global alliance of NGOs and UN agencies seeking to engage boys and men to achieve gender equality, formed in 2004. MenEngage members at the national level include more than 400 NGOs from Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Asia and Europe. Second, Partners for Prevention (P4P), a UN regional joint programme for gender-based violence prevention in the Asia-Pacific, formed in 2008.

There is growing diversity in the strategies used to engage or address men in violence prevention. Much prevention activity involves either face-to-face education programs in schools and universities, or communications and social marketing strategies. These are now increasingly complemented by other strategies, including efforts to engage and mobilise communities, change organizational practices, and influence policies and legislation. In addition, within each level of the spectrum, there is increasing diversity in the strategies used. For example, at the level of community education, there is growing specialisation in the adoption of particular approaches such as bystander intervention, social norms approaches, and so on.

We are reaching men through new areas and in relation to new practices. There has been an increase in efforts to engage men in violence prevention through particular domains such as parenting. The MenCare project is the preeminent example of this. MenCare is a global campaign to promote men's involvement as equitable, responsive and non-violent fathers and caregivers. The campaign is described as having a preventative effect on men's violence against women by encouraging fathers to treat mothers with respect and care, diminishing the corporal punishment which feeds into cycles of family violence, involving fathers in preventing

sexual violence against children, and contributing to boys' adoption of peaceful and progressive masculinities and girls' empowerment (MenCare, 2010).

There is growing attention to violence prevention work with men and boys in conflict and post-conflict settings in particular. There are fledgling efforts at gender-conscious violence prevention among men and boys in conflict and post-conflict settings: in the Western Balkans, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Liberia, and Chad.

There is some evidence of an increasing orientation towards 'scaling up' – towards addressing the systemic and structural supports for men's violence. I know I know, size doesn't matter. But here, it does. Most violence prevention work with men and boys has been local in scale and limited in scope. To really transform gender inequalities, we must adopt systematic, large-scale, and coordinated efforts.

'Scaling up' here includes the need to address the social and structural determinants of gender inequalities, contribute to the development or consolidation of policies and programmes promoting gender equality and non-violence, scale up existing initiatives already being run by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other actors, and strengthen policy implementation (Flood, Peacock, Stern, Barker, & Greig, 2010).

Finally, there is an increasing emphasis on evaluation. There is a new mantra of evidence-based practice. It can be too narrow in its criteria for evidence, but it signals a valuable emphasis on the need to assess whether our efforts actually make a difference.

Much violence prevention work has not been evaluated. We don't have data regarding its effectiveness – and that's true, in fact, of most of White Ribbon's work as well.

Bad news: Some weaknesses of men's violence prevention

Just to continue this mapping of the strengths and weaknesses of men's violence prevention, I want to highlight three weaknesses.

First, much of the work engaging men and boys in violence prevention is conceptually simplistic. Much is not informed by contemporary scholarship either on interpersonal violence and its prevention or on men and masculinities. This causes a number of problems. Many interventions fall short of the elements identified

as 'best practice' in prevention (Flood, Fergus, & Heenan, 2009). Many lack a theory of change – of how the strategies they use will lead to intended effects. They do not necessarily address relevant predictors or causal factors for violence or its antecedents. Their actual activities may not generate the intended change, because they are too short, one-dimensional, or limited in other ways.

The violence prevention field's lack of engagement with scholarship on men, masculinities and gender also causes problems. In many projects boys and men are addressed as an homogenous group, all sharing the same relationships to violence against women. There has been little attention to how men's lives (like women's) are shaped by multiple forms of social difference including ethnicity, class, age and sexuality (Heppner, Neville, Smith, Kivlighan Jr, & Gershuny, 1999).

In short, too many projects are based on poor knowledge and poor strategy.

Second, the growing focus on engaging men and boys in prevention is politically delicate and, in some instances, dangerous. Mobilising men to end violence against women and gender inequalities involves mobilising members of a privileged group to dismantle that same privilege (Flood, 2005). In practice, a number of problems have been visible in violence prevention efforts focused on or led by men. In some instances, funding or resources for these have been at the expense of, or in competition with, women-only and women-focused programs. Not all 'work with men' shares a feminist-informed commitment to gender justice, and some is motivated instead by problematic understandings of men or boys as victims (Pease, 2008). 'Work with men' sometimes has ceased to be the strategy and has become the goal, perceived as an end in itself rather than as one means of pursuing violence prevention and gender equality. More widely, a focus on 'working with men' or 'male involvement' can omit or marginalise the pressing need to address unequal *relations* of gender between men and women.

Third, there is a whole lot we *don't know* about the effectiveness of violence prevention efforts among men and boys. Are some strategies more effective among some groups of men or boys than others, and why? For example, there is evidence that rape prevention efforts among men are less effective among those men at higher risk of perpetrating sexual coercion. In a US study among college men, while the intervention's impact overall was positive, this was driven by shifts among low-risk men, and in fact there was an increase in sexually coercive behaviour among high-risk men (Stephens & George, 2009).

What are the mediators of change, those factors which influence whether and how change occurs? What factors sustain men's and boys' involvement in and commitment to prevention activities? How do the contextual features and dynamics of organisations, communities, and cultures influence efforts to engage men and boys in violence prevention? How is men's and boys' participation in the prevention of violence against women shaped by the wider dynamics of gender and sexuality and other forms of social difference?

I'll turn now to my second major point.

Men's involvements in violence prevention are shaped by these same gender inequalities.

Here we are at a conference defined by its focus on men's roles in preventing violence against women. And we have to acknowledge that men's involvements in violence prevention are shaped by these same gender inequalities. To the extent that it is hard to engage men in reducing and preventing men's violence against women, it is hard above all because of gender inequalities.

I retain my firmly held hope in men's positive futures and men's abilities to change. But I also want to call for a realistic and clear-eyed examination of what we are up against. I was troubled yesterday by some of the hyperbole, the rhetoric, that White Ribbon and other efforts have created a profound change in men's and women's speaking up and taking action. I say: Show me the *data*. I think that sometimes, men are prone to 'premature congratulation'.

Yes, there are signs of positive change, but there is a long way to go. And with that in mind ...

Men start in a worse place than women.

Men start in a worse place than women. It should not be news to you that men's attitudes towards violence against women are systematically worse than women's. As a national survey of community attitudes demonstrated, there is a systematic gender gap in attitudes. Men are consistently more likely than women to agree with violence-supportive myths, to justify or excuse violence in relationships and families, to blame the victim and to excuse the perpetrator. If you want

the details (or indeed the details on what data there is on the proportions of men who perpetrate violence against women), go to the White Ribbon report *Where Men Stand* (Flood, 2010).

Far fewer men than women take up the cause of preventing violence against women.

Efforts to prevent men's violence against women or more generally to build gender equality receive more support from women than men. Again, it should not surprise you that fewer men than women turn up or sign up, and it's harder to educate and inspire them than women if they do.

There is no doubt that there has been a groundswell of support among men for violence against women, and this is demonstrated for example by men's support for and involvement in the White Ribbon Campaign. There were over 460 events and 250,000 ribbons distributed in the 2012 Australian campaign. But I would like to know the answers to three questions. First, how many of the ribbons were worn by men? Second, in how many of these events did men play a significant organising role? And third, how many of the 250,000 ribbons were worn by men (a) who freely chose to wear them rather than being ordered to by a superior, and (b) whose wearing of the ribbon symbolised a substantive rather than token commitment to addressing violence against women?

Men in general are hostile to involvement in violence prevention efforts

Many men feel blamed and defensive about the issue of men's violence against women (Berkowitz, 2004). Some men perceive anti-violence campaigns as 'anti-male', and for many this reflects a wider perception of feminism as hostile to and blaming of men (Flood, 2010).

Male audiences may react to educational efforts with hostility or defensiveness.

So not many men turn up. And when we do actually get men in the room, for example running a violence prevention program in a school or university, male au-

diences may react with hostility or defensiveness. Many react with hostility and defensiveness in response to violence prevention efforts, even those which emphasise the positive roles men can play in ending violence against women. Many men see violence against women as exclusively a women's issue, one in which men have no place. Such notions produce 'cultural inoculation', in which men are immune to programs designed to engage them (Crooks, Goodall, Hughes, Jaffe, & Baker, 2007).

Now there is some good experience and insight on how to limit men's defensive reactions, which I won't go into, but this will be an ongoing challenge. And if your efforts are not producing *any* discomfort among the men in the room, then you're probably not making a difference.

Some groups of men actively campaign in defence of gender inequalities: men's rights and fathers' rights groups.

Indeed, some groups of men actively campaign in defence of gender inequalities. Men's rights and fathers' rights groups take up anti-feminist agendas, campaigning against the White Ribbon Campaign and other efforts focused on men's violence against women.

To summarise so far, men start in a worse place, and they're more resistant to change. And when men *do* get involved, they may be complicit in gender inequalities.

Those men who are involved also may be complicit in patriarchal masculinities.

There is a growing body of research on men's involvement in violence prevention advocacy – research among male activists and educators for example in campus anti-rape groups or in international violence prevention and gender equality initiatives. It documents that, on the one hand, these men undergo important processes of positive personal change. Several studies document that men who become involved in anti-violence work become strong allies to women (Mohan & Schultz, 2001) and reject dominant masculinities (Hong, 2000).

On the other hand, some men involved in this work also are complicit in patriarchal masculinities. This should not surprise us. Men in general carry an 'invis-

ible backpack' of privilege, a taken-for-granted set of unearned benefits and assets (McIntosh, 1989), and gender norms and inequalities shape patterns of male-female interaction. Men involved in violence prevention are not immune from these. To give some examples:

Men in a campus-based Men Against Violence network showed defensive homophobic responses to others' perceptions of gayness and effeminacy and espoused chivalric notions of themselves as protectors and defenders of women (Hong, 2000).

In an American women's network that recruited male volunteers as anti-violence educators, some men showed sexism, lack of empathy for survivors and stereotypical expectations of women's roles (Mohan & Schultz, 2001).

So of course, in doing this work, we must look at our own privilege and work to undermine it. (See the White Ribbon report *Men Speak Up* (2011) for ideas on how to do this.)

Gender inequality and other problems

At this point, I want to complicate the story I've told so far.

Gender is not the only story, and gender inequality is not the only problem.

Gender inequality is the problem, but it is not the only problem. Gender intersects with other forms of social difference, such as race and ethnicity, class, and sexuality. In turn, gender inequalities intersect with other forms of inequality associated with race and ethnicity, class and sexuality.

We are only just beginning to think about how to engage men from diverse cultural backgrounds, men from vastly different social and economic positions and communities, in preventing men's violence against women.

I gave a paper at a conference two weeks ago on DV in culturally and linguistically diverse or 'CaLD' communities, on engaging men from diverse backgrounds in prevention. Just to highlight some points from that talk, I noted that women in immigrant and CaLD communities and refugees face a heightened vulnerability to violence. Men's violence-supportive attitudes are shaped by gender, but also by ethnicity, class, and other factors. Experiences of immigration and resettlement

shape men's uses of violence. And I emphasised that male perpetrators are more likely to be held accountable and criminalized, and their crimes are more likely to be seen as linked to their ethnicity, if they are from minority ethnic backgrounds (Flood, 2013).

Sometimes gender is the problem.

I've said that the problem is gender inequality, but there is also a sense in which gender *itself* is the problem. Men's violence against women is sustained by rigid gender codes, the policing of manhood, and by rigid constructions of a gender binary between masculinity and femininity, men and women, and male and female. Social marketing efforts engaging men in violence prevention often rely on 'real men' who are good at performing some of the dominant codes of masculinity, e.g. as sporting heroes or corporate leaders. But we also need to affirm and promote men who *don't* fit dominant codes of masculinity: girly men, gay men, sissy men, and transgender men. In other words, part of our work should be to break down narrow constructions of manhood and powerful gender binaries.

Some questions

I've said that gender inequality is the problem, and gender equality is the solution. This poses some practical challenges. I don't have the space to explore them in depth here, but I want to at least pose some questions.

If gender inequality is the problem, how do we work or engage with organisations which themselves are characterised by gender inequality? How do we engage with male-dominated organisations – in the business and corporate worlds, for example? How do we work with institutions which historically have been anything but advocates for gender equality, such as the institutions of organised religion? Indeed, in our efforts to end violence against women, how should we work with institutions such as the military which are defined by their use of violence – not the everyday intimate violence which many women face, but the organised, government-sanctioned use of violence against other countries or military forces?

If gender equality is the solution, what do we do about governments which are not very supportive of gender equality? At this conference on Monday morning, Michael Kaufman said that the White Ribbon Campaign is "politically non-parti-

san”, that these issues “have to transcend our political differences”. He urged a ‘big tent approach’, saying that “We will speak with one voice.” Later on Monday, Coalition Senator Michaelia Cash echoed this, stating that addressing violence against women is “above politics”.

I disagree. A Coalition government may come in in September, and I’m not sure if what I’m about to say will make it impossible for me ever to work for them. It will depend on whether they want what Australia’s public service used to call ‘frank and fearless advice’, or just advice which makes them ‘comfortable and happy’.

If saying that ending men’s violence against women is ‘above politics’ means that the two main political parties both will support efforts to reduce and prevent this violence, then all well and good. So perhaps saying that this issue is non-partisan, above politics, is strategically useful. But at a more substantive level, the issue is not at all above politics.

Conservative political parties and conservative political agendas do have an impact on gender, and thus on violence. In general, the political agendas of the Coalition are more likely than those of the Labor Party to maintain women’s economic dependence on men, to limit women’s access to political decision-making, to put children of divorced and separated parents in the hands of violent fathers, to limit women’s sexual autonomy, to support narrow constructions of gender and to refrain from educational and media efforts to change them, and to entrench various forms of social disadvantage. And these then feed into a greater likelihood of men’s violence against women. Equally, it’s broadly true that there is greater support for gender equality among the parties to the left of the Labor Party, those more progressive political parties and groups which contest the margins of parliamentary politics.

I’m not saying something stupid here, that a vote for Tony Abbott is a vote for violence against women. That’s too simple. But it is undeniable that a party which fails to address gender inequalities is a party which also risks failing to address violence against women.

So ...

Our efforts have to focus on ending gender inequalities, as these are so central to men’s violence against women. As well as providing services for victims and

responding to perpetrators, we must shift the social and structural inequalities which create victims and perpetrators in the first place. We must embed our efforts to end men's violence against women in wider agendas of gender justice. In short, we have to build a world of gender equality.

References

- Adler, C. 1992. Violence, gender and social change. *International Social Science Journal* 132: 267–276.
- Berkowitz, A. D. 2004. Working with men to prevent violence against women: An overview (part one). *National Resource Center on Domestic Violence* 9(2): 1–7.
- Crooks, C. V., Goodall, G. R., Hughes, R., Jaffe, P. G., & Baker, L. L. 2007. Engaging Men and Boys in Preventing Violence Against Women: Applying a Cognitive-Behavioral Model. *Violence Against Women* 13(3): 217–239. doi:10.1177/1077801206297336
- Flood, M. 2005. Men's collective struggles for gender justice: The case of anti-violence activism. In: *The Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, ed. by M. Kimmel, J. Hearn, & R. W. Connell, 458–466. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Flood, M. 2010. *Where men stand: Men's roles in ending violence against women*. Sydney: While Ribbon Prevention Research Series, No. 2.
- Flood, M. 2013. *Engaging Men from Diverse Backgrounds in Preventing Men's Violence Against Women*. Paper presented at the Stand Up! National Conference on Eliminating All Forms of Violence Against CaLD Women, Canberra.
- Flood, M. 2015a. Preventing male violence. In: *Oxford Textbook of Violence Prevention: Epidemiology, Evidence, and Policy*, ed. by P. Donnelly & C. Ward, 201–206. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Flood, M. 2015b. Work with men to end violence against women: a critical stocktake. *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 17(sup2): 159–176.
- Flood, M., Fergus, L., & Heenan, M. 2009. *Respectful relationships education: Violence prevention and respectful relationships education in Victorian secondary schools*. Melbourne: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, State of Victoria.
- Flood, M., Peacock, D., Stern, O., Barker, G., & Greig, A. 2010. *World Health Organization Men and Gender Policy Brief: Policy approaches to involving men and boys in achieving gender equality and health equity*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health

Organization.

- Flood, M., & Pease, B. 2009. Factors Influencing Attitudes to Violence Against Women. *Trauma Violence Abuse* 10(2): 125–142. doi:10.1177/1524838009334131
- Gamache, D. 1990. Domination and Control: The Social Context of Dating Violence. In: *Dating Violence: Young Women in Danger*, ed. by B. Levy, 68–83. Seattle: Seal Press.
- Hearn, J. 1996. Men's Violence to Known Women: Men's Accounts and Men's Policy Development. In: *Violence and Gender Relations: Theories and Interventions*, ed. by B. Fawcett, B. Featherstone, J. Hearn, & C. Toft, 99–114. London: Sage.
- Heise, L. L. 1998. Violence Against Women: An Integrated, Ecological Framework. *Violence Against Women* 4(3): 262–290. doi:10.1177/1077801298004003002
- Heppner, M. J., Neville, H. A., Smith, K., Kivlighan Jr, D. M., & Gershuny, B. S. 1999. Examining immediate and long-term efficacy of rape prevention programming with racially diverse college men. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 46(1): 16–26.
- Hong, L. 2000. Toward a transformed approach to prevention: Breaking the link between masculinity and violence. *Journal of American College Health* 48(6): 269–279.
- McIntosh, P. 1989. White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Peace and Freedom* July/August: 10–12.
- MenCare. 2010. *MenCare – A Global Fatherhood Campaign: Prospectus*. Washington, D.C. and Cape Town: Sonke Gender Justice and Promundo.
- Michalski, J. H. 2004. Making Sociological Sense Out of Trends in Intimate Partner Violence: The Social Structure of Violence Against Women. *Violence Against Women* 10(6): 652–675. doi:10.1177/1077801204265018
- Miller, P., & Biele, N. 1993. Twenty years later: The unfinished revolution. In: *Transforming a rape culture*, ed. by M. Roth, E. Buchwald, & P. R. Fletcher, 47–54. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions.
- Mohan, L., & Schultz, A. 2001. Mauled by MAVEN: Our story of involving men in the movement. *Off Our Backs* October: 25–30.
- Pease, B. 2008. *Engaging men in men's violence prevention: Exploring the tensions, dilemmas and possibilities*. Sydney: Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse.
- Scully, D. 1990. *Understanding sexual violence: A study of convicted rapists*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Stark, E. 2010. Do violent acts equal abuse? Resolving the gender parity/asymmetry

dilemma. *Sex Roles* 62(3–4): 201–211.

Stephens, K. A., & George, W. H. 2009. Rape Prevention With College Men: Evaluating Risk Status. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 24(6): 996–1013.

doi:10.1177/0886260508319366



Why Study Men and Masculinities?

A Theorized Research Review

Tal Peretz

ABSTRACT: Feminist scholars have long made the important and valid critique that nearly all knowledge production not explicitly labeled feminist has implicitly studied men. Nonetheless, feminist scholars and activists are increasingly recognizing the importance of explicitly investigating men as gendered beings. This paper argues that gender-aware studies of men and masculinities are in fact necessary for an intersectional analysis of gender relations, and that a better understanding of masculinity is necessary to reduce men's perpetration of violence and increase support for gender justice. It provides five mutually reliant reasons why studies of men and masculinities are necessary for understanding gender relations and beneficial for feminist projects for gender justice: that superordinate categories tend to go unmarked and thereby uncritiqued; that gender is relational; that investigating the social construction of masculinity calls men's superordinate status into question; that masculinity is one of the primary social forces currently stalling egalitarian social change; and that investigating masculinity highlights contradictions and cleavages where masculinity can be most effectively attacked.

KEYWORDS: men and masculinities, gender, superordinates, theory

American social science has historically tended to study “down,” investigating subordinated and oppressed groups (e.g. Liebow 1967; Whyte 1943); feminist sociology especially focuses on the lives and experiences of subordinated groups in the gender hierarchy, women and transgendered people. Because men are at the top



of the gender hierarchy in the United States, benefitting from the subordination of women and people of other genders, studying men and masculinity is “studying up.” Studying up began, in sociology, with investigations of class conflict, notably Marx’s *Capital* (1987) and C. Wright Mills’ *The Power Elite* (1956). The popularity of William Domhoff’s *Who Rules America*, (1967, 1983, 2006, 2009) and Shamus Khan’s *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul’s School* (2012) show that studying up is still considered a pressing and valid area for class research.

Studying up in gender research – that is, studying the superordinate category “men” – is still occasionally met with resistance. Feminist scholars have long made the important and valid critique that nearly all knowledge production not explicitly labeled feminist has implicitly studied men. Some argued that studying subordinated groups is necessary for working towards equality and human liberation, while studying men re-centers men’s experiences, draws attention and resources away from women, and thereby supports the male supremacist status quo. Nonetheless, feminist scholars and activists are increasingly recognizing the importance of addressing or including men (Casey & Smith 2010; Connell 1987, 2000, 2005; England 2010; Esplen 2006; Gardiner 2002; Messner, Greenberg, and Peretz 2015; Pascoe 2007; Schilt 2006, 2010; White 2008; White & Peretz 2010). A better understanding of masculinity is necessary to reduce men’s perpetration of violence and increase support for gender justice, but no research-informed enumeration of the overarching theoretical reasons to study men and masculinities currently exists. In this essay, I argue that gender-aware studies of men and masculinities are in fact necessary for an intersectional analysis of gender relations, and beneficial for feminist projects for gender justice.

I provide five mutually reliant rationales for why studying men is worthwhile and important, not only for academic interest and “balance,” or even for accuracy, but indeed to strengthen feminist research and social change projects. The first is that superordinate categories like men and masculinities tend to go unmarked (Butler 1990; De Beauvoir 1975; Kimmel 1997; Kimmel and Messner 2009; Salzinger 2004), and correcting this oversight by making men and masculinities objects of study is crucial in making change possible. Secondly, gender is a relational social structure embedded in an intersectional matrix of domination, and therefore information about one part of the structure informs our knowledge about the rest of it: even a feminism that is totally and completely about women’s experiences

should investigate “how men gain, maintain, and use power to subordinate women” (Collins 1990, 2004; Hanmer 1990, p. 37; Salzinger 2004; Stansell 2010; Thorne 1993). Thirdly, investigating the social construction of masculinity denaturalizes both its form and its superiority, calling men’s superordinate social status into question, disputing the naturalness of hierarchical and dominance-based social structures, and illuminating the possibility of change. Fourth, recent research suggests that the social forces currently stalling gender-egalitarian social change have more to do with ideas about masculinity than femininity (England 2010; Messner 2009; Risman 2004). Finally, investigating masculinity provides valuable information for feminist projects, advancing “the goal of revealing and demystifying the mechanisms of power, identifying their internal contradictions and cleavages so as to inform movements for change” (Messner 1996, p. 222). Therefore, investigations of superordinates, their interests, and their access to power are effective and necessary ways for research to reveal the places where social change can most effectively be encouraged.

Masculinities as Unmarked

A key finding in early studies of men and masculinity was “the initial insight that masculinity, too, is a gender and therefore that men as well as women have undergone historical and cultural processes of gender formation that distribute power and privilege unevenly” (Gardiner, 2002, p. 11). Previous to this, masculinity tended to go unmarked and assumed, as is most easily evidenced in the ways the English language uses masculine pronouns for all groups, thus making women’s presence in these groups invisible (Butler 1990; De Beauvoir 1975). Puri’s recent account of sexual violence in India found that masculinity is “unmarked precisely as a factor of its privilege,” and that the unmarked nature of masculinity (in this case, upper-class Hindu masculinity) facilitates sexual assault against women (2006, p. 146). By becoming simultaneously universal and invisible, masculinity is no longer open for challenge; femininity becomes the Other, questioned and marginalized.

In a fascinating account of the process of research, Salzinger (2004) makes very clear the unmarked nature of masculinities, which obscured this insight for so long. During interviews and participant observation in globalizing industries, Salzinger found that while most *maquilas* in Juarez, Mexico were explicitly marked

as female, one in particular was not. She first concluded that this one maquila was “ungendered,” then later realized that in fact it was gendered masculine, but as such was rarely ever marked as gendered at all: “masculinity is taken for granted, and hence not spoken, whereas femininity is the always-articulated modification of that assumed norm” (p. 14). This error not only illustrates how the absence of femininity can be mistakenly assumed to mean gender is not situationally relevant (crucial for gender research in male-dominated domains like war, international politics, and prisons), but also illustrates how masculinity is taken for granted in social institutions, thus reinforcing men’s power and privilege in these settings.

This institutionalized assumption of masculinity and the attendant othering and subordination of femininity are key in maintaining the group boundaries upon which unequal power relations rely. An analogous situation is remarked upon by Baca Zinn and Thorton Dill with regards to race: “[w]hite women ... must be reconceptualized as a category that is multiply defined by race, class and other differences ... even those [experiences] that appear neutral, are, in fact, racialized” (1996, p. 329). This is equally true with regards to men, for whom “gender might become salient only as a supervenient category, a category following upon or expressed in conjunction with another category” (Brod 1988, p. 6). Ignoring the gendering of (especially white, heterosexual) men is tantamount to yielding them the unmarked, socially central position. What this means then is that the onus for any gendered social change implicitly falls to others – women and trans people, and to a lesser extent gay men and men of color – who are seen as “possessing” or “owning” gender. Researchers who balk at studying and critiquing the superordinate category of men risk effectively promoting a “deviance model” that assumes the neutrality and normalcy of the superordinate and only scrutinizes the subordinate categories (Messner 1996, p. 83). This sort of research on men and masculinity is allied with multiracial feminism’s commitment to centering the experiences of women of color, because both critique the implicit centering of white, heterosexual men’s experiences.

Masculinities Stalling Social Change

A second important reason for including men in studies that aim to understand or encourage change in the gender order is that ideas about masculinity are cur-

rently a primary force in stalling social change. While women made gains in arenas like employment, educational attainment, and representations in political office in the 1970's and 1980's, and on some measures into the 1990's, these gains have flat lined in the last two decades (England 2010). The primary obstacle to further gains is men, and "unless men's practices, attitudes, and relations change, efforts to promote gender equality will face an uphill struggle" (Ruxton, 2004, p. 5).

As a direct consequence of feminism, employment and educational majors have substantially desegregated, with more women moving into highly valued, well-paid, and previously male-dominated fields (Charles and Grusky 2004). Nearly no desegregation has occurred in the other direction, however, because "men lose money and suffer cultural disapproval when they choose traditionally female-dominated fields; they have little incentive to transgress gender boundaries . . . , there is little incentive for voluntary movement in this direction, making desegregation a largely one-way street" (England 2010, p. 155). Variables with no easily recognized, concrete gain for women – dating and mating behavior, leisure activities, and personal appearance items like clothing and makeup, for example – seem to have shifted even less, and the changes that have taken place are similarly one-directional, because "when boys and men take on 'female' activities, they often suffer disrespect, but under some circumstances, girls and women gain respect for taking on 'male' activities" (ibid, p. 156).

Messner's "It's All For The Kids" (2009), a study of parental participation in youth sports, is especially clear in tracing the ways essentialist beliefs about masculinity impede egalitarian changes, and pointing out that there need be no intentional anti-feminist impetus involved in the process. Messner coins the term "soft essentialism" to describe how individuals struggling to uphold conflicting beliefs in equality and natural difference tend to hold boys and men more strictly accountable to outmoded ideas about proper gender performance, while allowing women and girls greater leeway because of the recognition that maintaining strict gender enforcement for them is tantamount to overt sexism. Because of the institutionalized relationships between genders, soft essentialism still affects women and girls negatively despite allowing them more leeway in their own lives. The demanding and thankless position of "team parent," for example, invariably goes to women, because no men will volunteer for the feminized role.

This dynamic is also found in other arenas. International development ex-

perts find that projects “which aim to improve women’s employment and income generating opportunities..are likely to compound women’s heavy work burdens unless efforts are made to encourage men to take greater responsibility for child care and domestic chores” (Esplen 2006, p. 1). Bridges (2010) found that feminism itself has been gender-typed as feminine, and that men are therefore hesitant to engage in marches protesting violence against women without making some sort of qualifiers that reconfirm their masculinity. In all of the above examples, men’s reluctance to revise masculinity norms limit the opportunities for women to improve their lives; without studying men and masculinity, these roadblocks cannot be adequately understood or effectively overcome.

Masculinities as Relational

Masculinities do not constitute a stable object of knowledge, but are historical projects that function as part of a gender order; masculinities are always defined in relation to femininities, and dominant masculinities are also defined in relation to subordinated masculinities (Connell 2005). These relations mean that women’s social existence is affected by the place of men and masculinities in society. Thinking intersectionally, for example, racialized ideas about masculinity also impinge on women’s lives: when Black boys are defined as “pathological,” “troublemakers” and “bad boys,” Black women are consequently blamed and pathologized as inadequate mothers (Ferguson 2000).

Understanding gender as relational emphasizes the importance of inter-group relationships and illustrates how we can better understand the experiences of oppressed groups by drawing on knowledge about their oppressors: “when we think about gender in terms of power relations, it becomes necessary to study the powerful (men)” (Messerschmidt, 2000, p. 2–3). If masculinities are defined in part by their difference from and purported superiority to femininities, then the interpersonal interactions that reproduce and reify masculine norms form a significant part of the oppression and subordination women experience (Messner 2002).

Adrienne Rich’s “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” (1980) is an early but thorough example of the project of understanding how men’s power over women is maintained. She argues that the socially enforced system of heterosexuality invalidates women’s existence *for themselves*, valuing them only for

their ability to produce or give pleasure to men. Empirical investigation shows how masculinities defined in relation to femininity and subordinated masculinities cause anxiety and lead young men to perpetrate sexual violence (Messerschmidt 2000). Using life histories from interviews with five sexually violent boys, five boys who engage in assaultive but non-sexual violence, and five non-violent boys, Messerschmidt finds that the violent boys all viewed violence as a crucial characteristic of masculinity, and used it as a “masculine resource” when their masculinity is challenged and other avenues to reaffirm it are denied. In both cases, we gain a more complete knowledge about women’s experiences of sexuality and sexual violence through the addition of knowledge gained by studying up, because the definition of masculinity as opposed to and superior to femininity drives men’s negative treatment of women and women’s negative self-perceptions.

Masculinities as Socially Constructed

Perhaps the most frequently confirmed tenet of masculinities research is that masculinities are socially constructed. Tracing this process and drawing attention to the substantial changes in masculine ideals over time highlights the manufactured, power-embedded character of both the superordinate group and of the hierarchy they dominate, thus undermining claims to naturalness. Similar analytical strategies have been very effective in research around other social hierarchies. Critical race theorists have had significant success in deconstructing whiteness (i.e. Frankenberg 1993; Harris 1993; Jacobson 1999; Lipsitz 1998). An especially effective example in studies of sexuality is Katz’s “The Invention of Heterosexuality” (1995), which not only shows that heterosexuality is a relatively recent social construct, but that bounding it and defining it as “normal” required significant effort over time by doctors, sexologists, and journalists.

Early research on men and masculinities aimed “to understand that the construction of masculinity contains a political dynamic, a dynamic of power, by which ‘the other’ is created and subordinated,” (Kimmel 1990, p. 96) and many resulting publications focused on the construction of masculinities and their links to power. Messner’s “Power at Play” (1995) shows how masculinity is constructed by power relationships in institutionalized sport, and the effects this has on men’s bodies, lives and relationships. Pascoe’s “Dude, You’re a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in

High School” (2007) exposes the construction of heterosexual, dominance-based masculinity in American high schools through sexual boasting, harassment, the rejection of the abject “fag” identity, and the disparagement of girls and women. Schilt’s research on transgender men and employment (2006, 2010) illustrates how power and privilege comes to men in interactions, even in cases where an individual was previously known as a woman. By showing that these benefits accrue to individuals as they move through across genders, Schilt convincingly argues that they originate from the socially constructed category “men,” not from anything about the individuals themselves. These examples offer effective rejoinders to the common claim that gender inequality is inevitable because of some natural differences between the sexes by challenging the naturalization of hierarchy and dominance.

Cleavages and Contradictions in Masculine Power

Men’s power and privilege in society is far from complete; indeed, the very existence of feminism evinces both the vulnerability of masculine power and the effectiveness of women’s challenges to date. A better understanding of men’s power can provide scholars and liberatory movements with valuable information on how to best direct future efforts, by pointing out the places where such efforts will be most effective.

Much research on men and masculinities has taken this as its goal. Goode’s “Why Men Resist” (1982), for example, not only describes the reasons and cases in which men resist gender-egalitarian social change, but also gives hints as to how, why, and when men might be more open to such progress, and which men might be less inclined to defend gendered hierarchies and male dominance. Kimmel’s (1987) description of the three ways men react to women’s calls for equality can help us predict both many men’s regressive reactions in defense of the status quo and some men’s pro-feminist impulses.

Knowledge about men who work for gender justice provides important information about possible feminist strategies, and this project has accordingly been undertaken (Christian 1994; Kimmel and Mosmiller 1992; Messner 1997; Messner, Greenberg, and Peretz 2015; Stansell 2010; White 2008; White and Peretz 2010). Investigating the reasons for men’s engagement improves the possibility of encouraging more men to support social change. Kaufman concludes that although

men's social power provides privilege, it also becomes "the source of the individual experience of pain and alienation. That pain can become the impetus for the individual reproduction ... of men's individual and collective power. Alternatively, it can be an impetus for change" (1994, p. 142–143). Empirical research has used interviews to map the longitudinal process of men's engagement with gender justice work, which involves sensitizing experiences, multiple opportunities to get involved, and the creation of new ways of making meaning about gender, violence, and efficacy around the issue (Casey and Smith 2010). Intersectional identity is important here, as men who are marginalized due to some other intersectional identity (Black, Jewish, Gay, etc.) may be more likely to have a critical view of hierarchy and dominance systems and to support gender justice (Brod 1988; Messner, Greenberg, and Peretz 2015; Shiffman 1987; White 2008; White and Peretz 2010).

Connell's work¹ is especially useful in understanding where men's power within the gender order is vulnerable to change (1987; 2000; 2002; 2005). She argues that "There are some cases ... where patterns of masculinity are tough and resistant to change. There are other situations where they are unstable, or where commitment to a gender position is negotiable ... Investigating the circumstances where gender patterns are less or more open to change seems an important task for research" (2002, p. 23). Paying attention to the divisions within masculinity reveals multiple masculinities, including subordinated, marginalized, and complicit masculinities; this is a key site for intersectional analysis, and has been elaborated by many other researchers (e.g. Espiritu 2004; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner 1994; Majors and Billson 1992; White 2008). This area of research also helps us understand why so many men (and women) support the hegemonic ideals even though the idealized form does "not correspond at all closely to the actual personalities of the majority of men, and despite not sharing equally in the patriarchal dividend (Connell, 1987, p. 184–5). Connell argues that tensions intrinsic to masculine ideals, across institutions, and within the gender order more generally can be used to create progressive change.

Conclusion

A thorough understanding of the theoretical reasons underlying the study of men and masculinities shows the importance of these studies for gender-egalitarian

social change projects as well as for an accurate intersectional understanding of gender. Such an understanding also counters concerns about re-centering men and undermining the scholarship of marginalized women. Studying up is really about studying the social construction of inequality. Contemporary scholarship on men and masculinities provides a good example of this conceptualization of studying up, engaging in what Messner calls “strategic deconstruction ... of the dominant end of binary categories” (2010, p. 83). While some early work (especially under the rubric of men’s studies) tended to equalize men’s and women’s experiences and posit that men are equally victimized in gendered ways (i.e. Farrell 1974, Goldberg 1976, discussed in Messner 1998), masculinities theory provides a new paradigm that is in alliance² with other progressive projects that aim to transform society. These studies are not liberationist, but transformationist; that is, instead of working to provide men new rights and possibilities within the current social structure (already biased in their favor), they aim to critique and transform the social structure so that men and women both have a new set of opportunities and responsibilities which are much more similar and provide for a more equitable structure overall (Hanmer 1990).

Endnotes

- ¹ Although Connell’s work encompasses a complete structural theory of gender orders and is most fully elaborated in texts that are not strictly “studying up,” (1987, 2002) it also runs through “Masculinities” (2005) and “The Men and the Boys,” (2000) and has been used extensively by researchers whose work is clearly within the “studying up” frame. The focus of this structural framework on historicity and practice also shows the fluidity of masculinities and denaturalizes them, as discussed above.
- ² This alliance is also clearly visible on the ground: NOMAS-Boston, an activist group that draws significantly on the ideas of men and masculinity research in their work, has this alliance written into their tenets as “Pro-feminist – LGBT Equality – Racial Justice – Enhancing Men’s Lives.”

References

- Baca Zinn, Maxine, and Bonnie Thornton Dill. 1996. “Theorizing Difference from Multi-racial Feminism.” *Feminist Studies* 22 (2): 321–31.
- Bridges, T. S. 2010. “Men Just Weren’t Made To Do This: Performances of Drag at ‘Walk

- a Mile in Her Shoes' Marches." *Gender & Society* 24 (1): 5–30.
- Brod, Harry. 1988. *A Mensch Among Men: Explorations in Jewish Masculinity*. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press.
- Butler, Judith. 2006. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Casey, Erin, and Tyler Smith. 2010. "How Can I Not?": Men's Pathways to Involvement in Anti-Violence Against Women Work." *Violence Against Women* 16 (8): 953–73.
- Charles, Maria, and David Grusky. 2004. *Occupational Ghettos: The Worldwide Segregation of Women and Men*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Christian, Harry. 1994. *The Making of Anti-Sexist Men*. Routledge Chapman & Hall.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston: HarperCollins.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2004. *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism*. New York: Routledge.
- Connell, Raewyn. 1987. *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Connell, Raewyn. 2000. *The Men and The Boys*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Connell, Raewyn. 2002. *Gender*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Connell, Raewyn. 2005. *Masculinities*. 2nd ed. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- De Beauvoir, Simone. 1975. *The Second Sex*. New York: Knopf.
- Domhoff, G. William. 1967. *Who Rules America?* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Domhoff, G. William. 1983. *Who Rules America Now?: A View for the '80s*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Domhoff, G. William. 2005. *Who Rules America? Power, Politics, and Social Change*. 5th ed. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Domhoff, G. William. 2013. *Who Rules America? The Triumph of the Corporate Rich*. 7 edition. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.
- England, Paula. 2010. "The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled." *Gender & Society* 24 (2): 149–66.
- Espiritu, Yen Le. 2004. "All Men Are Not Created Equal: Asian Men in US History." In *Men's Lives*, Edited by Michael S. Kimmel and Michael A. Messner. 21–27. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Esplen, Emily. 2006. "Engaging Men in Gender Equality: Positive Strategies and Ap-

- proaches: Overview and Annotated Bibliography.” Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. http://www.aletta.nu/epublications/2006/engaging_men_in_gender_equality.pdf.
- Farrell, Warren. 1974. *The Liberated Man*. New York: Random House.
- Ferguson, Ann Arnett. 2000. *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Frankenberg, Ruth. 1993. *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gardiner, Judith Kegan, ed. 2002. *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory: New Directions*. Columbia University Press.
- Goldberg, Herb. 1976. *The Hazards of Being Male*. New York: Signet Books.
- Goode, William J. 1982. “Why Men Resist.” In *Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions*, edited by Barrie Thorne and Marilyn Yalom, 131–50. New York: Longman.
- Hanmer, Jalna. 1990. “Men, Power, and the Exploitation of Women.” In *Men, Masculinities, and Social Theory*, edited by David Morgan and Jeff Hearn. London; New York, N.Y: Unwin & Hyman and Routledge.
- Harris, Cheryl I. 1993. “Whiteness as Property.” *Harvard Law Review* 106 (8): 1707–91.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette, and Michael A. Messner. 1994. “Gender Displays and Men’s Power: The ‘new Man’ and the Mexican Immigrant Man.” In *Theorizing Masculinities*, Edited by Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman, 200–218. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Jacobson, Matthew Frye. 1998. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Katz, Jonathan Ned. 1995. *The Invention of Heterosexuality*. New York: Dutton Adult.
- Kaufman, Michael. 1994. “Men, Feminism, and Men’s Contradictory Experiences of Power.” In *Theorizing Masculinities*, edited by Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman, 142–63. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Khan, Shamus Rahman. 2011. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul’s School*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.
- Kimmel, Michael. 1997. *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. New York: Free Press.
- Kimmel, Michael S. 1987. “Men’s Responses to Feminism at the Turn of the Century.” *Gender & Society* 1 (3): 261–83.
- Kimmel, Michael S.. 1990. “After Fifteen Years: The Impact of the Sociology of Masculin-

- ity on the Masculinity of Sociology.” In *Men, Masculinities, and Social Theory*, edited by David Morgan and Jeff Hearn, 93–109. London; New York, N.Y.: Unwin & Hyman and Routledge.
- Kimmel, Michael S., and Michael A. Messner. 2009. *Men’s Lives*. 8 edition. Boston, Mass.: London: Pearson.
- Kimmel, Michael S., and Thomas E. Mosmiller. 1992. *Against the Tide: Pro-Feminist Men in the United States, 1776–1990: A Documentary History*. Boston, MA: Beacon.
- Liebow, Elliot. 1967. *Tally’s Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.
- Lipsitz, George. 1998. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Majors, Richard, and Janet Mancini Billson. 1992. *Cool Pose: The Dilemmas of Black Manhood in America*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Marx, Karl. 1992. *Capital: Volume 1: A Critique of Political Economy*. Translated by Ben Fowkes. New York, N.Y.: Penguin Classics.
- Messerschmidt, James W. 2000. *Nine Lives: Adolescent Masculinities, the Body, and Violence*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Messner, Michael A. 1995. *Power at Play: Sports and the Problem of Masculinity*. Beacon Press.
- Messner, Michael A.. 1997. *Politics of Masculinities: Men in Movements*. The Gender Lens. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Messner, Michael A. 1998. “The Limits of ‘The Male Sex Role’: An Analysis of the Men’s Liberation and Men’s Rights Movements’ Discourse.” *Gender & Society* 12 (3): 255–76.
- Messner, Michael A. 2002. *Taking the Field: Women, Men, and Sports*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Messner, Michael A. 2009. *It’s All for the Kids: Gender, Families, and Youth Sports*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Messner, Michael A. 2010. *Out of Play: Critical Essays on Gender and Sport*. SUNY Press.
- Messner, Michael A., Max Greenberg, and Tal Peretz. 2015. *Some Men: Feminist Allies and the Movement to End Violence against Women*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Mills, C. Wright. 1959. *The Power Elite*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Pascoe, C. J. 2007. *Dude, You’re a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berke-

- ley, CA: University of California Press.
- Puri, Jyoti. 2006. "Stakes and States: Sexual Discourses from New Delhi." *Feminist Review*, 139–48.
- Rich, Adrienne. 1980. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." *Signs*, 631–60.
- Risman, Barbara J. 2004. "Gender as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling with Activism." *Gender & Society* 18 (4): 429–50.
- Ruxton, Sandy, ed. 2004. *Gender Equality and Men: Learning from Practice*. Oxford: Oxford Publishing.
- Salzinger, Leslie. 2004. "Revealing the Unmarked: Finding Masculinity in a Global Factory." *Ethnography* 5 (1): 5–27.
- Schilt, Kristen. 2006. "Just One of the Guys? How Transmen Make Gender Visible at Work." *Gender & Society* 20 (4): 465–90.
- Schilt, Kristen. 2010. *Just One of the Guys?: Transgender Men and the Persistence of Gender Inequality*. University of Chicago Press.
- Shiffman, Michael. 1987. "The Men's Movement: An Exploratory Empirical Investigation." In *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*, edited by Michael Kimmel, 295–314. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Stansell, Christine. 2010. *The Feminist Promise: 1792 to the Present*. New York: Modern Library.
- Thorne, Barrie. 1993. *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- White, Aaronette M. 2008. *Ain't I a Feminist?: African American Men Speak Out on Fatherhood, Friendship, Forgiveness, and Freedom*. SUNY UP.
- White, Aaronette M., and Tal Peretz. 2010. "Emotions and Redefining Black Masculinity Movement Narratives of Two Profeminist Organizers." *Men and Masculinities* 12 (4): 403–24.
- Whyte, William Foote. 1943. *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press.



Militarization of Sikh Masculinity

Aakriti Kohli

ABSTRACT: Critically reading the theoretical and descriptive scholarly work on colonial Punjab, Sikhs, Sikhism and the imperial British Empire, this paper traces how the formation of Sikh martial masculinity rooted in religious tradition was institutionalized into a particular form of militarized masculinity in the colonial period in Punjab, India. Additionally, it explores how the historical construction of masculinity intersects with the contemporary discourses on Sikh identity and masculinity in the diaspora, specifically in Britain. With reference to British Sikhs and their project of reclaiming recognition of their contribution in WWI, the paper goes on to argue that perhaps the projection of Khalsa identity as synonymous with Sikh identity and the performance of Sikh masculinity lies in projecting and representing themselves as warriors, to seek legitimacy from the military of their masculinity in exhibiting war effort.

KEYWORDS: masculinity, military, martial, Sikhs, Punjab, Khalsa

The dominant perception of Sikhs as martial, brave and willing to sacrifice is reflected in popular culture at large. By extension and association, Punjab, seen as the homeland of Sikhs, finds itself venerated as the land of the brave, or the land of the lions, if you like. This idea of the Sikh identity and Sikh masculinity in particular is a very real form of consciousness which defines, shapes and configures Sikh masculinity and performance of the male self, and are ideas in which many Sikh men root their identity. As I have argued elsewhere, this particular masculine performance does draw its strength from religious rituals and practices.¹ It might not



be wrong to suggest that the dominant understanding of Sikh masculinity seems to be trapped within a martial Khalsa identity.² However it can also be traced to a very complicated relationship with the British in the colonial period.

Critically reading the theoretical and descriptive scholarly work on colonial Punjab, Sikhs, Sikhism and the imperial British Empire, I set out to trace how the formation of Sikh martial masculinity rooted in religious tradition was institutionalized into a particular form of militarized masculinity in the colonial period. Additionally, I also explore how the historical construction of masculinity intersects with the contemporary discourses on Sikh identity and masculinity in the diaspora, specifically in Britain. With reference to British Sikhs and their project of reclaiming recognition of their contribution in WWI, I go on to argue that perhaps the performance of Sikh masculinity lies in projecting and representing themselves as warriors, to seek legitimacy from the military of their masculinity in exhibiting war effort.

Looking for the Martial and the Militarized

If we see masculinity as a set of gendered relations and practices, then the formation of Khalsa identity affects the body, identity and culture of the Sikhs. Khalsa martial identity is essentially embodied masculinity, which ascribes symbols and markers on the Khalsa body, and specifically the male body in this case.³ The *Rahit Maryada* Code or *rahit namas*, with their elaborate injunctions sought to construct Khalsa identity, which was circumscribed by what they could and could not do. Additionally, it promoted a culture of martial valour, which placed an accent on bravery, heroism and the fight for justice against those who were seen as attacking the Sikh religion and empire.⁴ This produced a very distinct form of Sikh martial masculinity.⁵

Military masculinity on the other hand is certainly distinct from martial masculinity, as the former refers to an institutionalized set of accepted practices and behaviors, which must conform to the military ideal of the masculine. Whereas the quality of being martial, as an ideal, as an aspiration may allude to any of these: combative, brave, heroic, valiant etc. Weber's work on different forms of authority for ruling legitimately is particularly useful here, for both religious leadership and military institutions (Guenther and Claus, 1978). Weber mentions the rational legal

form of authority, which finds its legitimacy from codes and principles, which have legal sanctions. Weber called this an authority, which draws from 'natural law', which leads to the development of a 'normative order' that leads people to accept proper behavior and action. It has been said that this type of authority is not based on 'religious morality' (Best, 2001, p. 13), but legal codes and rules, which govern behavior of a population. Since the military is a state institution, it wields rational legal authority. Consequently, military or army acts of violence carry state sanction, which legitimizes these acts by celebrating and rewarding acts of violence as 'valour'. On the other hand, martial identity and by extension, martial masculinity, might have cultural legitimacy or draw on traditional or charismatic authority, but it does not occupy the status accorded to militarized masculinity.

Belkin (2012) considers military masculinity as particular practices and beliefs, which provides men the ability to wield power and authority over others on the basis of their military service. He also argues that this can take multiple forms, with men positioning themselves along with the ideological construct of military institutions as inherently brave, authentic, powerful, respected and martial in nature. This conception of military masculinity helps in understanding the mutually beneficial relationship between the British state and Sikh recruits for instance. The practice and performance of Sikh martial masculinity is deeply rooted in the Sikh Rahit Maryada Code or the Khalsa Code as well as the teachings of the Gurus (Singh and Fenech, 2014). The questions that emerge from this are what idea of Sikh martial qualities did the British appropriate in the military and how did they in turn construct Sikh martial masculinity. Could it be argued that the British institutionalized Sikh martial masculinity into a decidedly militarized masculinity? Conversely, was there a disjuncture in the Sikh's conceptualization of their own martial masculinity from how the British positioned it?

Further elaborating on the function and operation of military masculinity, Belkin adds, 'The pursuit of masculine status has produced conformity and obedience not just through the disavowal of the unmasculine, but via the compelled embrace of the masculine/unmasculine and other oppositions which have been constructed as irreconcilable' (2012, p. 4). Thus in the context of Sikhs in Punjab, how did this overemphasis on Sikh martial masculinity (particularly the Jat Sikhs) subordinate other Sikh and non-Sikh groups? Where then does the performance of Sikh martial masculinity lie? Where can we locate its practice? The privileging

of Khalsa identity as *the* Sikh identity, thereby making the Khalsa Singh identity as the dominant and often hegemonic representation of Sikhism (Grewal, 1990; Oberoi, 1994; McLeod, 1996; Dhavan, 2011; Singh, 2014) also leads to the effacing of other subordinate identities within the community, which are not considered the 'pure' or 'authentic' forms of Sikhism. Another significant question is what were the historical and social processes responsible for this idea of Sikh martial identity, which were appropriated by the British? Was the martial race theory enough as an explanation, or were there other considerations which impinged on the decision to recruit Sikhs in the army?

These questions become relevant as the Khalsa Sikh identity was a very deliberate social construction of boundaries and fashioning of a distinct warrior identity, which was constantly in the process of making (Oberoi, 1994). When the British appropriated Khalsa identity, it begs the question of how and why did it happen? Was there conflict in this British appropriation? And more importantly did it really transform and solidify Sikh martial masculinity as a decidedly militarized masculinity?

Taking off from one of Connell's (1995) earlier arguments, masculinity cannot be conceived of in singular and stable terms. As an idea, as an ideological construct and as a performance, masculinities exist in their multiplicity. Masculinity in itself does not refer to a universally understood or accepted definition; there are different kinds of masculinities that exist across space and time. The articulations and performance of masculinities vary across time, region and specific contexts. What it means to be masculine in Punjab at a point in time might not hold true for Bengal, for example, a point eloquently argued by Sinha (1995).

While Sikh martial masculinity is not a universal category of masculinity, which can be attributed to all Sikhs at all times, as argued in the context of Sikh identity by Oberoi (1994), McLeod (1968, 1996 and 1997), Fox (1985) and some others, it is that one particular form of masculinity, which emerged at the intersection of religious, social, political and cultural factors. In a revisit to the ideas around masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that hegemonic masculinity (in singular) is a very particular and dominant form of masculinity. Hence it is crucial to unravel why Khalsa Sikh martial identity, and by extension, martial masculinity, became the dominant and hegemonic form of masculinity in Punjab.

Historically the formation of Sikh martial identity had developed its specific

contours in Punjab. Khalsa Sikhs specifically, were seen as formidable warriors. Working as mercenaries in the armies of Sikh chiefs was perhaps seen as enhancing the masculine status of this group (Roy, 2011). Hence the Khalsa Sikhs themselves acknowledged their own identity as a warrior group with distinct martial qualities (Soherwordi, 2010).

In the case of colonial Punjab, masculine power flowed through the network of disciplinary codes and institutions such as the military, the landed peasantry and tribal or customary law, and religious identity (Talbot, 1991). This circulation of masculine power reinforced and determined social relations and created certain subject positions. It has been argued that military modernity in the colonial period provided a possibility of ‘manhood enhancement’ and the idiom of ‘martial valor’ found much traction and support among people (Gupta, 2010, p. 324). Masculinity in the colonial discourse was constructed by juxtaposing it with ideas of femininity and holding superior the white Christian masculinity vis-à-vis the effeminate colonial subject (Sinha, 1995).

Any exploration of masculinities in Punjab needs to clearly foreground the colonial context of these formations as well as the role of British colonial administration in Punjab and the specific features of the administration that had an impact on Punjabi society and culture. Through looking at the role of the British administration with reference to militarization of Punjab, construction of the “martial caste” and/or “martial race”, and valorization of rural life, I hope to unearth some processes, which lead to particular formations of martial and military masculinity in Punjab, with certain masculine groups posited as dominant in opposition to subordinate groups.

Punjab’s Annexation and the Mutiny of 1857

British annexation of Punjab, Pritam Singh (2008) argues, had three critical consequences. First, that even though the Sikh soldiers had been defeated, the British respected them for their bravery, and sought to enlist them in the army. I argue that the British deliberately employed this discourse of bravery so that they could patronize the Sikh soldiers and prevent an uprising from them, by privileging their Khalsa identity and also positing them in opposition to Hindus and Muslims. Secondly, Singh goes onto to argue that since Sikhs were defeated by the Bengal army

in the Anglo-Sikh wars, this very grievance was used by the British for a third point, that is to make Sikhs allies of the British Empire and help defeat the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. So a contradiction emerged, while Sikhs were upset at the British annexation of their empire, the prospect of enlisting in the army and the benefits of a salary and land grants seemed to pacify them. Perhaps being a part of the army, gave them a sense of control over their bodies, and also legitimized their martial identity, which was recognized and nurtured by the state. This allowed them to uphold their existing “martial” identity while being militarized by the British.

After the mutiny of 1857, colonial rule in India repositioned various communities and classes as “loyal/traitorous” and “martial/effeminate”. The rural peasants in Punjab, majority of who were Jats, provided military support as irregular soldiers (they were partially mercenary and partially wage laborers) to the British army who were able to quell the revolt of 1857, and restore order in North West India and the Gangetic plain with their help. Chowdhury (2013) for instance, has argued that in the pre-colonial period, recruitment was more broad-based and generalized; however, during the colonial period, Jats and more importantly, Sikh Jats in particular were transformed from the martial identity that they were perceived to have occupied to a more militarized identity where their martial identity was institutionalized by their recruitment in the army. It is said that entire *biradaris* or coparcener groups became rural collaborators and benefitted in terms of low rung administrative posts and military employment as well as land grants. This was also the basis for the ideological underpinnings of the view that rural peasants were martial, hard-working and sturdy and hence highly appropriate for recruitment into the military. This led to the Punjabisation of the army after 1857 and keeping control over Punjab allowed the British to continue to wield control over the North of India (Roy, 2011).

Thereafter the Bengal army began recruiting from Punjab. The Bengali was demonized and seen as “undisciplined”, rogue and defiant, and since the Punjabis had helped fight against the sepoys, they were seen as trustworthy and “loyal” (Soherwordi, 2010). Hence it is important to note that for the British, loyalty was an important component of ‘ideal’ martial masculinity. Soherwordi further argues that as a result recruitment shifted geographically, from Bengal to Punjab and then began the process of othering. The educated, politically aware Bengali, and upper-caste Brahmins were projected as “effeminate”, and this very process of othering

was used to construct other groups as more “martial” in opposition to them. For instance, Sinha (1995) has looked at how the dynamics of colonial and nationalist politics can be understood best from the lens of colonial masculinity for it constituted both the British colonizer and native colonized as the “manly Englishman” and the “effeminate Bengali” respectively.

Construction of the ‘Martial Race’ Ideology

The British, in their recruitment policies, were very careful in studying and classifying the various castes, communities, religions and groups in Punjab, and factored that into their assumptions about each community. Gand and Wagner (2012) note that Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief of the Bengal Army, a prominent military voice, believed that keeping a mix of various castes and races was not ideal since it would mean that the best men were not fighting. Hence it was decided that they should make regiments on the basis of their best men, to fight the possible Russian invasion. Roberts believed that the Gurkhas, Sikhs, some Punjabi Muslims, and Pathans as groups or races were intrinsically superior warriors than others, that they could bear arms, and that they had physical courage to do so. They were seen to hold “martial” qualities and came to be known as ‘martial races’ (Omissi, 1995; Cohen, 2001; Roy, 2006 and 2011; Streets, 2004).

It has been argued that the British saw the caste system as a hierarchy of who worked better than the others, and believed that the distinction of the Kshatriya or warrior caste in the system was indeed true and indicated people who were better at fighting (Chowdhury, 2012). This could be a possible reason, however, this does not adequately explain the inclusion of Muslims and high-caste Brahmins. Alternatively, it is possible that after the revolt of the Bengal Army, the strategic importance of the region of Punjab grew, and the British thought it fit to elevate the loyal rural Punjabi peasant-soldier as exemplar in opposition to the deliberate construction of the debased ‘effeminate’ Bengali.

As I pointed out in the beginning of this section, it became a critical exercise for the British to study and gather knowledge about the people they governed, and it often led to the use of stereotypes to label and classify communities. Roy (2011) similarly notes that the British took great pains in carefully documenting and recording the various castes in Punjab, their characteristics, their origin, oc-

cupation patterns and customs, and in many ways ethnographic studies marked an important aspect of the colonial government. This excerpt below from a report highlights the process by which the British marked various castes in Punjab and imbued them with characteristics which guided administrative decisions and hiring practices. Through this detailed recording and observation, the British theorized on the various groups, castes and sub-castes for purposes of social and political control.

The Bania with his sacred thread, his strict Hinduism, and his twice-born standing, looks down on the Jat as a Sudra. But the Jat looks down upon the Bania as a cowardly spiritless money-grubber, and society in general agrees with the Jat. The Khatri who is far superior to the Bania in manliness and vigour, probably takes precedence of the Jat. But among the races or tribes of purely Hindu origin, I think the Jat stands next after the Brahman, the Rajput and the Khatri.⁶

McLain, for instance, looks at how General Sir George MacMunn's commentary on martial races often contrasted dark-skinned slightly-built southern Indians with the light-skinned, physically endowed northern Indian, calling them 'Aryan tribes, of a high grade ... Aryan beauty and physiognomy of the Greek' (2014, p. 46) McLain calls this the "imperial masculine ethos" that made the British believe that only they could lead Asian soldiers (2014, p. 49). Further he adds that in the colonial discourse the word *lala* was used derisively, and alluded to the *bania* caste, which were considered shrewd, lazy, educated and "effeminate". The martial race theory further segregated the Indian population, which was already divided across caste and class points as the British manipulated the idea of masculinity to call a certain population "effeminate" and prevent them from coming together and waging a war against the empire, and calling a population masculine by heralding them as exemplar, however at the same time controlling both.

The British had realized that keeping order and control over Punjab required the compliance and loyalty of rural Punjab, and hence the valorization of rural life and rural folk over urban dwellers became a compulsion. The Jats assumed significant importance since they were a land-owning group, and wielded much influence. Additionally, the Jat peasantry, the figure of the toiling peasant and able-bodied farmer who was loyal and hardworking gained much respect from the

British. The Sikh Jats who followed the Khalsa principles, the Hindu Jats and the Muslim tribes from the Salt Range conformed to the template of exemplar masculinity imagined by the British. In opposition to them, the Dalits, Baniyas and Punjabi Hindus (mostly Khatris) were offered the subject position of a subordinate abject masculinity.

Yong (2005) argues that Jat Sikhs were privileged because they were considered to be 'socially dominant and militaristic' (2005, p. 72). Further, since they followed the Khalsa norms, they were assumed to embody martial characteristics. In fact, he goes on to suggest that with Jat peasants entering the fold of Sikhism, the religion itself became "militarized". And importantly, some of the assumptions about the characteristics of Jat peasants as being inherently "martial" were later reproduced in colonial accounts.

Colonial accounts helped produce notions about the qualities which different groups were presumed to possess, thereby attributing martial qualities to certain groups, Jat Sikhs for instance, and also suggesting that this colonial construction was constant across time and stood true for all Jat Sikh. These historical social constructions produced a hegemonic template, which treated Sikh martial masculinity as exemplar and relegated other groups to a subordinate position. The ethnographic surveys translated into logical arguments for changing recruitment policies and only enlisting certain 'martial races' by attributing to them inherent qualities such as 'masculinity, fidelity, bravery and loyalty' (Yong, 2005, p. 65).

The Cracks in the 'Martial' Race Narrative

The 'martial race' theory has been interpreted variously and has been used as a lens to understand the functioning of the colonial government as well as military recruitment. Dominant discourse around the 'martial race' theory takes it as a fixed notion, which was seamlessly adopted by the British. In this section I hope to show how the 'martial race' theory was used as a manipulative framework by the British, and how even the martial race theory was riddled with contradictions and ruptures, and was not as seamlessly employed as it has been presented and that it should not be taken unquestioningly as a frame of analysis.

For many scholars the 'martial race' theory was arbitrary, and some argue that the indigenous native traditions shaped it, while some others believe that it was

strategic and geared not just for military purposes, but also for administration and management of civil relations. There is one argument, like that of Marston and Sundaram (2008) which suggests that the martial race theory was used to stump nationalism in India, and that in many ways the imperial power sought to divide the population to prevent them from coming together and organize against the British, by pitting one against the other. This argument tends to consider the martial race theory as purely hegemonic and ideological, which tended to stereotype a group, without any actual bearing. It is argued that the British believed that their rule was imperative to save the non-martial groups from the possible aggression by martial races. Additionally, this strategy is seen as fostering caste, race and tribal ties of loyalty, where as it is argued that such divisions were not so sharp but were exacerbated by the British.

There is another perspective, which Roy (2011) calls the Functionalist argument which argues that certain visible characteristics of the Indian society as well as the requirements of ruling India, led to the martial race theory. Cohen (2001) for instance has suggested that the predilection for the martial race theory resulted from two situations: one, the armed peasantry, which was considered militaristic, and second, the rise of nationalism. He points out that this was done to stifle any political movement towards nationalism by exclusively recruiting from certain groups. It is believed that it was the very cleavages present in traditional society, which were further exploited by the British and that the present caste system had already differentiated between the martial and non-martial in the form of caste. Omissi (1995) in a similar framework looks at the social and political considerations behind military recruitment policies. He argues that only those groups initially enlisted in the army who saw the gains in military service. He also suggests that the British, offered privileges to only a few after enlistment, which earned them the loyalty of a few groups. He emphasizes that the Indian army was constantly evolving, and the initial shift in recruitment from Punjab was less because of martial race ideology, but for political, social and pragmatic reasons. He suggests that the more focused martial race ideology was used for many reasons: the first was territorial since there was an impending threat of Russian invasion, the second was due to the Mutiny, the balance shifted towards more 'martial', or loyal groups. He points out that a lot of military decisions were based on anthropological and ethnographic work done by the colonial administration. Thereon he ar-

gues that this ideology was codified, and stamped with official approval, and institutionalized, by putting it in recruitment handbooks and this theory also became a form of political control. Roy (2011) points that there has already been precedence of peasants working as mercenaries and the unstable nature of monsoons, and uncertainty over agriculture, is the reason why a lot of peasants were pushed into military service even before the British.

How was the category of race and racial ideologies understood and used by the British in the Indian context? Offering an explanation Streets (2004) points out that during the 19th century, deliberations on 'race' were first marked by 'objective' biological considerations, but situated within the context of racial ideologies, and secondly, race was a highly manipulative category used strategically by imperial powers. She calls for deconstructing the romanticized notion of the martial race theory to unravel how Punjabi Sikhs, Gurkhas and Scottish Highlanders came to be considered as the most sought-after soldiers in the British Empire. In her understanding this stemmed from the ideology of the 'martial races' or the 'martial race' theory propounded by the British and used strategically to suggest that some groups, owing to biological and cultural factors, were inherently better fighters. Additionally, she says that this martial race theory should be seen in the light of the fear of a possible Russian invasion in colonial India and the British fear of a French or German attack in Britain and this impending threat was seen as a reason to shape new recruitment policy. She points out that the Sikhs, for instance, were made to 'perform' this martial race theory, by wearing uniforms, pledging their loyalty to the unit, and working on that identity of *being* a martial soldier.

The seamless application of this 'martial race' theory has also been challenged for instance by Gajendra Singh (2013) who argues that the British conception of 'martialness' was not static, and hence there were shifts in the discourse of the martial warrior, from 1857 till 1947. He situates the British martial conception of the Sikhs historically by discussing how the East India Company, after the annexation of Punjab in 1849 had to raise regiments to govern the province. He remarks that at that point Sikhs were considered to have an antagonistic relationship with the East India Company. However, a few hundred Sikh men were raised in the infantry and cavalry. It is only with the Mutiny of 1857 that the Sikhs came to be heralded as the martial class par excellence. He quotes the report of Friedrich Engels published in The New York Tribune in 1958 to demonstrate the ambivalence of the

British towards the Sikhs, while they acknowledged their martial qualities, they were unsure of their loyalty and wondered if they would turn against them.⁷

Singh further argues that if one studies the recruitment handbooks and manuals, it becomes evident that the British not only compartmentalized the population between 'martial' and 'non-martial,' but also categorized populations on their future prospects of being 'martial'. The not-so desired aspects of those groups would then be "discarded, re-found or reproduced" accordingly (2013, p. 115). He discusses the recruitment practices of Frederick Roberts, who after becoming the commander-in chief in 1885 made use of the census of 1883, to label tribes and castes by ascribing separate characteristics to them. He says that this was followed by creation of military knowledge in the form of the *Handbooks for the Indian Army: Sikhs* written by A.H. Bingley in 1899. In this handbook, Bingley, Singh argues, describes various kinds of Sikhs by making distinctions between Sikh Brahmins who were derided for their caste bias, Sikh Khatri for being lazy and their reluctance in taking to physical work and Sikh Mazbhis were painted as criminals. However, it was the Jat Sikh, who was praised. He argues that this was perhaps because the colonial administration privileged the hard laboring, peasant body, who was considered benign and easy to manipulate.

Singh (2013), quotes from a report by Lepel Griffin which gives a graphic description of how Jat Sikhs were perceived:

'Hardy, brave and of intelligence too slow to understand when he is beaten, obedient to discipline, devotedly attached to his officers, and careless of the caste prohibitions ... can be controlled ... unsurpassed as a soldier.' (p. 118)

This also throws light on what the British conceived as the 'ideal' soldier body. Their idea of militarized masculinity was one which was obedient, could be controlled and disciplined. In the British conceptualization of Sikh martial body is their understanding of Jat Sikhs as slow-witted, easy to control, temperamental but loyal.

Gajendra Singh (2013) also points out that the martial qualities imputed to the Sikhs, were in fact variable. Since for the British, loyalty was an important martial quality, the perception of Sikhs as martial was changing especially after the First World War. While the Khalsa Sikhs were praised as 'lions' who fought for the British

admirably, the events leading to the Ghadar Movement, civil disobedience, and the Jallianwallan 'Bagh carnage, made the British re-think their conceptualization of Jat Sikhs as martial and loyal.⁸

Singh (2013) quotes from a report of the East India Sedition Committee, 1918, appointed to investigate Revolutionary Conspiracies in India:

With the high-spirited and adventurous Sikhs, the interval between thought and action is short. If captured by inflammatory appeals they are prone to act with all possible celerity and in a fashion dangerous to the whole fabric of order and constitutional rule. (p. 118)

Gajendra Singh (2013) further argues that after the Mutiny of 1857, there were micro-discourses, which positioned only certain Sikhs as 'martial', in order to justify the recruitment policies of the British, which focused on specific castes and regions. The recruitment policies dictating recruitment from only certain 'martial' groups with specific requirements of height and weight were changed after the First World War, and were revised in the Second World War, and were completely retracted in the 1940s.

Roy (2006) similarly makes a case for a more nuanced understanding of the construction and operation of the martial race theory and moves away from the nationalist frame or the functionalist approach to understand the reason and implications of the martial race theory. He believes that the military recruitment policies of the British can be seen as a struggle between competing discourses. He argues that it was not as fixed or certain as it has been described or discussed, and in fact was mutable. He posits that while there were those who argued for the martial race framework for recruiting, there is also an anti-martial race lobby or the ones who favored a more balanced approach to recruitment, especially in the Bombay and Madras armies. After the Bengal mutiny, he points that the proponents of the balanced approach did gain some traction, only to be swept by the hegemonic discourse of martial theory propagated by General Roberts.

Despite broadening the recruitment base to include the entire region of Punjab, religious identity of Khalsa Sikhs continued to be a significant factor, which was valued by the British in their recruitment policy as well as their understanding of Sikhs as a 'martial' race. For the British, Sikh martial masculinity, flowed from their religious identity as Khalsa Sikhs, hence it has been shown that the army went to great lengths in order to preserve and uphold the Khalsa identity of their

Sikh recruits. Gajendra Singh (2013) notes that Major A.E. Barstow was entrusted with the task of revising Bingley's handbook titled *Sikhs*. It came out in 1928, and reproduced much of the book in terms of Sikh history and tradition. However, in describing Sikhs, it sought to distinguish between the 'pure' Sikhs and the ones who had 'fallen back' into Hinduism. Singh notes that in his book, Barstow argued that in order to maintain the 'martialness' of Sikhs, it is important to preserve their rituals and traditions, for instance the *amrit* ceremony, the reverence to Guru Granth Sahib in the regiment, and encouraging the sense of separate nation among them. Singh also notes that Barstow believed that any 'relapse' into Hinduism is bound to significantly reduce their 'martialness' and status as a martial race. (p. 118–119) Further Barstow argued that Sikhs needed to be properly managed, and given a direction, otherwise they could turn against the British. Singh shows how for Barstow, Sikhs represented unbound martiality, which had a tendency to fall into, for instance, Bolshevism, and had to be contained and properly channeled and disciplined through military service. He demonstrates how for Barstow, Punjab was a fertile ground for Bolshevism, due to its resemblance to the interiors of Russia, similar agricultural conditions as well as in terms of Sikhism and its close proximity to the principles of Bolshevism. From 1916 onwards, some of the earlier race restrictions were removed and voluntary enlistment of Sikhs waned after World War I (Singh, 2013). This he argues was because Sikh Jats came to be seen as seditious or secessionists, while they were warriors but they could not be trusted.

Previously, I have discussed how multiple masculinities exist in the military, where men seem to occupy different positions at different points of time. The social construction of Sikhs as a 'martial' race, as I have demonstrated through the changing recruitment practices, was not fixed or static, and responded to changing circumstances and situation. The privileging of Sikh masculinity happened in a complex set of social and cultural circumstances, where their privileging required the deriding of high-caste Hindus in Bengal. Further, my earlier argument that identities are not fixed, and constantly in the making, is evident when the British no longer held the 'loyal' Sikh soldier in high regard. At this point, other marginal identities, which earlier did not find a place or were not offered a place in the mesh of military masculinity, for instance Mazhabi Sikhs and low-caste Hindus, found a place to occupy.

Memorializing militarized masculinity

In July 2014 an exhibition in the UK recalled the contribution of Indian Sikhs in the British Army while serving in the Western Front in WW1 as part of the 58th Vaughan's Rifles. Coinciding with the 100th anniversary of WW1, the exhibition was a part of an on-going project, 'Empire, Faith and War: The Sikhs and World War One' organized by the United Kingdom Punjab Heritage Association and included artist sketches, portraits and photographs that were on display. This three-year-long project has undertaken archives of photographs ranging from the 15th century to 1918. Other artifacts including uniforms and gallantry models are also on display. The motivation behind the exhibition is to highlight the heroism and sacrifice of Sikhs during the WW1, which according to the association has hitherto been undervalued.

The idea and intent behind the exhibition that is intended to make the Sikhs and the world reflect on Sikh contribution in the British Army. It is a very intriguing project partly because of the systematic way in which the project aims to unearth and commemorate memories and also partly because this initiative is undertaken by migrants living in the UK, and this is the way they choose to remember home and their roots and build a sense of identity, and at the same time to insert themselves into the histories of commemorations of their adopted homes. Certainly, the exhibition shows that they want to memorialize the idea of Sikhs as a martial race and reinstate the idea of Sikhs as warriors.

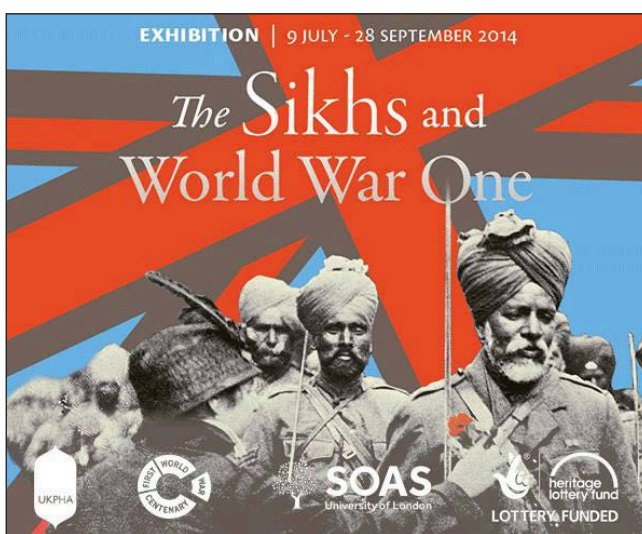


Fig. 1 The poster of the exhibition 'The Sikhs and World War One', <http://www.empirefaithwar.com/> (accessed 29th January, 2015)

Figure 1 is a poster from the exhibition, which includes a photograph of a French woman, pinning a flower on a Sikh soldier's uniform in 1916 during their march in France after the conclusion of WW1. The soldiers of the Sikh regiment fought against the Germans on the Western front. Titled 'Stalwarts from the East: A French lady pins a flower on the Sikh saviours of France', places emphasis on Sikhs as loyal, reliable, and sturdy men who *saved* France (emphasis added).

The description of the project is almost a reclamation exercise, to reclaim the lost glory of Sikhs, to re-inscribe it with passion and fervor, to etch it in popular memory again, and to commemorate a certain idea of Sikhism, of masculinity of the Sikh race and the Sikh body in particular.

The context of the exhibition being displayed in the UK by the migrant community also speaks to the idea of multiculturalism and the attempt by British Sikhs to seek recognition for their contribution as well as build better relations with the English. This then can also be seen as an exercise at assimilation, to obliterate the taint of being illegal migrants.⁹ This enterprise of archiving and memorializing this particular aspect of Sikh history makes me reflect on why the community continues to be so invested in hyper-masculinizing its men. What prompts immigrants to remember or memorialize their pasts in this fashion? Is it perhaps only because they are immigrants who feel a sense of loss and distance from the country and hence this leads to painting this particular picture, which at once elevates their status as world warriors and also links them to the bravery of their ancestors? Is it an exercise to reclaim their own history or place within the larger Sikh tradition, of perhaps also connecting with their own version of Sikh history which places an accent on the 'martial'? I will come back to this at a later point, where I will demonstrate how this current articulation differs slightly from how the British projected the Sikhs and other 'martial castes'.

This exhibition provides an important opportunity and entry into questions on historical social construction of martial masculinity, historical memory and experiences of war. The exhibition, which seeks to highlight contributions of Indians, also exposes itself to contradictions in the archiving and documenting of military contribution. It offers an uncritical subject position to the viewer, asking them to consume these images without the subtext of the imperial invasion, oriental gaze and racism encountered by the soldiers and the actual experience of war lived by the soldiers. Couching it in a narrative of bravery and recouping their 'lost' memory, this exhibition seems to erase the contradictions, which emerged from the experience of war, such as racism, doubt and fear. It also asks the viewers and the community (in India and abroad) to uncritically embrace the martial race epithet, without offering a space for contesting these labels. Was the enlistment entirely voluntary and out of choice or were there other compulsions, which impinged on the decision to join the army? Were the soldiers sure of their purpose and partici-

pation in the war or were they doubtful and feared for their lives and worried for their families? I shall raise some of these questions in the later sections.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

While it is true that the British employed the 'martial race' theory, and it led to solidifying of a particular form of Sikh martial identity, was it an identity just thrust upon them? The Sikh martial orientation did not emerge in a vacuum and social and political circumstances led to the emergence of the Khalsa tradition, and provided a more 'martial' orientation of the community, which the British appropriated. The Sikhs then actively worked upon this identity, by working as Khalsa warriors and mercenaries, by enlisting in the army and self-identifying themselves as a martial community that was habituated to war, and upholding those ideals and notions. There was intention in embracing that identity and making it their own. In the range of choices available to them, they chose the image of warriors, among others. In this sense hegemonic masculinity then also creates a space for men to assume multiple identities at a given point of time and choose a position, which is the most beneficial.

Towards the end of the essay, I discussed the WWI exhibition in the UK to commemorate the contribution of Sikhs during WWI coinciding with the centenary celebrations, held from 9th July to 28th September 2014 at Brunei Gallery, SOAS, University of London, UK. This exhibition was organized by the UK Punjab Heritage Association. The founding members of the organization are a group of young Sikhs born in Britain. The organization seeks to recover the 'lost' heritage of Punjab, in terms of its culture and language, and bring them to the British-born Punjabis in the UK. It is important to note that they choose to celebrate the martial persona and militarized identity of Sikhs, which initially developed as an anti-state identity (fighting against the Mughals), but was appropriated by the British for fighting for the colonial state. It is interesting to note that the Sikh Punjabi migrant population in the UK currently seeks to memorialize the efforts of their ancestors in keeping the Empire together, and conforming to the same template of masculinity which the British provided to them, without positioning it expressly as the Khalsa identity, which came to be branded as a deviant masculinity in post-independence India. Hence this exercise can be read as an exercise of reclamation as warriors, loy-

alists and contributors to the British, but not their identity as militant Khalsa Sikhs. The Sikhs currently seem to be embracing a militarized citizenship, wherein they seem to be displaying their past efforts and future potential as military recruits for the British. Is it perhaps that even as legal immigrants they seek a way to legitimize their status as citizens by joining military service or positioning themselves as historical allies of the British? Currently in the US, Britain and Canada (countries with the highest percentage of immigrant Sikhs) there is no longer a tradition of conscription, and consequently no pressure on the citizens to demonstrate their patriotic allegiance to the country. What then drives this process of reclamation, considering that there was a disjuncture in the Sikh's conceptualization of their own martial masculinity from how the British positioned it? Some of these questions require greater examination for another stage.

For the British, Sikh martial masculinity was something to be channeled, disciplined, trained and tamed. The loyalty of Sikh soldiers was constitutive of the militarized masculinity that they imagined and constructed. As soldiers they were heralded as warriors, and physically brave, but official reports reflect that they were thought of as 'slow', with brawn, but no brains. On the other hand, the Sikh's perception of their martial masculinity before the colonial period involved plundering and looting (Dhavan, 2011), and in the colonial period, fighting in the battlefield as great Khalsa soldiers and upholding the pride of their Khalsa identity.

It is believed that Sikhism intrigued the British, due to its close resemblance to Christianity. Jakobsh (2003) has also argued that for the British, the martial hues of Sikh religion corresponded to their own "militarized/masculinized" (2003, p. 59) understanding of religion. This is a critical point because there was a transformation of Khalsa Sikhs from the time of Ranjit Singh's empire, till their entry into the British army, slowly from being martial, they were getting militarized, this institutionalization of their martial identity getting furthered during the British times. Sikhism is often seen as exclusively masculine and martial in its imagery and there was perhaps a relationship of mutual admiration between the Sikhs and the British.

In the colonial reports on the martial races and the Sikhs discussed before, the one recurrent theme is the conjunction of the ideal martial body with the idea of loyalty. In their documentation and remarks about the Sikhs and other 'martial races', the official colonial discourse speaks of martial masculinity that refers to

someone who is able-bodied and is habituated to war, but at the same time can be trained, disciplined and tamed. Even though it seems that the British sought to privilege the 'martial' character of some races and their 'manliness', the British wanted subservience. Of course the Sikh's understanding of their martial masculinity also flows from their Khalsa identity. They saw themselves as elite warriors, who were trained in warfare, were brave and physically strong and would fight for justice. The Khalsa traditions that came up in opposition to the state, where martial traditions were seen in terms of 'defending' the community against the violence of the state, were not necessarily in sync with the British idea of orderliness and obedience. Thus two 'versions' of being martial seemed to exist simultaneously; it is the disjunctions and ruptures between these two versions that are important to explore in greater detail than is possible here.

It is decidedly the hyper-masculine and martial understanding of Sikhs and Sikhism that the colonial state privileged and sought to nurture and protect. In my discussion on formation of masculinities, specifically in the colonial period, I have argued that masculine identities were restructured and dictated by British notions of hyper-masculinity. The use of categories such as 'martial' and 'effeminate' by the British, were forms of social control. Additionally, within the military there are multiple competing masculinities, with the British officers occupying a dominant position with their understanding of masculinity flowing from notions of white muscular Christianity, and casting the 'martial races' as a reflection of that image, but an image that is never truly at the same level as that of the British. Even in an understanding of Sikh martial masculinity as a hegemonic form of masculinity within the context of Punjab, it is important to also locate it within the matrix of other relations, such as those with their colonial officers, who occupied a dominant position in comparison to them. This critically points out that in a given space and time, there may be multiple masculinities, which may or may not be placed in a hierarchy, based on varying levels of dominance and subordination between men and women.

Endnotes

- ¹ Kohli, Aakriti. Forthcoming. "Constructing the Ideal Sikh: Historiographies of Sikh Martial Traditions." *Intellectual Resonance* presents a detailed discussion on the historiographies of Sikh martial traditions, historical and social processes which lead to the formation of a

particular Sikh martial masculinity and identity. It argues that the cultural transformation of Sikh identity, the teachings of the Sikh Gurus, the emergence of the Tat Khalsa and the Singh Sabha movement produced a hegemonic image of Sikh identity and masculinity.

- ² Kohli, Aakriti. 2016. "Who can be a Sikh?" *Raiot*. Accessed on 15th May 2016. <http://raiot.in/who-can-be-a-sikh/>
- ³ The term Khalsa is derived from Arabic and means *khalis* or pure. During the Mughal rule, *khalsa* meant the land, which directly belonged to the Mughal ruler, hence *khalsa* in the Sikh context also referred to allegiance to the Guru directly and not the intermediaries or *masands*. According to Guru Gobind Singh, the baptized Sikhs who followed all the injunctions were his Khalsa. (W.H. McLeod. 2004. *Sikhs of the Khalsa: A History of the KhalsaRahit*. Delhi: Oxford University Press)
- ⁴ For a detailed discussion on this please see, Grewal, J.S. 1990. *The Sikhs of the Punjab: The New Cambridge History of India II.3*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Grewal, J.S. 1997. *Historical Perspectives on Sikh Identity*. Patiala: Punjabi University.
- ⁵ Dominance within the Sikh *panth* can be seen in the form of projecting the Khalsa identity as the normative male identity imbued with a martial masculinity. This is visible from the order of following the Five Ks, the *rahitnamas* and the Singh Sabha and Tat Khalsa's move towards projecting an 'authentic' Sikh identity, which sought to define and authorize the meaning and being of a 'Sikh'. For a detailed discussion on Tat Khalsa and its role in projecting Khalsa identity as the normative identity in Sikhism see Oberoi (1994). For a greater discussion on the historiography of the Singh Sabha and the Tat Khalsa ideals, please see Singh and Barrier (1999)
- ⁶ H.A Rose, Denzil Ibbetson and Edward Douglas Maclagan. 1991. *Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Province*. Volume 1, 2 and 3. Lahore : Printed by the superintendent, Government Printing, Punjab (p. 867)
- ⁷ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The First Indian War of Independence, 1857-1859* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, reprint 1988), p. 152. cited in Singh, Gajendra. 2013. "Finding those Men with 'Guts': The Ascription and Re-ascription of Martial Identities in India after the Uprising" In Rand, Gavin and Bates, Crispin. Eds *Mutiny at the Margins: New Perspectives on the Indian Uprising of 1857* (New Delhi: Sage), (p. 116).
- ⁸ The Ghadar movement was started by Punjabi Indians living in the United States and Canada, against the British rule in India. The members of the Ghadar Party were predominantly Sikhs, but also included members from other groups. Their active rebellion against the British in Punjab in 1915 was seen as an act of disaffection against the British. In the Jallianwalan Bagh carnage in 1919, civilians gathered in the park for Biasakhi celebrations were fired upon by the British Indian Army who had banned all meetings for the fear of an insurrection. These two events worked towards making visible Sikh disaffection against the British, and made the British question the loyalty and by extension the martial qualities of the Sikhs.
- ⁹ While it is true that the exhibition is mounted by those who are not illegal themselves, but the distancing from the taint of those who might be illegal – or the distancing from

the clustering of all migrants as essentially tainted by illegal passage – is an essential part of the ‘message’ in the display.

Image Reference

Figure 1. *Stalwarts from the East: A French lady pins a flower on the Sikh saviours of France, Paris*. (Poster) <http://www.empirefaithwar.com/> (accessed 29th January, 2015). The poster of the exhibition includes the photograph of a French woman pinning a flower on a Sikh soldier.

References

- Ali, Imran. 1998. *Punjab Under Imperialism 1885–1947*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Belkin, Aaron. 2012. *Bring me Men: Military Masculinity and the Benign Façade of American Empire, 1989 – 2001*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Berger, Maurice. 1995. Wallis, Brian and Watson, Simon (eds.) *Constructing Masculinity*. New York: Routledge.
- Best, Shaun. 2001. *Introduction to Politics and Society*. London: Sage
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1972. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Boyd, B.S, Longwood, W.M and Muesse, M.W, eds. 1996. *Redeeming Men: Religion and Masculinities*. Westminster: John Knox Press.
- Charu Gupta. 2010. “Feminine, criminal or manly? Imaging Dalit masculinities in colonial north India.” *Indian Economic Social History Review* 47 (18): 309–42.
- Chatterjee, Partha. 1989. “Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonized Women: The Contest in India.” *American Ethnologist* 16 (14): 622–633
- Chowdhry, Prem. 2013. “Militarized Masculinities: Shaped and Reshaped in Colonial South-East Punjab.” *Modern Asian Studies*, 47(3): 713–750
- Cohen, Stephen P. 2001. *The Indian Army: It’s Contribution to the Development of a Nation*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press
- Cornwall, Andrea and Lindisfarne, Nancy. 1994. *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies*. London: Routledge.
- Connell, R.W. *Masculinities*. 1995. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Connell, R.W. and Messerschmidt, James W. 2005. “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethink-

- ing the Concept” *Gender Society*, 19(6): 829–859
- Connell, Robert. 2000. “Arms and the Man: Using the New Research on Masculinity to understand Violence and Promote Peace in the Contemporary World” In *Male Roles, Masculinities and Violence*, edited by Breines, Ingeborg, Connell, Robert and Eide. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Darling, Malcolm. 1934. *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Dhavan, Purnima. 2011. *When Sparrows Became Hawks: The Making of the Sikh Warrior Tradition, 1699–1799*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Deol, Jeevan. 2001. “Eighteenth Khalsa Identity: Discourse, Praxis and Narrative in Sikh Religion, Culture and Ethnicity” In *Sikh Religion, Culture and Ethnicity* edited by Shackle, Christopher, Singh, Gurharpal and Mandair, Arvind-pal. Surrey: Curzon Press.
- Duncanson, Clair. 2009. “Forces for Good? Narratives of Military Masculinity in Peace-keeping Operations” *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 11(1): 63–80.
- Empire, Faith and War. “Become a Citizen Historian”. Accessed on 16th, January, 2015. <http://www.empirefaithwar.com/citizen-historian>.
- Empire, Faith and War. “Empire, Faith and War: Sikhs and the World War One”. Accessed on 16th January, 2015. <http://www.empirefaithwar.com>.
- Fenech, Louis. E. 2000. *Martyrdom in the Sikh Tradition: Playing the ‘Game of Love’*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Fox, Richard. 1985. *Lions of the Punjab: Culture in the Making*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gilmore, David D. 1990. *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.
- Grewal, J.S. 1990. *The Sikhs of the Punjab: The New Cambridge History of India II.3*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grewal, J.S. 1997. *Historical Perspectives on Sikh Identity*. Patiala: Punjabi University.
- Hall, Stuart. 1990. “Cultural identity and diaspora” In *Identity: Community, Culture and Difference* edited by J. Rutherford. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Haywood, Chris and Mac an Ghail, Mairtin. 2003. *Men and Masculinities*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Jakobsh, Doris R. 2003. *Relocating Gender in Sikh History: Transforming, Meaning and Identity*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

- Kamtekar, Indivar. 2002. "A Different War Dance: State and Class in India, 1939–45" *Past and Present*, 176: 187–221.
- Kaur, Ravinder. 1986. "Jat Sikhs: A question of identity" *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 20(2): 221–39
- Kaur Singh, Nikky-Guninder. 2005. *The Birth of the Khalsa – A Feminist Re-Memory of Sikh Identity*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Kaur Singh, Nikky-Guninder. 2011. *Sikhism: An Introduction*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Kimmel, Michael and Aronson, Amy eds. 2004. *Men and Masculinities*. California: ABC-CLIO.
- Kohli, Aakriti. 2016. "Who can be a Sikh?" *Raiot*. Accessed on 15th May 2016. <http://raiot.in/who-can-be-a-sikh/>
- Kohli, Aakriti. Forthcoming. "Constructing the Ideal Sikh: Historiographies of Sikh Martial Traditions" *Intellectual Resonance*.
- Kulkarni, Mangesh. 2013. "Critical Masculinity Studies in India" In *Masculinity and its Challenges in India: Essays on Changing Perception* edited by Rohit K. Dasgupta and Moti K. Gokulsing. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc.
- Mac an Ghail, Mairtin. 2000. "The Cultural Production of English Masculinities in Late Modernity" *Canadian Journal of Education*, 25(2): 88–101.
- Malaby, Mark. 2005. *Masculine Identity Formation During and After School*. PhD thesis. Oklahoma State University: US
- Marston, Daniel and Sundaram, Chandar, eds. 2008. *A Military History of India and South Asia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Marston, Daniel. 2014. *The Indian Army and the end of the Raj*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mason, Philip. 1988. *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men*. London: Penguin.
- Mazumder, Rajit K. 2003. *The Indian Army and the Making of Punjab*. Delhi: Permanent Black.
- McLain, Robert. 2014. *Gender and Violence in British India: The Road to Amritsar, 1914 – 1919*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McLeod, W.H. 1968. *The Sikhs of the Punjab*. Ludhiana: Lyall Book Depot.
- McLeod, W.H. 1975 & 1996. *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- McLeod, W. H. 1984. *Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism*. Manchester: Manchester

- University Press.
- McLeod, W. H. 1997. *Sikhism*. London: Penguin Books.
- McLeod, W.H. 2004. *Sikhs of the Khalsa: A History of the KhalsaRahit*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Murphy, Anne. 2012. *Materiality of the Past: History and Representation in Sikh Tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nandy, Ashis. 1983. *The Intimate Enemy*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Nesbitt, Eleanor. 2005. *Sikhism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Oberoi, Harjot. 1987. "From Punjab to "Khalistan": Territoriality and Metacommentary." *Pacific Affairs*, 60(1): 26–41.
- Oberoi, Harjot. 1994. *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity, and Diversity in Sikh Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Oberoi, Harjot. 2012. "Brotherhood of the Pure: The Poetics and Politics of Cultural Transgression" In *Punjab Reconsidered: History, Culture and Practice* edited by Anshu Malhotra and Farhana Mir.
- O'Hanlon, R. 1997. "Issues of Masculinity in North Indian History: The Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad." *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 4(1): 1–19.
- Omissi, David. 1995. *Indian Voices of the Great War: Soldiers' Letters, 1914–18*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Rand, Gavin and Wagner, Kim A. 2012. "Recruiting the 'martial races': identities and military service in colonial India." *Patterns of Prejudice*, 46(3–4): 232–254.
- Rose, H.A., Ibbetson, Denzil and Maclagan, Edward Douglas, eds. 1911. *A glossary of the tribes and castes of the Punjab and North-West frontier province. Volume II*. Lahore: Superintendent, Government Printing Punjab.
- Roth, Guenther and Wittich, Claus. 1978. *Max Weber: Economy and Society*. Berkeley. University of California Press.
- Roy, Kaushik. 1997. "Recruitment Doctrines of the Colonial Indian Army." *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 34(3): 321–54.
- Roy, Kaushik. 2006. *War and Society in Colonial India (Themes in Indian History Series)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Roy, Kaushik, ed. 2011. *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars*. Leiden: Brill.
- Sasson-Levy, Orna. 2003. "Military, Masculinity, and Citizenship: Tensions and Contradictions in the Experience of Blue-Collar Soldiers." *Identities: Global Studies in Cul-*

- ture and Power*, 10(3): 319–345.
- Shani, Georgio. 2007. *Sikh Nationalism and Identity in a Global Age*. New York: Routledge.
- Singh, Gajendra. 2013. "Finding those Men with 'Guts': The Ascription and Re-ascription of Martial Identities in India after the Uprising" In *Mutiny at the Margins: New Perspectives on the Indian Uprising of 1857* edited by Gavin Rand and Crispin Bates. New Delhi: Sage.
- Singh, Gajendra. 2014. *The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars: Between Self and Sepoy*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Singh, Pashaura. 2014. "An Overview of Sikh History" In *The Oxford Handbook of Sikh Studies* edited by Pashaura Singh and Louis E. Fenech. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Singh, Pashaura and Fenech, Louis E. 2014. "Introduction" In *The Oxford Handbook of Sikh Studies* edited by Pashaura Singh and Louis E. Fenech. Oxford University Press.
- Singh, Pritam. 2008. *Federalism, Nationalism and Development: India and the Punjab Economy*. New York: Routledge.
- Sinha, Mrinalini. 1995. *Colonial Masculinity*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Soherwordi, Syed Hussain Shaheed. 2010. "Punjabisation of the British Indian Army 1857–1947 and the advent of military rule in Pakistan." *Edinburgh Papers in South Asian Studies*, 4: 1–33.
- Streets, Heather. 2004. *Martial Races: The Military, race and masculinity in British imperial culture, 1857–1914*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004
- Talbot, Ian. 1991. "British rule in the Punjab, 1849–1947: Characteristics and consequences." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 19(2) :203–221.
- Uberoi, JPS. 1996. *Religion, Civil Society and the State: A Study of Sikhism*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Yong, Tan Tai. 2005. *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849–1947*. New Delhi: Sage.



The Invisibility of Men's Practices: Problem representations in British and Finnish Social Policy on Men's Violences Against Women

Stephen R. Burrell

ABSTRACT: This paper investigates British and Finnish government policy discourses around men's violence against women. Finland and the UK were selected for comparison because of the historically contrasting relationships between the women's movements and the state in the two countries. Two government policy documents from each country, published between 2008 and 2011, have been analysed using Carol Bacchi's 'What's the problem represented to be?' approach. The main finding of this analysis is that despite men being the perpetrators of the vast majority of different forms of violence towards women, in all four texts men's practices are almost entirely invisible. This concealment is carried out through six core problematisations of men's violence against women: as a problem of women; as a problem without perpetrators; as a problem without context; as a 'gender-neutral' problem; as an 'agentless' problem; and as a problem of the Other(s). With the policy focus restricted to victim-survivors, responsibility is placed on women for both causing and stopping men's violence. The commonalities among the four texts suggest that there may be some convergence in contemporary problematisations of men's violence against women by British and Finnish policymakers, where its systemic and gendered nature are recognised at a superficial level only.

KEYWORDS: men's violence against women, men and masculinities, problem representations, policy discourses, Finland, United Kingdom



Men's violences against women are both systemic and gendered practices. They are systemic in that rather than being perpetrated by a few pathological individual men, they are normalised and commonplace behaviours that form a continuum of violence and abuse, which are routine and everyday experiences for women across society (Kelly 1988). In this way, 'normal' and 'abnormal' practices based around the exertion of power and control by men over women blur into one another (Bacchi 1999; Kelly 1988). They are gendered phenomena not just in how they are directed at women, but in how they are perpetrated overwhelmingly by men, and are rooted in the gender order of men's dominance and women's subordination. Phenomena such as domestic violence and sexual violence can be perpetrated by anyone, against anyone, but they are committed by men against women in uniquely systemic and structured ways. They both reproduce and are a product of patriarchal power relations (Westmarland 2015).

However, as socially systemic crimes there is also nothing inevitable about men's violences against women. Recognition of this fact enables us to envisage a world in which, through social change, these phenomena could be stopped. The gendered social context which underlies men's violences against women therefore provides clues as to how this kind of change might be achieved. For Walby (1990), men's violence against women is one of several social structures that constitute the patriarchal gender system, along with patriarchal relations in paid employment, in the state, in sexuality, and in cultural institutions, as well as the patriarchal mode of production. It is fundamentally connected to the social construction of masculinity (Gadd 2012), and the kinds of practices, ideas, expectations and entitlements that we teach to men and boys as being normal and legitimate, and deem to be acceptable and desirable. This applies to all forms of men's violence, including violence towards other men and violence towards oneself, which combine with violence against women to form the triad of men's violence (Kaufman 1987). All three corners of this triad function to maintain the hegemony of men (Hearn 2004, 2012).

Walby (1990) describes how the different structures of patriarchy are mutually reinforcing. This can be observed in the response of the state to men's violences against women, where the prevalence of inaction and failure has conveyed that the state tolerates and condones these practices in different countries. It is therefore vital to examine the contemporary approach of the state to men's violences

against women, and consider how it ignores, legitimises, or challenges these phenomena. That is the aim for this paper, which is based on an analysis of the discourses of recent policy documents produced by the governments of Finland and the United Kingdom, using Carol Bacchi's 'what's the problem represented to be?' approach. The primary finding is that in the social policies of both countries, there is a failure to address the systemic and gendered nature of men's violence against women, as a result of the invisibility of men's practices in the ways in which these phenomena are problematised.

Gendered violence in social policy

Gender can be understood as a systemic social organising principle which categorises people into the hierarchy of 'women' and 'men'. Social policy is constantly shaping and being shaped by gendered power relations despite often being conceived as a 'gender-neutral' process (Hearn and Pringle 2006). For example, assumptions about gender are built into the development of policies, yet often these assumptions are not recognised or explicitly expressed (Hearn and McKie 2008). Even when policy does make gender explicit, the focus is usually centred on what Hearn and McKie (2008) call the 'policy users' rather than the 'problem creators'. This is part of the wider association of gender solely with women, which feminists have long critiqued. Meanwhile, men are rarely named as men or specifically focused upon in policy, including in relation to the violence they commit (Hearn and McKie 2008; Hearn and Pringle 2006). For instance, Hearn and McKie (2010) note that when men who use violence are discussed in policymaking, they are typically individualised and constructed as 'atypical', whilst the agentic focus is placed almost entirely on women, as if they are responsible for both causing, and stopping, men's violence.

Women's movements across the world have had a considerable impact in forcing policymakers to recognise men's violence against women as a problem. These movements have taken different forms and adopted different approaches in different countries. This paper is comparing the policies of Finland and the UK, primarily because of the notable contrasts in the histories of the women's movements and their relationship to the state in the two countries. In the UK, feminists successfully initiated some of the first autonomous women's refuges and Rape

Crisis centres in the world, and these have played vital roles in supporting victim-survivors of men's violence, as well as having an impact on wider policy, practice, and perceptions (Harne and Radford 2008; Hester 2005). In Finland meanwhile, the women's movement is more associated with the crucial role it has played in the development of the so-called 'woman-friendly', universalist, social democratic Finnish welfare state (Esping-Andersen 1990; Hearn 2001; Siaroff 1994).

Refuges for victim-survivors of domestic violence in Finland developed out of former child welfare institutions, and have often featured more of an emphasis on mediation, as well as a closer connection with the state and an orientation towards social services and child protection (Clarke 2011; Hautanen 2005; Hearn and McKie 2010; McKie and Hearn 2004). This is indicative of how the women's movement in Finland has historically not focused to the same extent on men's violence against women as has been the case in the UK (Eriksson and Pringle 2005; Hester 2005; Kantola 2006). In addition, Hearn and McKie (2010) note that whilst there has been a strong emphasis in the Nordic countries on human rights, this has been based on the notion of the 'genderless citizen', which has frequently led to an overtly 'gender-neutral' approach to social policy. Whilst there has been a move towards gendered conceptions of men's violence against women in Finland in recent years (Keskinen 2005), Hautanen (2005) argues that a fear of being perceived to be making accusations or generalisations about 'all men' has remained, which means that this discussion is often carried out in vague terms.

Kantola (2006) argues that key to understanding some of these differences between Finland and the UK is how the women's movement has theorised and engaged with the state in fundamentally different ways in the two countries. In Finland, many feminists have traditionally regarded the state as a relatively benign apparatus for social change (Hearn 2001; Kantola 2006). In the UK meanwhile, the women's movement has more often viewed the state as a patriarchal institution and a core component in the maintenance of women's subordination (Walby 1990). Kantola contends that feminists in Britain has thus often been more wary about operating 'inside' of the state than the women's movement in Finland, and these differences have been reflected in the ways in which they have sought to resist men's violence – and in the state's response to it.

However, with social policy within European countries such as Finland and the UK showing signs of convergence through factors such as the globalisation

of neoliberal capitalism and the growing influence of supranational institutions on some areas of policymaking, it is possible that national distinctions in policy approaches to men's violences against women are becoming more blurred. For example, the approach of 'gender mainstreaming' has been emphasised by the European Union since the 1990's and has become common practice for many European governments (Hearn and McKie 2008; Hester 2005). Hearn and McKie (2010) describe how the focus of this approach to tackling gender inequalities has been on equality of opportunity, or 'means' equality, which is based on treating women and men equally, rather than on equality of outcomes, or 'results' equality, where means are applied differently in order to achieve equal outcomes. They argue that this is one example of how policies are to some extent converging in their 'degenderedness', where the gendered nature of the phenomenon is taken for granted but not explicitly examined, and an 'averted gaze' to gender is adopted in the state's response, where it is discussed without ever really being addressed (Hearn and McKie 2010).

Problematisations of men's violences against women

The ways in which men's violences against women are constructed and talked about in discourses – understood as the meaning systems we create in the ways that we use language (Bacchi 2009, Gill 2000, Wodak 2008) – fundamentally shape how these phenomena are comprehended. This is one reason why language has long been a site of interest and contestation for feminists, who have demonstrated how discourse is deeply involved in the maintenance of men's dominance (Gill 1995). Day-to-day, taken-for-granted discursive practices do not just reflect inequalities, but help to produce and reinforce them. The ways in which policies are discursively constructed therefore has significant consequences both in their direct material effects, and how they impact upon public perceptions of different phenomena. Policies are normative in the sense that they shape, and are shaped by, common meanings, assumptions, ideas and values (Murray and Powell 2009).

Bacchi (1999, 2009) argues that making explicit the 'problems' which are implicit in policies, and carefully scrutinising them, is a vital aspect of policy analysis. She contends that 'problems' do not simply exist in the world; people decide what is and what is not defined as one, and they are constituted and given shape by

policies. Governments do not simply react to 'problems', instead they actively create them as an obligatory part of policymaking. Policies are based around making proposals for change, and therefore implicitly represent 'problems', things which need to be changed, by their very nature (Bacchi 2009). People can thus be understood as being governed through problematisations rather than through policies themselves, because policies are problematising activities. Bacchi (2009) therefore argues that when analysing policies we should shift our attention from taken-for-granted 'problems', to how these 'problems' are constructed in the first place, and to examining the shape and character of 'problem representations'. Rather than simply considering whether a certain policy is a success or failure, this means assessing the premises behind particular problem representations, and the assumptions and presuppositions that underpin and shape policies. This project sought to question what limits are imposed by the representations of men's violence against women within Finnish and British policy discourses, which aspects of these phenomena are problematised and which are not, which issues and perspectives are silenced, and what is made (in)visible in the process (Bacchi 2009).

A considerable body of feminist research has demonstrated how, throughout different levels of society, men's violence against women is concealed and obscured through a range of linguistic devices and discursive techniques. This contributes to what Romito (2008) has elucidated as the strategies of legitimisation and denial of men's violence against women and children, which are accomplished through six main tactics: euphemising, dehumanising, blaming, psychologising, naturalising, and separating (Westmarland 2015).

Berns (2001) has described how there has been a societal backlash to feminist conceptualisations of men's violence against women, which she calls 'patriarchal resistance'. Patriarchal resistance consists of two main discursive strategies: 'de-gendering the problem', where the role of gender and power in men's violence is obscured; and 'gendering the blame', where culpability is placed on women for both causing and preventing the violence (Berns 2001). In a study on the coverage of domestic violence in women's magazines, Berns (1999) found that it was typically constructed as a private problem and as the victim's problem, with the focus limited to the individual rather than connected to wider social relations, and the onus placed on women to solve it. In a study of articles about domestic violence in major women's and men's magazines, Nettleton (2011) found that even

within well-meaning narratives victim-survivors were often implicitly blamed for the abuse rather than the male perpetrators, because they were deemed to have chosen the 'wrong partner' for example. In women's magazines, women were expected to bear responsibility for the behaviour of both themselves and their partners, whilst in men's magazines, tolerance and celebration of domestic violence was found (Nettleton 2011).

Meanwhile, in a discourse analysis of both professional and popular literature discussing men's violence against women, Phillips and Henderson (1999) found that amongst the 165 abstracts and 11 full-length articles they examined, there were only eight occasions in which there was a phrasal connection between the violent acts and men. The gender of women as victim-survivors was commonly made visible, but the gender of the perpetrators was left unmentioned, which Phillips and Henderson (1999) argue demonstrates how men's violence against women is conceived as a 'problem of women'. This can arguably also be observed when men's violence against women is described as a 'women's issue', for example (Katz 2006), where attention is taken away from the actual source of the problem: men.

Similarly, Coates and Wade (2007) conducted an analysis of sexual assault trial judgments and found that judges commonly drew from psychological concepts and constructs in order to explain men's use of violence, systematically reformulating deliberate acts of violence into acts which were neither deliberate nor violent. Trial judges also obscured the nature of the sexual assaults through the use of externalising attributions, which portrayed an external force such as alcohol as being the cause. Coates and Wade (2004) argue that these 'psychologising' ascriptions are combined with other linguistic devices to accomplish discursive operations which function to: conceal men's violence, mitigate the perpetrator's responsibility, conceal the resistance of the victim, and blame or pathologise them. The ways in which these discursive practices misrepresent men's violence and women's experiences of it, and obstruct effective interventions, demonstrate that, in the words of Coates and Wade (2007, p. 511), 'the problem of violence is inextricably linked to the problem of representation'.

Every utterance that we choose to express about men's violences towards women contributes to the construction of certain representations of these phenomena. For example, in an analysis of academic journal articles discussing domestic violence, Lamb (1991) found that in the linguistic choices of the authors, the

abuse was typically constructed as ‘acts without agents’, consistently discursively hiding men’s responsibility for it. Meanwhile, Frazer and Miller (2009) compared reports in the mass media about cases of domestic violence where the perpetrator was male and cases where the perpetrator was female, and found that the passive voice was used much more regularly to describe the former. This diminished any emphasis on male perpetrators, demonstrating that such techniques are not necessarily about the phenomenon of domestic violence itself, but specifically about the abuse of women by men.

These are just some examples of how feminist research has illustrated the ways in which we discursively construct and problematise men’s violence against women in ways that blur its systemic and gendered foundations (Bacchi, 1999). This project investigates how such representations are constructed at the policy level, using Bacchi’s ‘What’s the problem represented to be?’ approach to analysing policy discourses. Bacchi (2009) describes how Foucault’s concepts of ‘prescriptive texts’ and ‘practical texts’ offer the means for identifying how problems are discursively represented in policy. She contends that policies offer rules, opinions and advice about how one should behave, and are therefore prescriptive texts. In this project, official policy documents provide the ‘practical texts’, the ‘methods of implementation’ for prescriptive texts, which provided the point of entry for examining the problematisation of men’s violence against women in British and Finnish policies. The following four national government policy documents were analysed: ‘*Recommendations for the Prevention of Interpersonal and Domestic Violence: Recognise, Protect and Act*’ (Ministry for Social Affairs and Health 2008) and ‘*Action Plan to Tackle Violence Against Women*’ (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2011) from Finland; and ‘*Call to End Violence to Women and Girls*’ (Home Office, 2010) and ‘*Call to End Violence to Women and Girls: An Action Plan*’ (Home Office, 2011) from the UK.

The two British policy documents were published by the Home Office under the Conservative-Liberal Democrat, centre-right coalition government, with the first paper presenting the newly elected government’s ‘*Strategic Vision*’ and the second an ‘*Action Plan*’ to discuss how their proposals would be implemented. These documents quickly replaced the paper published by the preceding Labour government one year earlier (HM Government 2009). Meanwhile, the earlier Finnish document, ‘*Recommendations for the Prevention of Interpersonal and Domestic*

Violence' is focused upon addressing institutional practices in local and regional services to tackle 'interpersonal and domestic violence'. The latter text, also described as an *'Action Plan'*, was the first set of policy proposals put forward by the Finnish government in this area since 2002; demonstrating inaction which had incurred criticism from the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2011). The two papers were published by successive centre-right coalition governments consisting of the Centre Party, National Coalition Party, Green League, and the Swedish People's Party.

All four documents were published and analysed in English, with all government policy documents in Finland being officially translated into both English and Swedish in addition to Finnish. In comparing policy proposals from two unique national contexts, the aim was to gain insights into how men's violence against women is being represented as a policy problem in two contrasting Northern European post-industrial settings with unique histories of policymaking around gendered violence. Kantola (2006) argues that discourses are intertwined with specific historical and cultural contexts, and comparisons can help to reveal discursive silences, differences and similarities in concepts and meanings, and challenge what is taken for granted within specific settings.

The invisibility of men's practices: Six key problem representations

The main finding of this study is that in all four of the policy documents analysed, despite the contextual differences between Britain and Finland, men's practices in relation to violence against women were made almost completely invisible, and the systemic and gendered facets of these phenomena were discursively silenced. The concealment of men's practices was carried out through six key problematisations, which were present in all four texts:

1. A problem of women

All four of the policy documents feature an overriding focus on the practices of victim-survivors, and with the exception of the earlier Finnish document, *'Recommen-*

dations for the Prevention of Interpersonal and Domestic Violence, the discourse is gendered through representations of the problem as being the victimisation of women. At the beginning of both of the British documents, it is recognised that: *'The vast majority of these violent acts are perpetrated by men on women'* (Home Office 2010, p. 5; Home Office 2011, p. 5). Yet from this point onwards, there are few occasions within either document where the gendered dynamics of these phenomena are alluded to. For example, in the entirety of the UK *'Action Plan'*, men are only named 7 times, compared to the 106 times in which women are referred to, and in the *'Strategic Vision'* document, men are only identified 9 times, whilst women are named 219 times. So while a gendered discourse is present, it is only women who are made visible within it. By identifying and naming the victim-survivors, but not the perpetrators, and focusing so exclusively on women's practices, a representation is therefore created where the problem is associated solely with women.

Only the earlier Finnish text does not contain this gendered discourse on the victimisation of women. Whilst the focus is again on victim-survivors, this is carried out in a degendered fashion through the domination of a 'gender-neutral' discourse. For instance, gender-neutral terms for victims appear 37 times compared to 20 references to female victims, whilst gender-neutral terms for perpetrators are used 25 times, compared to zero references to male perpetrators. In the latter Finnish document meanwhile, *'Action Plan to Tackle Violence Against Women'*, women are named 322 times, compared to 206 uses of gender-neutral terms for victims. In comparison, men are referred to 66 times in this text, but only 36 occasions in relation to the perpetration of violence, with 12 of the 66 references being made in the context of the victimisation of men. The following quotation provides one example of how the onus is placed upon victim-survivors to pursue support, whilst the responsibility of the perpetrator to stop using violence is not contemplated: *'If any interpersonal and domestic violence occurs among their [NGOs, parishes and other organisations] members, information is given on the services and forms of support available, and victims are urged to seek help'* (Ministry for Social Affairs and Health 2008, p. 14).

It is also noteworthy that whilst the prevailing focus is on victim-survivors in these documents, it is through a construction of them as passive recipients of abuse, with little consideration for how they may express agency in their lives. This

is demonstrated by the dominance of the word 'victim' and the near-total absence of language inferring agency, such as the word 'survivor' (Harne and Radford 2008), in all four policy documents. The appropriateness of these different terms is contested, but it is important to note that the more active ways in which women may exhibit agency, such as in resistance to men's violence, are almost entirely ignored. Coates and Wade (2007) write that people resist whenever they are subjected to violence, and that for every history of violence, there is a history of resistance running parallel to it. The routine limiting and dismissal of the agency, resistance and resilience that women who are victims and survivors of men's violence articulate contributes to pathologising and blaming them for the violence they are subjected to by men (Coates and Wade 2004). Agency is denoted upon women in terms of having responsibility for men's behaviour, but seldom discussed in relation to their own selves.

2. A problem without perpetrators

With the focus almost entirely on the victimisation of women, men's practices as the perpetrators of violence are not scrutinised and are barely discussed or even mentioned in any of the four texts, even in degendered terms, leaving the actual agents of the violence unproblematised. This is despite the fact that the 'prevention' of violence against women is emphasised as a key tenet of both governments' approaches. For example, the importance of addressing the roots of men's violence is referred to: '*We are committed to leading by example in challenging the attitudes, behaviours and practices which cause women and girls to live in fear*' (Home Office 2010, p. 9), but what exactly these attitudes, behaviours and practices consist of and who they belong to is not made clear. At no point are connections made to the social construction of men and masculinities, and commitments to prevention are expressed in vague, abstract, degendered statements. For example, in both the latter Finnish paper and the British '*Action Plan*', the 'role of men' in challenging violence against women is referred to. Yet what this role could actually consist of is never explored further, and even within specific chapters on prevention, the emphasis remains on women's practices.

Men's practices are slightly more visible in the latter Finnish paper, where they are intermittently named as perpetrators, and the need to address men's practices

in order to prevent violence against women is implicitly raised on occasion. Yet these gendered constructions of male perpetrators represent exceptions rather than commonalities, and as with the other three documents, men remain fundamentally invisible in this text. This means that men's violence against women is represented as a problem without perpetrators, and men are absolved of responsibility for their violence.

On the occasions that men are made visible, it is just as often as potential victims of phenomena such as domestic violence and sexual violence than as perpetrators. Four out of nine occasions in which men are mentioned in the British '*Strategic Vision*' text, and two out of the four times in the '*Action Plan*', it is as victim-survivors. The victimisation of men is discussed in this way without being situated within the wider context of gendered patterns of violence. Whilst male victims are obviously important in their own right, focusing on them to the same extent as on men's use of violence can minimise the gendered imbalances of phenomena such as domestic violence and sexual violence and diffuse responsibility for them (Lamb 1991). It risks distorting women's use of violence (Berns 2001) and equating its extent with the violence of men. The extent to which male victim-survivors are focused upon also suggests a contradiction in the notion, repeated in some of the texts, that the victimisation of men is a hidden phenomenon, when it appears that the actors that are concealed in these texts are actually male perpetrators of abuse. In the earlier Finnish document for example, the only occasion in the text where men alone are mentioned at all concerns male victims of sexual violence. This kind of problematisation potentially serves to derail any focus on gendered power relations more than it helps the victimisation of men to be treated with the seriousness that it warrants.

3. A problem without context

Whilst all of the documents apart from the earlier Finnish paper do use the terms 'violence against women' and 'gender-based violence', and acknowledge its connections to gender inequalities, this gendered discourse remains at a superficial level. There is an absence of any deeper problematisation of the context in which these crimes are perpetrated, in terms of how men's violence against women is structured as a cause and consequence of patriarchal power relations, or of the

culture which enables, excuses and legitimises these practices. Nor are substantive linkages made to the structural inequalities which women face and the role they play in enabling, perpetuating, and compounding men's violences against women – or how these factors could be tackled as part of the governments' responses. A gendered analysis of these phenomena is therefore lacking in the four texts.

For example, in the UK documents there appears to be a greater emphasis on questioning the sustainability of funding for women's refuges and rape crisis centres than there is on problematising structural gender inequalities (which, ironically, underlie the under-resourcing of these services in the first place). In all four documents, 'incidents' of phenomena such as domestic violence and sexual violence are represented as problems, but not the social context which enables these crimes to take place. This means that there is not only a silence around the perpetrators of men's violence against women, but also its structural causes. Yet if men's violence against women is rooted in gendered power relations and in the social construction of men and masculinities, then how can it be prevented without these things being addressed? These missing linkages to the patriarchal context of men's violence against women points to an individualised rather than social problematisation in which its systemic and gendered features are left untouched.

4. A gender-neutral problem

In addition to the discursive centring of the victimisation of women, there is also a 'gender-neutral' discourse running through all four of the texts, in which phenomena such as domestic violence and sexual violence are discussed without any reference to the gender of those involved. This is particularly common when the agents of violence are being discussed, so that even when men's use of violence towards women is alluded to, it is typically as gender-neutral, anonymised 'perpetrators', leaving men's practices further hidden from view. However, there are also many occasions across all four documents where this discourse is applied to all actors and men's violences against women is fully degendered.

The discourse of the earlier Finnish document is almost entirely 'gender-neutral'. In the main body of the text, specific references to women, men, or gender are almost non-existent. Rather than being based around a discourse on the victimi-

sation of women, the 'interpersonal and domestic violence' that the paper focuses upon are represented as degendered problems. Where links are made to actual actors, it is almost always in gender-neutral terms. On a number of occasions, not only is the gender of the actor absent, but the connection of that person to the violence itself is also neutralised. For instance, the terms 'customer', 'client', 'patient', 'spouse', 'partner', and 'parent' were used 43 times in this document, both in the context of perpetration and victimisation. The word 'customer' alone appears 30 times.

Given that the defining feature of men's violence against women is its gendered dynamics, 'gender-neutral' problematisations further disguise and distort the roots of these phenomena, as if they affected women and men equally. For instance: *'The aim of the campaign will be to prevent teenagers from becoming victims and perpetrators of abusive relationships'* (Home Office 2011, p. 4). Representations of domestic violence such as this create the impression of a relationship where the abuse might be mutual and shared, rather than the exertion of power and control by men over their female partners.

In the earlier Finnish document, the assertion is also made several times that perpetrators require 'help' in a way that is equated with the support needed by victims. This language again mutualises the experiences of the two groups, as if both victims and perpetrators equally need (and deserve) the same kind of support in order to stop the abuse. For example: *'Interpersonal and domestic violence is easily overlooked as both the victim and the perpetrator find it difficult to report it and seek help because of feelings of shame, guilt and fear'* (Ministry for Social Affairs and Health 2008, p. 14). Kantola (2006) argues that the popular notion in Finland of the need to 'support' male perpetrators of domestic violence is the product of an influential 'family violence' discourse. This discourse risks pathologising men who use violence against women, medicalising them as atypical men in need of 'help' or 'mediation' rather than normal men who choose to use violence. It mitigates men's accountability and responsibility for their violence, by suggesting that they are 'people prone to violence' (Ministry for Social Affairs and Health 2008, p. 28) and that the actions which they need 'help' to stop are somehow out of their control. This may also be reflected in that fact that the Finnish documents are both published by the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health, whilst the British documents are published by the criminal justice-oriented Home Office. It is worth

reflecting on whether other crimes would be discussed in such ways.

A recurring 'gender-neutral' discourse also persists in the second Finnish policy document, in constructions such as the following: *'One-fifth of people living in a partnership say they have sometimes experienced violence or threats of violence from their current spouse or partner'* (Ministry for Social Affairs and Health 2010, p. 14–15). Gender-neutral terms for 'victims' and 'perpetrators' are used 206 and 68 times respectively, and neutralising terms for actors such as 'customer', 'client', 'patient', 'spouse', 'partner', and 'parent' also appear on 125 occasions. This problematisation again blurs, equates and mutualises the experiences and needs of women and men in relation to men's violence. Discourses on 'gender-neutrality' and the victimisation of women therefore blend together, leaving an obfuscated construction of gender in relation to men's violence. However, as with the other texts, neither problematisation focuses upon men's practices, either as degendered perpetrators, or as named men. Men's violences against women are not 'neutral' – they are phenomena which serve to maintain men's dominance of women, on an individual and structural, personal and political basis. Representing phenomena such as domestic violence and sexual violence as 'gender-neutral' problems therefore functions to depoliticise them and hide their connections to gender inequalities.

5. An agentless problem

Lamb (1991) argues that we absolve men of responsibility for domestic violence by concealing the agent in the linguistic choices we make when talking about the phenomenon. This is carried out within a series of problem sentence categories: diffusion of responsibility; acts without agents (passive voice and nominalisation); victims without agents; and gender obfuscation. This kind of agentless discourse was also found running through all four of the policy documents analysed, in relation to men's violence against women more broadly.

Terms appear in all of the texts which diffuse responsibility (Lamb 1991) for men's violences against women, by constructing these phenomena as mutualised experiences rather than exertions of power and control by men against their female partners. For example, domestic violence was described in the four texts in terms such as: 'violent relationships', 'violent families', 'partnership violence', 'vio-

lence among intimate partners', and 'assault in intimate relationships'. These constructions suggest that it is the relationship which is violent, rather than the male perpetrator, as if both partners somehow share responsibility for that violence.

Second, men's violence against women is almost always discussed in the passive voice (Lamb 1991) in the texts. The violence and abuse is represented as actions which are done to women rather than done by men. Indeed, through agent deletion the use of the passive voice frequently extends further, so that women are described as 'experiencing domestic violence', being 'exposed to domestic violence', and being 'at high risk of domestic violence'. The agents of the abuse are almost always missing, and when they are present they are very rarely named as being men, but as degendered 'perpetrators'. In these policy documents women are thus constructed as 'victims without agents' (Lamb 1991).

The instances listed here also demonstrate how different forms of men's violences against women are discursively transformed into personified forces (Coates and Wade 2004), as if the violence itself was the 'agent'. This is through the nominalisation of terms such as domestic violence, which occurs throughout all four texts. It is thus 'domestic violence' which harms women and children, 'domestic violence' which women 'fall victim to', and 'domestic violence' that women are killed 'as a result of', rather than the actual perpetrators. Nominalising men's violences against women entirely removes the agent of the violence from the text, and it constructs these practices in an impersonal and abstract form, disconnecting them from their reality. Non-volitional terms such as 'incident' are also used, rather than volitional terms such as 'action', to describe violence and abuse, again eradicating any semblance of agency from these crimes (Coates and Wade 2004). All of these linguistic choices contribute to a problematisation of men's violences against women where the male agents are invisible, and where the emphasis is placed entirely on the practices of victim-survivors.

Lamb (1991) also pointed out that gender obfuscation is a regular feature of the language we use to discuss domestic violence, through the dominance of gender-neutral terms such as 'victim' and 'perpetrator', as has been found in the texts analysed here. It is notable that in the earlier Finnish document, the gender-neutral terms 'interpersonal and domestic violence' are frequently shortened simply to 'violence'. For instance: '*When a violent person stops using violence, violence is reduced*' (Ministry for Social Affairs and Health 2008, p. 27). Linguistically, such

constructions serve to further distort the reality of men's violences against women as uniquely harmful and pervasive gendered practices, which gender-neutral discourses lay the basis for.

It is also noteworthy that in the British '*Action Plan*' paper, the acronym for violence against women and girls, 'VAWG', is frequently used. It could be argued that acronyms such as this also serve to remove gender from the discourse. 'VAWG' is used so extensively that it becomes a term in its own right, and the victim-survivors, the 'women and girls', become hidden behind it. Indeed, many of the most common terms used for different forms of men's violences against women in the texts arguably also obfuscate gender, such as 'domestic violence', 'interpersonal violence' and 'sexual violence'. This is even the case with the most commonplace term – 'violence against women', which does clearly name the victim, but in the passive voice, and with the agent of the violence entirely absent. It is noteworthy that in the UK documents the phrase 'tackle/tackling violence against women' is used frequently, appearing 27 times in the '*Strategic Vision*' and 19 times in the '*Action Plan*'. Yet this phrase conceals that which actually needs to be tackled – the practices of those (men) who are responsible for the violence.

6. A problem of the Other(s)

In the chapters on prevention in the two British texts, men's violences against women, and especially domestic violence, are also connected with different constructions of deviancy. These include substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, and 'problem families'. This 'troubled families' discourse constructs domestic violence within a wider nexus of behaviour represented as a problem, and in the process dissolves any connections to social structures and gender. Here the problem is individualised and defined as alcohol use, teenage pregnancy, or the family, rather than men's practices and gender inequalities. This externalises men's violence against women to factors such as alcohol consumption and other 'deviant' behaviours and again takes away responsibility from its perpetrators (Coates and Wade 2004). Moreover, it others men's violence against women and associates it with a minority of 'troubled' families from 'vulnerable backgrounds', despite the fact that these phenomena are pervasive throughout society.

In the latter Finnish document meanwhile, a significant portion of the text is

devoted to discussing what are represented as being unique problems of men's violence within migrant communities. In explaining this, the cultural backgrounds of migrants are problematised: *'Some of the immigrants moving to Finland come from countries with a hierarchic and patriarchal social structure, where women's right to equality is far from a matter of course, either in principle or in practice'* (Ministry for Social Affairs and Health 2010, p. 33), and constructed as being more prone to violence. The solution is presented as being greater integration into Finnish society. This implies that by becoming more Finnish, migrants can forgo violence, as if such behaviour, and gendered power inequalities more generally, were otherwise non-existent issues in Finland. In this discourse, men's violence against women is therefore racialised and associated with problems of ethnicity and culture, rather than gender, serving to sustain the notion that 'normal' Finnish men don't commit violence against women.

It is also interesting to note that 9 of the 36 specific references to men's use of violence in this text speak of 'immigrant men'. This suggests that there is more readiness to place responsibility on the male perpetrators of violence against women if they are men from a migrant background. This finding fits with the analysis of Clarke (2011) who argues that, as part of a xenophobic discourse in Finland, migrant communities and migrant men have been constructed as being innately patriarchal and violent. Men's violence against women is represented as a problem of migrant communities, and blamed on cultural differences. The function of culturally essentialising men's violence as only belonging to non-Finnish and non-white men is to further marginalise the phenomenon within wider Finnish society. This problematisation of Others disassociates violence against women from men more generally and from the social structures of male domination, thus hiding the systemic and gendered nature of these practices.

Conclusions

Using Bacchi's 'what's the problem represented to be?' approach, this research project has found that men's practices are made invisible in the discourses of contemporary British and Finnish policy documents on men's violence against women. This is accomplished through six main problem representations: men's violence against women as a problem of women; as a problem without pepe-

trators; as a problem without context; as a gender-neutral problem; as an agent-less problem; and as a problem of the Other(s). By concealing men's practices, the problem representations constructed in these policy discourses place their focus solely upon the practices of women. This serves to absolve men of responsibility for men's violence against women, and shifts it onto the victim-survivors. In the words of Berns (2001), these policy discourses therefore degender the problem, by hiding men's perpetration of violence in a variety of ways, and gender the blame, by placing the onus on women to stop it.

Despite this, it is clear that significant achievements have been made by the women's movements in Britain and Finland in forcing the state and wider society to recognise men's violence against women as a major problem. The influence of feminist discourses can be seen in the construction of these phenomena as gendered 'violence against women' in three of the four policy documents that were analysed, for example. This is undoubtedly a step forward; recognising phenomena such as domestic violence and sexual violence as crimes against women is vitally important. However, the embrace of feminist discourses by policymakers appears to remain superficial, with their problematisations featuring only a very limited gender analysis. Whilst the texts do focus on the victimisation of women, this is their only focus, and in this way women are denoted with responsibility for both causing and preventing men's violence, as if it could be stopped if their practices were somehow different. This suggests that policymakers and indeed wider society are more comfortable with accepting the idea of women as victims, than with recognising men's responsibility for that victimisation. It demonstrates that a victim-blaming approach to men's violence against women remains entrenched in policymaking and the state's conception of these phenomena.

In the different policy documents analysed in this study, which were published between 2008 and 2011, there appears to be considerable alignment between the British and Finnish governments in the ways in which men's violence against women is discursively constructed. The earlier Finnish document, *Recommendations for the Prevention of Interpersonal and Domestic Violence*, is anchored in 'gender-neutral' discourses, which suggests the influence of the 'genderless' approach which has long been rooted in Finnish social policy more generally (Hearn and McKie 2010). Whilst there was still considerable evidence of this gender-neutral discourse in the latter Finnish text, the *Action Plan*, it was much closer to the Brit-

ish documents in constructing these phenomena as the victimisation of women. This (limited) recognition of the importance of gender relations by policymakers may have occurred earlier in the UK because of the strength and pressure the British women's movement has applied from 'outside' of the state in relation to men's violences against women (Hester 2005; Kantola 2006).

The parallels in the problem representations of these documents may also provide evidence of growing international influence in this area, and of supranational institutions such as the EU and the UN playing an increasingly important role in policymaking around men's violence against women. It is notable for instance that in all three of the most recent documents, the UN's definition of violence against women is used. The findings of this study may therefore support the idea that policymaking on these phenomena in some European countries is to some extent converging (Hearn and McKie 2010), at least at the discursive level. However, this is towards problematisations where the victims are made visible, but the perpetrators are made invisible, and a representation of the problem as violence against women but not men's violence. These problematisations may also be influenced by depoliticised neo-liberal conceptions of gender equality, related to the notion of equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcomes (Hearn and McKie 2010). This means treating women and men equally in response to phenomena which are defined by inequality, and rooted in the structural dominance of men and subordination of women. If there is policy convergence then, it may be towards a discourse which addresses the role of gender at a surface level only.

Within the confines of these problem representations, it seems obvious that women should be the focus of attention, when supporting victim-survivors is the clear shared goal. Men's discursive invisibility from the outset means that there is never any expectation for their practices to be examined. By keeping men hidden from the conversation, their practices never enter our consciousness, and the possibility of transforming them is closed off through discursive manoeuvres. This is akin to the 'averted gaze' to gender described by Hearn and McKie (2010) – often in the texts it is implicit that it is men's practices which are being talked about, but it is rarely made explicit. We have a subliminal awareness of men's responsibility for violence against women (and violence more generally), yet never actually confront it.

Of course, such constructions of men's violence against women extend far beyond the policy sphere, and are reflected in the discourses used to talk about

these phenomena on a day-to-day normative basis across society too. Within criminology there continues to be little acknowledgment, scrutiny or explanation of the fact that most violence, and indeed most crime, is committed by men. As a society, we remain reluctant to recognise or confront the systemic violence and abuse men enact against women, its causes, or the complicity among men more generally in its legitimisation. Of course, there are vested interests that are served by sustaining the silence around men's violences, in terms of the maintenance of men's power. Yet social policy presents a platform from which these discourses could be challenged, and new, destabilising problematisations of men's violences could be advocated. However, policies aiming to 'tackle violence against women' are unlikely to have success whilst they simultaneously hide the agents of that violence from view.

Furthermore, a discourse which is centred on women's practices may appear to be separate from commonplace constructions which ignore or minimise phenomena such as domestic violence and sexual violence and dismiss women's perspectives and experiences. Yet the discourses in these texts seemingly reflect precisely the same kind of androcentric standpoint, based on a position of male dominance that actually subjugates women's experiences. Whilst the focus may be on women in these problem representations, it is only in very limited and limiting ways. The intersectional totality of women's lived experiences continues to be marginalised in these policy documents, where women's agency is only represented in relation to the responsibility denoted upon them for men's violence.

It is because the subjectivities, experiences, and perspectives of men are assumed to be the subject and the norm that they are so rarely actually gendered. Men are not named as men because the standpoint of men is what we understand as being universal, as being the default and the 'neutral'. It is precisely because men are invisible from these discourses around men's violence that they function to maintain men's power. The hegemony of men is reproduced – consciously or not – through the concealment of the ways in which men go about maintaining that hegemony. Of course, this does not mean that policy around men's violence against women should not be centred on victim-survivors and their needs – this is essential. However, when the spotlight is exclusively on women's practices and men's practices are obscured, that discourse is about protecting the interests of men's power.

The emphasis on the victimisation of women in these policy documents also belies a fatalistic approach and ‘culture of resignation’ (Thapar-Björkert and Morgan 2010) towards men’s violences against women, where phenomena such as domestic violence and sexual violence are assumed to be inevitable problems that can only be ‘managed’ by social policy. As systemic social phenomena, through social change men’s violences against women can be stopped. However, this will only be possible by identifying and making visible who is responsible for them, and why. That will require a shift in the preventative focus, away from the practices of victim-survivors, and onto the practices of men.

The findings of this project therefore suggest that fundamental change is needed in the approaches of policymakers in both Britain and Finland towards tackling men’s violences against women, as campaigned for by feminist movements in both countries. That change is not simply about new policies, but a transformation in the ways in which those policies understand, construct and represent men’s violence against women as a problem in the first place. Each one of the four policy documents analysed here emphasised the importance of prevention, and primary prevention does offer a means of moving beyond the resignation, acquiescence and victim-blame articulated by policy responses to men’s violences against women. Preventing these phenomena demands that we place a critical spotlight on men and masculinities – onto those with power, and how they go about preserving that power. This means challenging the gender hierarchy that defines the very foundations of the status quo – however that is what is necessary in order to tackle men’s violence against women.

References

- Bacchi, Carol. 1999. *Women, Policy and Politics: The Construction of Policy Problems*. London: Sage Publications.
- Bacchi, Carol. 2009. *Analysing Policy: What’s the Problem Represented to be?* Frenchs Forest: Pearson.
- Berns, Nancy. 1999. “My Problem and How I Solved It: Domestic Violence in Women’s Magazines.” *The Sociological Quarterly* 40 (1): 85–108.
- Berns, Nancy. 2001. “Degendering the Problem and Gendering the Blame: Political Discourse on Women and Violence.” *Gender and Society* 15 (2): 262–281.

- Clarke, Kris. 2011. "The Paradoxical Approach to Intimate Partner Violence in Finland." *International Perspectives in Victimology* 6 (1): 9–19.
- Coates, Linda and Wade, Allan. 2004. "Telling it like it isn't: Obscuring perpetrator responsibility for violent crime." *Discourse and Society* 15 (5): 499–526.
- Coates, Linda and Wade, Allan. 2007. "Language and Violence: Analysis of Four Discursive Operations." *Journal of Family Violence* 22 (7): 511–522.
- Eriksson, Maria and Pringle, Keith. 2005. "Introduction: Nordic issues and dilemmas." In *Tackling Men's Violence in Families: Nordic Issues and Dilemmas*, edited by Eriksson, Maria, Hester, Marianne, Keskinen, Suvi, and Pringle, Keith, 1–12. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. 1990. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Frazer, Alexander K. and Miller, Michelle D. (2009) "Double Standards in Sentence Structure: Passive Voice in Narratives Describing Domestic Violence." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 28 (1): 62–71.
- Gadd, David. 2012. Domestic Abuse Prevention after Raoul Moat. *Critical Social Policy* 32 (4): 495–516.
- Gill, Rosalind. 1995. "Relativism, Reflexivity and Politics: Interrogating Discourse Analysis from a Feminist Perspective." In *Feminism and Discourse: Psychological Perspectives*, edited by Wilkinson, Sue and Kitzinger, Celia. London: Sage Publications.
- Gill, Rosalind. 2000. "Discourse analysis." In *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound: A Practical Handbook*, edited by Baker, Martin W. and Gaskell, George, 173–190. London: Sage Publications.
- Harne, Lynne and Radford, Jill. 2008. *Tackling Domestic Violence: Theories, Policies and Practice*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Hautanen, Teija. 2005. "Bypassing the relationship between fatherhood and violence in Finnish policy and research." In *Tackling Men's Violence in Families: Nordic Issues and Dilemmas*, edited by Eriksson, Maria, Hester, Marianne, Keskinen, Suvi, and Pringle, Keith, 67–82. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Hearn, Jeff. 2001. "Nation, State and Welfare: The Cases of Finland and the UK." In *A Man's World?: Changing Men's Practices in a Globalized World*, edited by Pease, Bob and Pringle, Keith, 85–102. London: Zed Books.
- Hearn, Jeff. 2004. From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men. *Feminist Theory* 5, 49–72.

- Hearn, Jeff. 2012. A Multi-faceted Power Analysis of Men's Violence to Known Women: From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men. *The Sociological Review* 60, 589–610.
- Hearn, Jeff and McKie, Linda. 2008. Gendered Policy and Policy on Gender: The Case of 'Domestic Violence'. *Policy and Politics* 26 (1): 75–91.
- Hearn, Jeff and McKie, Linda. 2010. "Gendered and Social Hierarchies in Problem Representation and Policy Process: 'Domestic violence' in Finland and Scotland." *Violence Against Women* 16 (2): 136–158.
- Hearn, Jeff and Pringle, Keith. 2006. "Men, Masculinities and Children: Some European Perspectives." *Critical Social Policy* 26 (2): 365–389.
- Hester, Marianne. 2005. "Tackling men's violence in families: Lessons for the UK." In *Tackling Men's Violence in Families: Nordic Issues and Dilemmas*, edited by Eriksson, Maria, Hester, Marianne, Keskinen, Suvi, and Pringle, Keith, 173–182. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Home Office. 2010. *Call to End Violence to Women and Girls*. London: Home Office.
- Home Office. 2011. *Call to End Violence to Women and Girls: An Action Plan*. London: Home Office.
- HM Government. 2009. *Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls: A Strategy*. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office.
- Kantola, Johanna. 2006. *Feminists Theorize the State*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Katz, Jackson. 2006. *The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks.
- Kaufman, Michael. 1987. "The Construction of Masculinity and the Triad of Men's Violence." In *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by Men on Pleasure, Power, and Change*, edited by Kaufman, Michael, pp. 1–29. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kelly, Liz. 1988. *Surviving sexual violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Keskinen, Suvi. 2005. "Commitments and Contradictions: Linking Violence, Parenthood and Professionalism." In *Tackling Men's Violence in Families: Nordic Issues and Dilemmas*, edited by Eriksson, Maria, Hester, Marianne, Keskinen, Suvi, and Pringle, Keith, 31–48. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Lamb, Sharon. 1991. "Acts Without Agents: An Analysis of Linguistic Avoidance in Journal Articles on Men Who Batter Women." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 61 (2): 250–257.

- McKie, Lina and Hearn, Jeff. 2004. "Gender-neutrality and Gender Equality: Comparing and Contrasting Policy Responses to 'Domestic Violence' in Finland and Scotland." *Scottish Affairs* 48.
- Ministry for Social Affairs and Health. 2008. *Recommendations for the Prevention of Interpersonal and Domestic Violence: Recognise, Protect and Act*. Helsinki: Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2008: 26.
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. 2011. *Action Plan to Tackle Violence Against Women*. Helsinki: Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2010:15.
- Murray, Suellen and Powell, Anastasia. 2009. "What's the Problem?": Australian Public Policy Constructions of Domestic and Family Violence", *Violence Against Women* 15 (5): 532–552.
- Nettleton, Pamela Hill (2011) "Domestic Violence in Men's and Women's Magazines." *Women's Studies in Communication* 34 (2): 139–160.
- Phillips, Debby and Henderson, Dorothy. 1999. "Patient Was Hit in the Face by a Fist...': A Discourse Analysis of Male Violence Against Women. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 69 (1): 116–121.
- Romito, Patrizia. 2008. *A Deafening Silence: Hidden Violence Against Women and Children*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Siaroff, A. 1994. "Work, Welfare and Gender Equality: A New Typology." In *Gendering Welfare States*, edited by Sainsbury, Diane, 82–100. London: Sage.
- Thapar-Björkert, Suruchi and Morgan, Karen J. 2010. "Exploring Blame and Responsibility in Interpersonal Violence." *Violence Against Women* 16 (32): 32–59.
- Walby, Sylvia. 1990. *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Westmarland, Nicole. 2015. *Violence Against Women: Criminological Perspectives on Men's Violences*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Wodak, Ruth. 2008. "Introduction: Discourse Studies – Important Concepts and Terms." In *Qualitative Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences*, edited by Wodak, Ruth and Krzyzanowski, Michael, 1–29. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.



Photo Series: Making Men and Man-Kind

Damien Schumann

Masculinity is socially constructed. It is learned and passed down from one generation to the next. Masculinity in South Africa is troubled with historic and economic challenges, as well as changing gender norms having greatly affected the way we perceive men in our society, and also how masculinity is achieved. The inability to achieve a sense of manliness through socially acceptable means leads to hyper masculine behaviour that includes violence, dangerous acts, and acts of domination (like rape or domestic abuse), played out in order to counter the stress caused by the inability to feel purposeful within society.

The response to hyper masculine behavior until recently has been to empower women, in a sense putting up arms against a threat. Few have considered how to resolve this threat from its root. What are the concerns of men, and how can these be resolved to better society?



Making Men

Making Men looks at the relationship between fathers and sons and inquires what kind of influence this masculine role model has had on a boy's life, and how they choose to embrace manhood. Based on what they experience in their intimate environment, what do boys consider to be manly? Through observation of physical similarities including mannerisms, postures, dress code and genetic snaps, a greater discourse is opened on how much psychological behaviour can be adopted from a role model as well. The influence of the (physically or emotionally) absent father is also analyzed.

Having lost his father at a young age, the artist commences this project within the demographic he grew up in, witnessing how his peers grew up and turned out having had a male influence. His search to conclude what a good masculine role model is traverses a gendered line and the relationship between men and boys.























Man-Kind

For *Man-Kind* the artist was curious on how men strive to attain and sustain their sense of masculinity. In a constant battle for dominance how does an alpha-male come to power and maintain his position? To find out Schumann undertook to seek alpha-males from a diverse cross section of backgrounds and observe behavioral trends, both of the alpha-male and his counterparts. Attention was placed on noting the performance men take on to exert their masculinity, and also the vulnerability of what lies beneath this mask. It aims to question how certain men are of their actions that feed the social construct of masculinity in which they find themselves; the scope of opportunity their environment provides for them to achieve this sense of masculinity; and what the repercussions of success and failure of these actions mean for the rest of society.

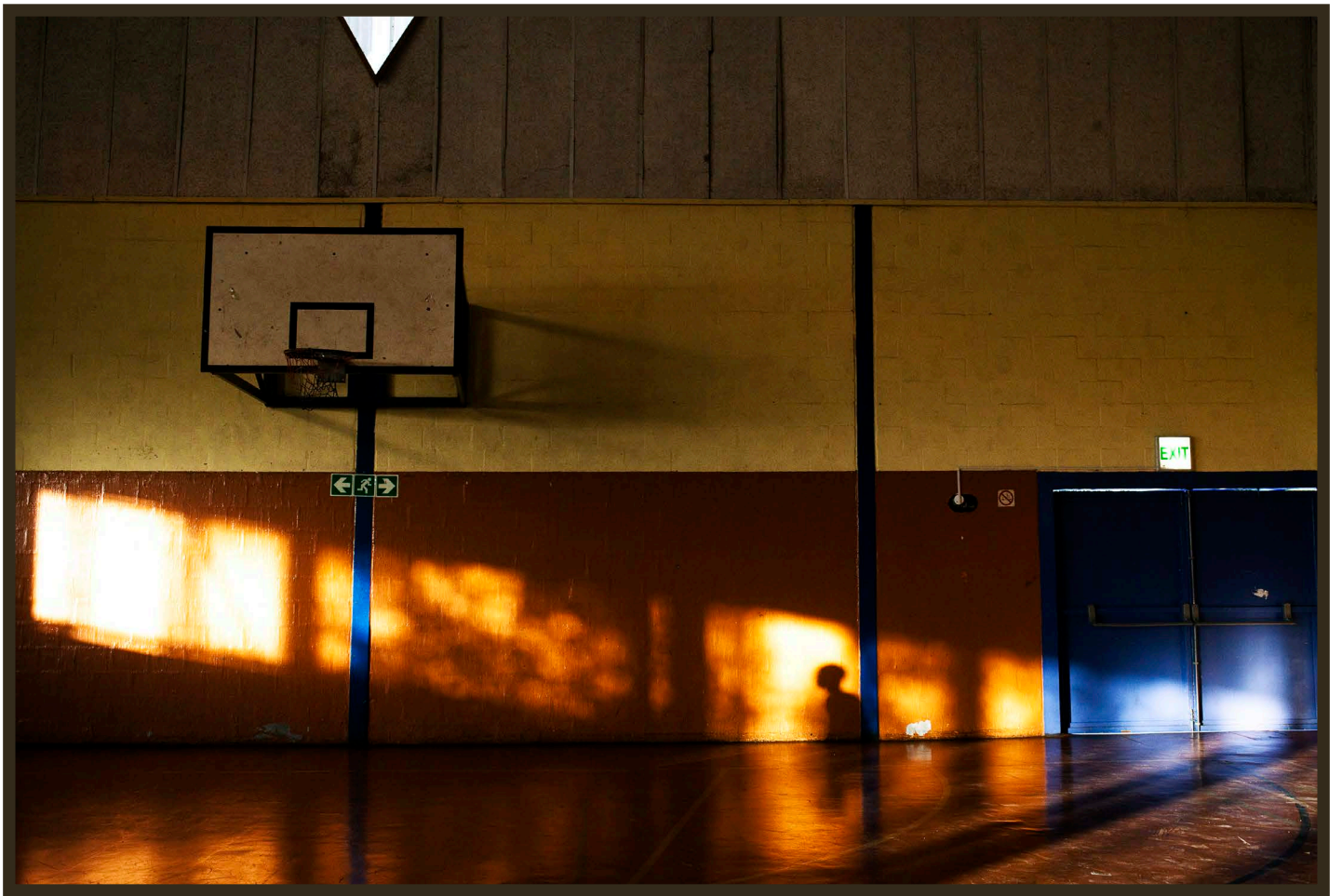










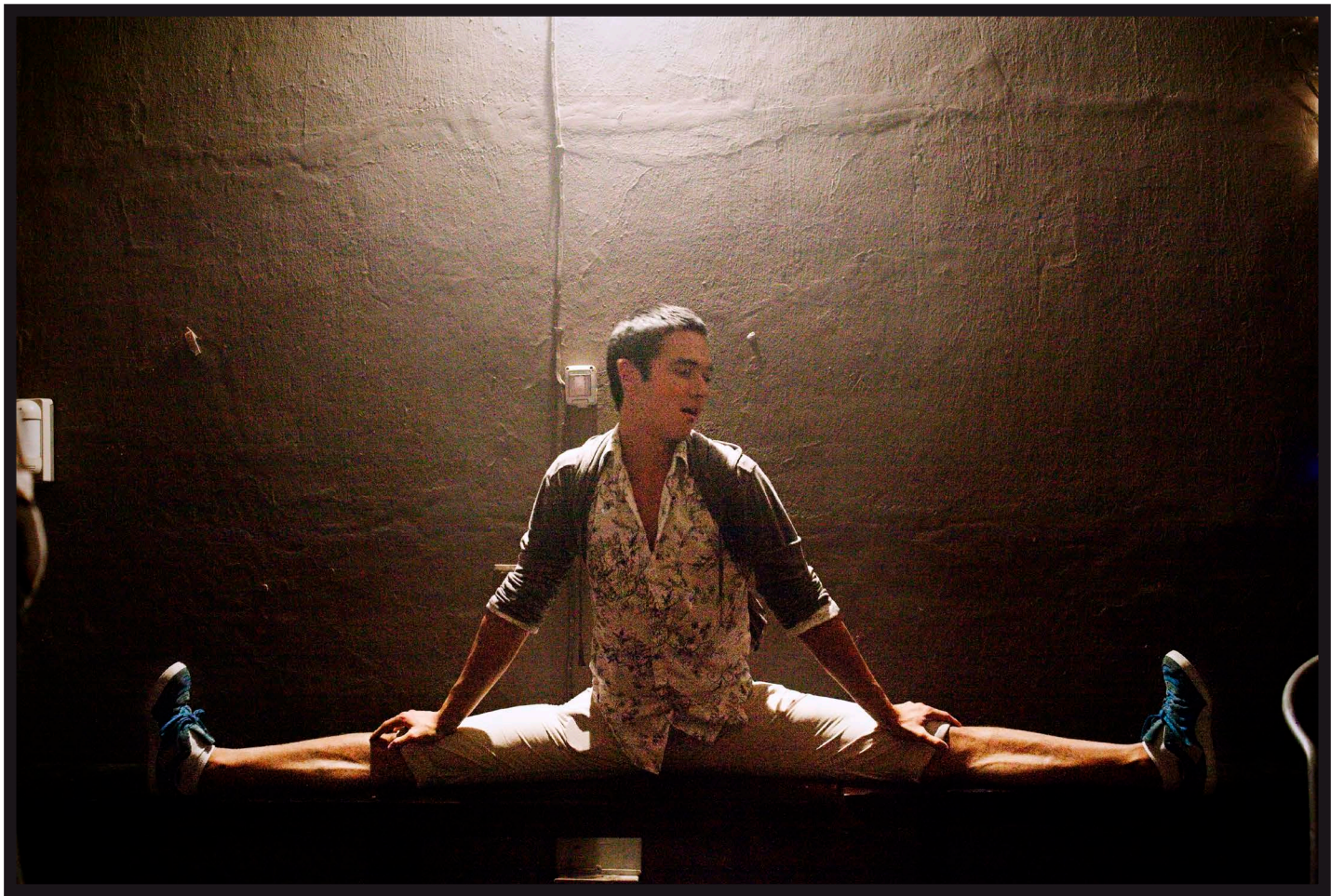














Doing violence: Some reflections on research, affects, and ethics

Mia Eriksson

ABSTRACT: This essay is about the embodied experience of writing a dissertation about Anders Behring Breivik and the terrorist attack in Norway on 22 July 2011. I will reflect upon what it was like to do research on material that recounts, with great detail, the life of a right-wing terrorist and the violence that he unleashed. My dissertation focuses on the ‘stories’ about Breivik, i.e. how his actions have been made sense of and how the violence of the terrorist attack has been narrated, but I also wrote a lot about how it felt to read and write about such a person and such an event. This *emotional data* became an important part of my research and in this essay I will elaborate further on the ethical and theoretical implications of this; the affective relationship between researcher and research material; and the practice of reading and the methodology of writing. I will argue that in order to analyze what a text *does*, it is not enough to deconstruct what it *says*. One also needs to deconstruct the relationship between text, the world it writes, and the feeling, reading body.

KEYWORDS: Research ethics, violence, emotions, methodology, Breivik

This essay is about the embodied experience of writing a dissertation. Or rather the embodied experience of writing my own dissertation in Gender Studies at a Swedish university, since such experiences must always be understood as local and partial (Haraway, 1991). I ended up with a difficult topic: how Anders Behring Breivik and the terrorist attack in Norway on 22 July 2011 had been explained and made sense of in a number of popular Norwegian books and Swedish news me-



dia articles.¹ In this essay, I will reflect upon what it was like to do research on a material that described so intimately the life of a right-wing terrorist, but that also told me about the lives of the victims and about the violence of the attack. I will focus primarily on the ethical implications of such research, and on the affective relationship between researcher and research material, and between the practice of reading and the methodology of writing.

A fellow scholar once said, at a seminar, that she carried her dissertation in her body, like a separate but integrated being that fed off her energy and thoughts – and off her very flesh. It made a ligament in her calf break; she was sitting in front of her computer for so many hours every day that when she finally stood up to walk away it just broke. Nothing ever broke in me, but I did, throughout the entire research and writing process, feel my dissertation in my body. I carried it, fed it, slept with it, loved it, hated it, cried and screamed at it. I think most Ph.D. students go through something like this but for me it became an essential part of my research. I started writing about it, this ‘emotional data’, as Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre (1997) calls it. Perhaps not exactly about the ways in which the dissertation itself became a part of my body, but about how my material did; how it affected me, emotionally, bodily, to read about the violence that took place on that Friday afternoon. It became a part of my theoretical and methodological framework and a way to approach a violent and disconcerting material.

I started formulating my research project approximately six months after the terrorist attack. At this juncture, my intention was to analyze Breivik’s ideological convictions in relation to political developments in Norway and Europe. This changed, however, when I read Åsne Seierstad’s *One of Us: The Story of Anders Breivik and the Massacre in Norway* (2015). I read it with the intention of learning more about Breivik – it was supposed to be background and not material – but there was something about it that didn’t sit right, that kept nagging my thoughts and my emotions. I came across other, similar, books, and I began to wonder about the stories they told, the performativity of their narratives, and about the discourse on Breivik that they took part in shaping. According to this discourse, Breivik was a ridiculous and failed loner, an outsider to the Norwegian society as well as to the norms of white, adult masculinity, norms which his body, presumably, *should* inhabit (Eriksson, 2016b). I found, in these books, narratives of an imagined national community (Anderson, 1983) and presumptions about ‘normal’, and normative,

gender identities, sexual practices, ways of living, and age-appropriate behaviors. And I found that the explanations offered for Breivik's violence were located not in society, politics, or ideology, but in his own personal failure with inhabiting these norms and with being a part of the imagined national community. Upon reading these books, my research focus began to alter, and instead of looking at Breivik, I started analyzing the stories about him, including the ways in which the violent events of 22 July 2011 were narrated.

■

One of Us starts with a detailed depiction of young people being killed on Utøya Island. It describes bullets penetrating bodies, blood dripping and hands slowly slipping away, the calm steps of the terrorist, his smile and voice, the thoughts of a dying child, and people being shot as they attempt to swim to the mainland, to safety. These initial pages had a big affective impact on me, and I read the rest of the book in a state of mind – or ‘state of being’, as Claire Hemmings (2005, p. 551) would put it – produced by this reading experience. It was a state of sadness and anger that made me feel *for* the victims and their friends and families, and *against* the perpetrator. I cried for the dead ones, and I hated their murderer. But I also found myself being drawn into the life of the terrorist, through the intimate narration of his life, and I found myself, at times, identifying with some of the experiences described – social awkwardness, a sense of exclusion and being a ‘misfit’ in relation to societal and cultural norms, periods of loneliness and low self-esteem – a recognition that produced shame and self-doubt. I understood this shame not as an appropriate reaction to a moral transgression, but as an effect of the initial affective experience (Woodward, 2009). How could I simultaneously cry for the victims, hate the terrorist, and experience a sense of identification, a sense of ‘being like him’? This shame became a part of my ‘emotional data’ and thus turned from an affective experience into research material. I think this was a way for me to handle the experience rather than merely an epistemological and methodological decision. In turning it into something analyzable and theoretically anchored I could distance myself from the affect and from the reading encounter that produced it.

■

We kill them in the woods, sun's humming
Simon has the knife; he's bleeding from the head
The deer so happy in the warmth of the heather
We kill them in the woods, such tingling joy

I took a while before the affective experience became 'emotional data', however. For a long time, I was stuck in it, and any attempt to critically analyze and deconstruct the stories failed because I could not get past the affective state that the reading put me in. So instead of doing research in the 'proper', academic, sense of the word, I started writing poetry. These poems became a chapbook (Eriksson, 2016a) and thus a story in and of themselves about the terrorist attack. But I did not manage to fit them into my dissertation, except for the one above, about Simon.² I felt the pressure of 'academic writing', and while I eventually managed to write *theoretically* about the affective experiences of reading about violence, expressing these experiences poetically did not seem appropriate. Swedish scholar of literature, Annelie Bränström Öhman, calls this the 'academic mangle'; a narrow opening that the Ph.D. student has to squeeze through in order to pass into the academy (Bränström Öhman, 2007, p. 37–38).

But I also think it had something to do with my material. It had a way of making me feel powerless, exposed, and emotionally exhausted – like I could not bear to read another word; to feel another thing; to cry another time. The academic language offered a distance, a way to treat the stories with a sense of instrumentality and professionalism. Somehow it also seemed more respectful. While I was focusing on the ways in which the events had been narrated by others, by journalists, scholars, and authors, I was constantly aware of the fact that the books were, to some extent, based on interviews with survivors and families of the victims. I was afraid of using, or rather *misusing*, their memories and accounts for my own purposes, not that I could say exactly what these 'purposes' might have been. For some reason, however, writing poetry felt more like a misuse than the academic analysis did. The academic writing felt more legitimate and less like an appropriation. I can't say for sure where this feeling came from, but perhaps it had something to do with the fact that the poetry was much more intimately connected with the violence. It was an outlet for the encounter with this violence and a way to deal with the sorrow I felt for the victims rather than an analysis of national narratives

and gender norms. It was more personal, and thus made me more vulnerable. I knew that I would be able to take the critique that my academic text would inevitably face, a critique that all dissertations are exposed to, but I would not be able to bear a critical reading of my poetry; I would not be able to answer questions or defend it, because it was too close, too intimate, too intertwined with my body and my being.

This seems to part with many prominent feminist theorists and writers who see creative and poetic writing as a way to situate the always already embodied research process in a feeling, dreaming, leaking, and changing body, and to challenge the phallogocentrism of traditional academic writing (e.g. Braidotti, 2014; Cixous, 1991; Lykke, 2010). I do not disagree with these feminists, quite the opposite. But as a Ph.D. student, one is perhaps especially vulnerable, exposed not only to the scary and challenging experience of handling, or rather living with, a research material that might be disconcerting and difficult in many ways, but also to the pressures of this unknown territory called Academia, where one is constantly watched, assessed, and subjected to the powers of professors, supervisors, scholarships, and university politics (cf. Cvetkovich, 2012; Jönsson, 2007). In my case, it was not so much the critical eyes of the academy that scared – and disciplined – me, but the imagined eyes of wounded survivors and grieving families. I was writing poetry about the difficult experience of *reading* about the violence that they had experienced firsthand. What gave me the right? I have to leave this question unanswered because I do not know if I ever had such a right, or that it is even a matter of ‘right’. Like H  l  ne Cixous (1991), I had to write; the words were not sought after, they came upon me, or rather pushed their way out of me. On the other hand, I do not think that the terrorist attack of 22 July 2011 ‘belongs’ to anyone, or that one had to be there in order to write about it. But I do think that there are ethical considerations to be made, in poetic as well as academic writing, and to this I will turn now, in the essay’s final paragraphs.

■

I’m convinced that the ways in which violence is written about and made sense of matter for what we (can) know about violence, how we (can) talk about it and thus what we can do to prevent it. That’s why narratives on violence must be explored

without the condemning goggles of a morality that sees all violence as inherently bad or evil. I have no desire to lecture on the horrors of violence or on its devastating consequences. Primarily because I believe that violence itself is neither good nor bad. It just is. As Jean Améry (2006) put it, violence itself has no morality; it's an objective act, 'a chain of physical events that can be described using the formalized language of the natural sciences'. Only those who have been subjected to violence, and in whose bodies the strikes and blows can still be felt, can give it a moral meaning (Améry, 2006). For those who have experienced it, violence will forever be a part of their lived reality, an immanent feature of their bodily assemblage. Therefore, the aim cannot, according to Améry, be to overcome the violent event, to leave it behind and to move on into a brighter future. This would be to relegate the victims and their experiences to a History with which 'we' have got nothing to do and to turn the continued suffering into an irrational resentment, as opposed to Améry's *ressentiment*, which asks for a political and personal embrace of the event and a recognition of its continuation in the bodies of both victims and perpetrators. The only way for the lacerated body to obtain redress is if the perpetrator becomes fully aware of the moral significance of the violent act. This, however, cannot be obtained through punishment or revenge but only through a reversal, or tearing up, of time where the past becomes a part of the present and a lived reality not only for the victim but also for the perpetrator (Améry, 2006).

I don't believe that detailed and grotesque depictions of violence can accomplish this. The narratives on violence in the books I analyzed fill no ethical function: they do not demand justice or rebel against the passing of time. At the very best, they aspire to entertain the reader by exposing as much flesh as possible. At the worst, they turn the event into a by History contained anomaly where the society in which this violence is made possible is left uninterrupted and unchallenged and where harmony, rather than critique and change, becomes the desirable outcome (Améry, 2006). In comparison, Svetlana Alexiyevich, in *War's unwomanly face* (1988), writes about violence in a way where the detailed descriptions of war are not moralizing but curious about what violence does to the human body, mind and soul. And where neither 'victim' nor 'perpetrator' are stable categories, but fluid and ambivalent ways of being-in-the-world. Not that such writing necessarily heals any wounds or tears up time. The morality that Améry is after is, after all, impossible to achieve (Ben-Shai, 2006). But for me, the poetry became a way to ex-

plore violence in ways that I did not feel comfortable doing in my dissertation, an exploration that was both liberating and terrifying, and while it certainly affected my academic writing, I never managed to fully let them collide.

■

Reading and writing about violence is, to some extent, to be torn apart. This is not a healing exercise but it is not, for that matter, a destructive exercise. Negative affects can also be productive and place the subject in ‘a state of becoming’ (Hemmings, 2005, p. 551; see also Probyn, 2005). This may be thought of, as a play of words on Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s ‘affirmative deconstruction’, as an *affective deconstruction*, where the text is not only being read, negotiated with or critiqued, but *felt* (Spivak, 1993, p. 145). To get at what the text does, then, it is not enough to deconstruct what it says. Rather, what needs to be deconstructed is the *relationship* between text, the world it writes, and the feeling body. I cannot do this and stay intact, if I was ever intact. As the text seeps into me, and becomes a part of my being, I will become *an-other* to who I was.

■

Then the forest folded like a sack of skin
Into a muddy pile of splinters
No one ever heard such a sound / a sigh /
A wreck of raging thoughts of death
When it’s quiet it’s so quiet
Like an empty sack of skin

■

Endnotes

¹ My material consisted of three books: Aage Borchgrevink’s *A Norwegian Tragedy: Anders Behring Breivik and the Massacre on Utøya*, Erika Fatland’s *Året utan sommar* [The year without summer], and Åsne Seierstad’s *One of Us: The Story of Anders Breivik and the Massacre in Norway*; a special issue of the Norwegian cultural magazine *Samtiden*; and

newspaper articles from *Dagens Nyheter*, *Aftonbladet*, *Svenska Dagbladet*, and *Sydsvenskan*.

² Simon was killed on Uøya and is one of the victims who appear in *One of Us*.

References

- Adams St. Pierre, Elizabeth. 1997. 'Methodology in the Fold and the Irruption of Transgressive Data'. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 10(2):175–189.
- Alexiyevich, Svetlana. 1988. *War's unwomanly face*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Améry, Jean. 2006. 'Ressentiment'. *Glänta* 4:42–53.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Ben-Shai, Roy. 2006. 'Att leva utifrån: Om Jean Amérys moralfilosofi'. *Glänta* 4: 54–62.
- Braidotti, Rosi. 2014. 'Writing as a Nomadic Subject'. *Comparative Critical Studies* 11(2–3):163–184.
- Bränström Öhman, Annelie. 2007. 'Skrivandets urmörker En akademisk aria i fyra akter'. In *Genus och det akademiska skrivandets former*, edited by Annelie Bränström Öhman and Mona Livholts. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 36–61.
- Bränström Öhman, Annelie. 2008. "'Show some emotion!" Om emotionella läckage i akademiska texter och rum'. *Tidskrift för genusvetenskap* 2:7–31.
- Cixous, Hélène. 1991. Coming to Writing. In *'Coming to Writing' and Other Essays*, edited by Deborah Jenson. Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1–58.
- Cvetkovich, Ann. 2012. *Depression: A Public Feeling*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Eriksson, Mia. 2016a. *A Day in the Woods*. Georgetown, KY: Finishing Line Press.
- Eriksson, Mia. 2016b. *Berättelser om Breivik. Affektiva läsningar av våld och terrorism*. Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam förlag.
- Haraway, Donna. 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Association Books.
- Hemmings, Claire. 2011. *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Jönsson, Maria. 2007. 'Byrackan vs knähunden. Tankespill från arbetet med ett feministiskt författarskap'. In *Genus och det akademiska skrivandets former*, edited by

- Annelie Bränström Öhman and Mona Livholts. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 19–35.
- Lykke, Nina. 2010. *Feminist Studies: A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Probyn, Elspeth. 2005. *Blush: Faces of Shame*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Seierstad, Åsne. 2015. *One of Us: The Story of Anders Breivik and the Massacre in Norway*, translated by Sarah Death. London: Virago.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1993. *Outside in the Teaching Machine*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Woodward, Kathleen. 2009. *Statistical Panic: Cultural Politics and Poetics of Emotion*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.



Counselling as an intervention strategy for men who use violence in their intimate relationships

Elzette Rousseau-Jemwa, Lynn Hendricks & Kerryn Rehse

ABSTRACT: International research increasingly highlights that if a significant reduction in intimate partner violence (IPV) is to be achieved, it will be important to establish interventions that include both men and women, and are aimed at addressing the social norms that maintain such violence. In South Africa 1 in 4 men report to use some form of violence in their intimate relationships. In some instances in South Africa it has been found that men do not view their behaviour as constituting violence since these harmful practices are ingrained in the culture as normal, culturally appropriate, and normative intimate relationship behaviour. In the current formative evaluation, an exploration into counselling services as an intervention strategy for men who use violence was done in Mitchell's Plain, South Africa. This study included in-depth interviews with men (N=6) who used violence in their intimate relationships, and focus-groups with their counsellors (N=4). Men reported violence as a personal crisis aggravated by social environments. Furthermore, counsellors perceived help seeking of men to be based on individual choice. The conceptualisation of IPV, experiences of reciprocal abuse in relationships, help-seeking behaviour and masculinity, access to intervention services for men, and ultimately the preliminary outcomes of counselling on men's violent behaviour were explored.

KEYWORDS: intimate partner violence; counselling; help-seeking behaviour; masculinity; relationship abuse; qualitative research



Global statistics continuously show that the most prevalent form of violence perpetrated against people, regardless of country, culture, religion, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, is the violence perpetrated in intimate relationships (Chibber and Krishnan, 2011). This violence which occurs, by definition, between dating, cohabiting and married couples, is most commonly described as the repeated threat or practice of physical violence; psychological abuse through intimidation, humiliation, and controlling behaviour; and coerced or forced sexual violence (Alhabib, Nur, & Jones, 2010). The lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) has been reported to vary from 15% to 71% according to a WHO multi-country study (Garcia-Moreno, Heise, Jansen *et al.*, 2005), recognising it as a legitimate human rights, public health and societal concern, necessitating effective interventions (Joachim, 2000).

Although legal frameworks and societal definitions around issues of gender-based violence, more specifically IPV, differ in relation to country and culture, the leading theories and descriptions view the victim and the perpetrator as clearly distinct individuals. As a result, interventions for individuals in IPV situations are predominantly focused on shelters, medical and counselling services for women as the victims; and protection orders or court-ordered brief treatment programmes for men as the perpetrators (Tilley and Brackley, 2005; Jewkes, 2002). In the same way, research from South Africa (SA) predominantly suggests that IPV is perpetrated by men against women. In SA this form of violence is often justified by the amount of literature indicating that masculinity and violence has been yoked together in the history and cultural norms of the country (Abrahams and Jewkes, 2005; Morrell 2001). Researchers studying this relationship between masculinity and IPV suggest that violence is often a manner in which a man responds when his perceived gender role is challenged or threatened in society (Moore and Stuart, 2005). These gendered risk factors for IPV perpetration include a strong patriarchal belief with regard to gender roles, power and control; objectification of women; and a feeling of entitlement to respect and sex (Weldon and Gilchrist, 2012; Moore, Stuart, McNulty, *et al.*, 2010; Smith, 2007; Jewkes, 2002). However, men's use of IPV has also been closely related to their use of violence against other men as an essential behavioural means to resolve conflict (Fulu, Jewkes, Roselli, & Garcia-Moreno, 2013; Katz, 2006; Morrell, 2001). Hamel (2007) suggests that while patriarchal beliefs contribute to IPV incidences, more intrinsic facilitative factors are the harbouring of pro-violent attitudes. These attitudes are supported by IPV

risk factors, as depicted in research, including ineffective anger management skills; desensitisation to violence; childhood exposure to IPV; parental neglect and isolation; financial insecurity and/or unemployment; abuse of alcohol or drugs; failed previous relationships; actual or perceived infidelity and mistrust; retaliation; emotional dysregulation and meeting the criterion for a DSM Axis II personality disorder (Weldon *et al.*, 2012; Ross, 2011; Wei and Brackley, 2010; Smith, 2007; Medeiros and Strauss, 2006; Tilley *et al.*, 2005; Lipsky, Caetano, Field, *et al.*, 2005).

These findings propose that IPV is a multifaceted phenomenon driven by individual, situational and relational factors in both men and women which need to be considered by policy-makers, researchers, and health professionals when developing interventions for victims and perpetrators (Hamel, 2009). In a recent assessment of national policies and laws in 11 African countries, on the level that men are engaged in gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, South Africa ranked fourth (Sonke Gender Justice Network, 2012). This assessment indicated that some initiatives on the engagement of men regarding GBV were adequate, whereas other areas still had room for improvement, including: the conceptualisation of IPV, insufficient focus on preventative measures, commitment to transform gender norms, and inadequate acknowledgement of the violence men experience and its likelihood to increase the risk of men perpetrating violence (Sonke Gender Justice Network, 2012).

With 27.5% of South African men reporting the use of physical violence in their most recent intimate relationship (Gupta, Silverman, Hemenway, *et al.*, 2008) it is necessary that programmes for men who use violence become ever more accessible and effective in promoting the wellbeing of both men and women. This paradigm shift in the intervention and prevention of violence against women has been strongly supported by Jewkes, Flood and Lang (2015) in their review of multiple interventions' effectiveness in reducing violence and its risk factors. Approaches were considered most effective when a focus on strengthening women's resilience was combined with men's active involvement in programmes for sustained gender transformation. An increased focus needs to be placed on understanding the experiences and motivations of violent men, in order to tailor interventions toward addressing men's attitudes, behaviours, identities and associations of violence in their relationships (Moore *et al.*, 2005; Flood, 2011). Against this backdrop, a formative evaluation was conducted of counselling as an intervention strategy for men from a low income community in South Africa who use violence in their intimate relationships.

Methodology

Formative evaluations are generally employed during a project's implementation and focus on ways of improving the effectiveness of a programme. This is done through the exploration of processes from the viewpoints of both participants and project staff and/or stakeholders. In the current study, qualitative data were collected from the target population (male clients) and their counsellors to better understand their profiles, needs, help-seeking related experiences, and perceived benefits of the programme.

The counselling programme included in this study was the *Toolkit for Men: male counselling in the context of intimate partner violence* implemented by *Mosaic Training, Service & Healing Centre for Women*. *Mosaic* is a non-profit women's rights organisation offering psycho-social, educational and awareness services to persons affected by and at-risk of domestic and sexual violence. Included in the holistic approach is the inclusion of services that engage men and boys on the issues of gender-based violence, and a specific counselling programme keeping men who use IPV accountable and working towards ending the violence in the relationship by engaging with both the client and his partner. Gender transformative approaches are employed and sessions address the social tolerance of violence, norms around masculinity in the South African context, and the justification for using violence. The Toolkit for Men has been designed to be implemented by social service professionals and consist of a 12-session male counselling programme aimed at men who use violence within their intimate relationships. The programme works together with men, their partners and where necessary, their families. The underlying assumption in developing the Toolkit for Men was based on the principle that violence against women is never acceptable and must stop; that men are 'gendered' persons, and men have the potential to change. A further important component to counselling is the regulation of non-violent behaviour during the three month period of counselling. This often serves as a reflection of how the client is responding to counselling and the progress that is made.

The research project was initiated after receiving approval from the relevant partner institution's review boards. Study participants (N=10) were recruited using convenience and snowball sampling in the community of Mitchell's Plain in Cape Town, South Africa, through current programmes focused on counselling men who use violence. Four men who self-reported as having used violence in their in-

timate relationship and currently participating in the counselling programme, and six counsellors of the Toolkit for Men, volunteered as participants in the research study. Male clients were eligible to participate if (1) they were currently in counselling for IPV perpetration; (2) were at least 18 years old and provided informed consent; and (3) did not have serious addictions to alcohol or other substances which could limit effective participation and reliable outcomes. All the clients were in counselling for using violence in their intimate relationships and most entered counselling voluntarily (even though some did so as the prerequisite for a protection order suspension).

Data were collected by student research assistants through in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The individual interviews with men who were perpetrators of violence were conducted by a trained researcher and lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. The researcher probed for information on men's motivation for entering into counselling; their perceptions of the violent behaviour in their relationships; the perceived effect of counselling on men and their relationships; and recommendations on what can be done to improve counselling services for men who use IPV. The counsellors (one male; five female) were split into two focus group discussions (N=3 per group). All of the counsellors had more than 3 years of experience in counselling men who engaged in IPV. The researchers sought to understand counsellors' perceptions and experiences of counselling men; the challenges and benefits of counselling men; and the perceived influence of culture and gender roles within the South African context. The discussions also allowed for both male clients and counsellors to share their thoughts on how to engage other men who use violence in their relationships. Men in the study were open and willing to share the intimate details of their experiences.

Focus groups and interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim by the research assistants. The recordings were destroyed after transcription and pseudonyms were used for participants during data analysis such that responses could not be traced back to individual participants. The data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) by means of *Atlas.ti* to highlight and extract any obvious emerging patterns. Data analysis were initiated through open coding, examining the data sentence by sentence, to identify distinct concepts. Subsequently, discrete concepts related to similar phenomena were grouped together and along with discourses highlighted in the transcript, themes were built. In an attempt to establish credibility (Shenton, 2004) of the thematic analysis and

interpretations, all members of the research team reviewed the transcripts and critiqued emerging codes and themes. Finally, the themes and findings were brought back to the partner community to confirm the accuracy, relevance and meaning of the findings. Prominent themes which emerged included: varied attribution of responsibility in IPV; violence as a personal crisis aggravated by social environment; factors that bring men to counselling; cultural and societal challenges to men's help-seeking behaviour; counsellor characteristics enabling successful male counselling; and the perceived benefits of counselling.

Findings

In exploring counselling as an intervention for men who experience IPV, counsellors reflected on some practical obstacles to successful outcomes when men refuse to cooperate with counselling practices such as, not keeping appointments, attending sessions while under the influence of substances, or when crossing respectful boundaries. In most of these cases the appropriate referral is made to assist the client to be able to address other self-harm behaviours thus allowing them to fully participate in the counselling programme. A complexity in counselling men who use violence is the prevalence of manipulation in these clients' interactions, and how counsellors often spend a lot of time "on getting to the truth" with regard to the challenges and triggers in a relationship. It is within this context that the current study explored participants' conceptualisation of IPV along with narratives on cultural and societal challenges to men's help-seeking behaviour in violent relationships. Analysis revealed the landscape of counselling men who use violence in their intimate relationships, the counsellor characteristics that enable successful engagement with men and the change in violence initiated by counselling.

Violence as a personal crisis aggravated by social environments

Male clients described the prompts to violence as being a perceived loss of control over their relationships, reminders of abuse from their personal histories, and the inability to effectively express their emotions and viewpoints. A history of infidelity from their partner along with the manner in which women verbally responded to them were significant in challenging the participants' masculine ideas of being in

control making them feel *'disrespected and blamed by dominant women who undermine'* them. The counsellors agreed that violence is a personal response that is aggravated by society's perception *'that women should be submissive and that men are the heads of the household, should be in control.'*

Frustrated expressions: a lifetime characterised by violence

According to the participants' accounts, violence occurs when men struggle to deal with their anger that is often connected to an event in their individual past or in the history of the current relationship that resurfaces and brings about frustration and anger, which gets channelled towards their partner.

I can say whenever maybe a situation occurs between me and that person, or maybe that person is disrespectful, I think it kinda have flashbacks of everything my father said to me and the way he treated me at home and all the violent things that degraded me. That's the kinda thing that go through my mind so I channel all those things in the situation that I am, in the moment. I think that's what triggers the anger that I've got inside. (Ntokozo, male client)

Men further shared their experiences of being unable to fully express themselves within an argument which can then lead to them reacting violently. Men often spoke about the state of their mind during these incidences as being detached from the actions of violence they are involved in at that moment. One male client shared:

I'm angry that time, I won't still think that time. It will just happen, afterwards I will realise what I have actually done now ... there is no thoughts you are just doing, you are just doing it. (Douglas, male client)

The frustration of limited communication skills along with inadequate emotional regulation evolves into the perception of being manipulated and being dominated by a verbal forcefulness from their female partners.

I take her emotions in and as soon as I open my mouth then she shouts me down. So that frustrates me big time ... somebody does something to me I feel

like I need to lash back. My wife is very intelligent and I find it difficult in being able to retaliate verbally. (Max, male client)

Is it because they dominant or is it because the wife threatens them. In my case I think sometimes woman is abusive then men intend to, uhm, what's the word now, defend themselves and in a violent manner. (Douglas, male client)

These are often also connected to men coming from households where they were exposed to domestic violence and perceive violence as a normal way of communicating between partners and establishing dominance in a household.

Culture, gender, society and men who use violence

Counsellors acknowledged that engaging men who use violence is impossible unless you are very mindful of the part gender roles and individual histories play in relationships. Gender roles especially contribute to violence when there is limited or non-effective communication in the relationship with misunderstandings, assumptions and accusation being the result. This is exacerbated when men grew up within homes and communities characterised by violence and perceive violence as a normal way of communicating between partners and establishing dominance in a household.

If you as partners are fighting or arguing over a certain issue it is like normal for the female partner to get smacked or kicked it's like a normal thing and the culture allows that. As the man you are the head of the house you take decision, you take control you know, so it's not something like unusual. (Jabu, male counsellor)

It is a learned behaviour, they are taught: 'you will see when you grow up my son that a woman cannot listen or understand without the use of a fist upon her' ... it's like a normal thing and the culture allows that. (Debra, counsellor)

Counsellors believe that during counselling a focus should be on unlearning negative behaviour learned in childhood and replacing these with positive behaviours and tools along with developing a personal value system.

Attributions of responsibility: victim's problems vs shared problems

Attribution of responsibility is a major issue and can be a driving force of the self-justifications and self-rationalisations of the behaviour of men who use violence. Also the male clients' belief that IPV is normal behaviour in their culture or that their partners elicit the violence from them. Some male participants normalised their behaviour by introducing it as an act of self-defence.

... but I just need her to stop pushing me to the point and she knows she is doing it, she knows the outcome and she doesn't care about the outcome and when it happen then all fingers get pointed at me. (Max, male client)

In this context, some of the men still appeared to not see the significance of the violent behaviour between partners. This was most evident in one of the male client's narrative of abusing his wife in the viewpoint of the strong love he feels towards her and how his wife knows the consequences of her behaviour towards him:

And I love my wife very much ... if I didn't love her I wouldn't act the way I do but I just need her to stop pushing me to the point and she knows she is doing it, she knows the outcome and she doesn't care about the outcome and when it happens then all fingers get pointed at me ... (Max, male client)

The narrative throughout this study exposed violence in intimate relationship as an interplay between personal and relational factors, making the conceptualisation of perpetrator versus victim, and the onset of abuse difficult. Both counsellors and male clients highlighted the increasing amount of men self-reporting abuse by their female partners and how this appears to be ignored by relevant stakeholders. Counsellors believe that because IPV often arises in relationships as a result of power, and violence being perceived as physical abuse, men are seen as physically stronger than women, the blame is most often shifted on men. All the male participants articulated a sense of injustice associated with the lack of interventions for them; along with them believing that they were either also abused or that the violence was a general relational problem that needed intervention with both men

and women. It is in light of this that counsellors resolutely stated that:

It's no use trying to help one person and leaving one party out because that person will still continue with his or her abusive ways. Our role is to teach them both that there are other ways of resolving problems without the use of violence. (Miriam, counsellor)

What brings men to counselling?

Several themes regarding men's help-seeking behaviour emerged from the results including the role of masculinity in help-seeking; numerous accounts of missed opportunities; and the critical need for awareness of and access to services for men.

It's a personal decision to do counselling

A number of the participants stated that it is only through a man's personal decision that they want or need counselling that is able to bring them to a place of optimally accessing services. Male clients shared their stories of realising that they needed help, combined with becoming aware of services available to men that brought them to counselling. Counsellors reiterated the importance of IPV awareness campaigns in attracting male clients.

Men start to see themselves in the pictures. I once had a pamphlet in my office which read 'are you an abuser, do you feel that you are violating other people's rights' and this man came into my office immediately after reading that and admitted that he was an abuser and he needed help. (Zanele, counsellor)

Some participants did admit that it took a court order for them to realise that violence in their lives were getting out of hand and that they needed to seek services available to them to work to change their current situation.

I don't think it is easy, because men don't realise they have a problem man. Its yourself also, if you admit you have a problem you will come, if you don't admit you have a problem then you won't come. (Leonard, male client)

The role of social support during stressful life events

Men did not generally access services from a personal decision, as they believe they have to keep their challenges hidden. Male clients voiced the lack of support they receive from their peers, family and other support networks.

Men experience isolation in not being able to share about the violence used in their relationships, their struggles to express their emotions and also the perceived belief from society that it is only men who use violence in relationships: the perception that men are the sole perpetrators in violent situations and not also potential victims in a relationship of reciprocal abuse.

I think more men should come forward basically because a lot of men I know where I live, in the area, uhm, that needs this support and men don't really speak out. Pride they have too much pride and so a lot of them just turn to alcohol and drugs and suicide or respond in a violent manner and a lot those men aren't violent men, but they tend to keep it in them. They keep in and in and there comes a time when you explode so I think they do approach more men.
(Leonard, male client)

Counselling is risky behaviour: Help-seeking and masculinity

The social construction of masculinity is often an obstacle to men seeking help and support. A counsellor expressed that 'being a man in a community means you don't seek help, you keep quiet, you suffer inside, you don't talk'.

I think it's that sense of thinking if you come for counselling you are not man enough, you are weak you can't handle your issues so you need help. It's like the stigma they afraid to get it's exactly like when you come for counselling it's like you are weak for which that is not the case sometimes you need to speak to someone about any other issue. (Jabu, male counselor)

Several participants felt that emotional difficulty and violence in their relationships are amplified as they perceive support services weighing their masculinity in times of help-seeking.

I've been several times to the police station where I went to report that my wife is abusive and several stab me and then they would laugh at me and say I'm a moffie (gay), why don't I hit her back. Then I'd walk away and cry and don't know where to turn to. (Leonard, male client)

In this way participants perceived help-seeking as a risky behaviour often stigmatised by society and their peers. As a result, men usually only access services when there was a greater risk than social acceptance threatening them, for example when they are court mandated to go for counselling.

Access to counselling: Missed opportunities to engage men

Finally, participants felt that there was not sufficient awareness of the services available to men who use violence in their intimate relationships. There needs to be more communication available on where men can go to access help. Participants raised the perception that primarily women's rights and community-based support services for victims are promoted in South Africa, with the needs of men who use violence remain unmet. Men feel that they need services where they can access support:

You need to open up centres where men can have feelings and there would be less abuse ... If I could have dealt with this then, then I would not have abused my wife ... but nobody is looking at that, nobody is taking into consideration for the man. (Douglas, male client)

Counselling Men: The landscape

First Responses

Male clients' first responses were often to question why they were "summoned" for counselling and often reacted with distrust when speaking to a female counsellor whom they believed will side with the female partner. Consequently, the first stages of counselling men needs to focus on establishing rapport and trust with the client and assuring men that the counselling programme is for them, as a cli-

ent, and not as a “perpetrator”.

Counsellors revealed that a principal goal of counselling is to help the male client accept responsibility for the violence that occurred in their intimate relationships and demonstrate a willingness to change their interactions with their partners. It is a significant step for a man to enter counselling, and most of the counsellors shared the importance of acknowledging men for this precursor of commitment to change their own behaviour.

Education was highlighted as a vital part of counselling, steering men towards recognising that no form of abuse is acceptable under any conditions. It is believed that frequently male clients are not aware that their behavior constitutes abuse as some practices are deeply ingrained in the culture as normal intimate relationship behaviour.

Most of the time when you get a male client he is like lost and confused ‘why am I here because I paid lobola [dowry] for this wife and why I cannot say no, why I cannot rule because it’s how we do things we rule, we control the women’ so if now there’s not an understanding of domestic violence he is likely to continue thinking that’s it’s a normal thing. (Sandra, counsellor)

Attitudes of counsellors towards men who use violence in their intimate relationships

In the light of these personal, societal and institutional barriers to help-seeking, men indicated factors that enable access to available counselling services. Both male clients and counsellors stated that men hold the preconception that they need to be assisted by a male counsellor. However, after the first session, when they have experienced the nature of the counselling session as facilitated by the female counsellor as non-judgemental and client-centred, their perceptions are altered and are thereafter more at ease to return to the female counsellor.

The counsellors and clients alike highlighted the attitude of the counsellor as the most essential component in counselling men. The following were some of the attributes highlighted: non-judgemental and non-biased, sensitive towards men’s issues, inspire trust, ensure confidentiality, and be able to communicate respectfully towards all cultures.

Benefits of counselling

Counselors believe that the benefits of counseling for men are many but highlighted some of the benefits to include: awareness raising of what abusive behavior looks like and aiding in establishing a positive masculine identity of a good partner and father. In addition, counselling provides men with the opportunity and space to deal with various emotional, psychological and relational challenges.

I think it helps a lot because most of the time men are not given platforms to express themselves and to be open and share whatever problem they are going through so it's a good thing now that they can come, being open and not being judge. Like you know when you are raised as a man in Xhosa they say the man is not supposed to cry, men must be strong so it gives them a good platform to express themselves and talk about issues. (Jabu, male counselor)

Male clients felt that their recent counseling experience was helpful as it provided the opportunity to share what they went through in their violent experiences and in their pasts without judgment. Also, it provided them with the opportunity to learn new skills on how to handle future situations and how to more effectively express themselves.

Uh, talking it out with (counsellors name) and getting a few idea on how to handle the situation and giving me tips on things to try on whenever there is a certain situation that occurs in that certain time, so that's the thing that I enjoy. (Ntokozo, male client)

Participants concluded that they would like to talk about *'family life, everything, marriage, relationships, everything.'*

Discussion

This study formed part of a larger formative research project establishing an integrated approach to engaging men and boys as respectful partners and caring fathers within a South African context. This paper, with the focus on interventions

for IPV, was decided on as a vehicle to encourage discussion and debate on IPV prevention and intervention strategies aimed at men who use violence. It further places emphasis on the need to acknowledge and take caution not to overlook the issues experienced by men who use violence within violent relationships such as responsibility assumption for violence, reciprocal partner violence, and gendered access to services.

Male clients endorsed retaliation, a loss of control, infidelity, history of violence in the family and an inability to constructively express themselves emotionally as reasons for violence. It is with this understanding that it is necessary to have interventions that allow scope for the counsellor to adapt the content to where the client is at the moment of entry into the programme. Counsellors in the study confirmed that a one-size-fits-all intervention does not work as the issues of IPV are beyond gender roles but reflect on a society that uses violence, a population with low emotional and communication skills, and challenging situational factors. As a result, we need more flexible intervention alternatives beyond the protection order and legal redress to include intensive individual therapy, couples counselling, structured perpetrators groups, and restorative justice approaches.

Findings highlight risk factors for IPV as individual violent histories which were exacerbated by relational conditions between men and women in the violent relationships. Therefore, findings from this study, in correlation with recent research in the field (Jewkes, *et al.*, 2015; Fulu, *et al.*, 2013; Ricardo, Eads, & Barker, 2012), suggest that meaningful change in intimate violence perpetration will need interventions that target both males and females. The current study indicated men's need for intervention services along with their preference to seek help from formal sources such as the police service. but also now their preference to engage with a counsellor, more specifically male counsellors, as oppose to a family member or friend. Male clients highlighted that some interventions and communication around IPV, especially those in the policing and criminal justice sectors, are not gender inclusive and discourages men from accessing services. Changing the prevalence of violence in intimate relationships will require systematic and sustained efforts at the levels of relationships, families, communities, institutions, and legislations (Flood, 2011). This will need to include the training of health professionals and criminal justice agents to be non-judgemental and to understand the interplay involved in IPV relationships.

The findings suggest that gender bias should be carefully considered when developing awareness campaigns and criminal justice policies. More advertising and awareness campaigns are needed for the services available to men who use or experience violence in their intimate relationships. Assistance for men who use violence need to be made more readily available in order to shift societal norms, encourage help-seeking behaviour and ultimately intervene in relationships early enough.

Limitations

The limitations of the study, as with all qualitative studies, were those of self-report along with a small sample size from which findings were drawn. Researchers often reveal that experiences individuals recount from violent incidents are different, with individuals more often than not remembering that they were acting justly in the conflict (Armstrong, Wernke, Medina & Schafer, 2002). However, this method of data enquiry allows for an in-depth view of personal experiences of men who have perpetrated violence to a partner. This study is limited to a sample from a specific low income community in Cape Town and all participants were affiliated with an organisation working in the participants' community of origin. The findings, though extensive, present a snapshot of the perceptions of violence in the communities of interest and cannot be generalized to the entire community. However, the findings provide a valuable resource as baseline information for further inquiry.

Conclusion

Exploring male counselling for behavioural change with regards to intimate partner violence, in a low income community, with high levels of violence and crime and low levels of help seeking behaviour, has provided insight into the understanding and experiences of male perpetrators of violence as well as the challenges and experiences of those who provide the counselling. Participants experienced violence as a personal crisis when their lives had been characterised by violence in their communities and in their households during childhood and felt further aggravated by the perceived loss of control in their adult relationships and current social

environments. Men who accessed counselling in this study did not access services voluntarily, however, the majority of men believed in the benefits of counselling.

Paradigm shifts regarding masculinity and violence are necessary to affect change on an individual level and to further develop intervention programmes that encompass how individuals and specific societies/cultures understand IPV, identifying the specific individual treatment needs of participants, and learning how to deliver programmes in a way that is engaging to men, and motivates help-seeking. In addition, strategies need to be developed that can enhance motivation to change, as a long initial contemplation of change phase was indicated by men. These can include awareness raising of both IPV and the availability of interventions.

References

- Abrahams, Naeemah and, Rachel Jewkes. 2005. "Effects of South African men's having witnessed abuse of their mothers during childhood on their levels of violence in adulthood". *American Journal of Public Health* 95(10): 1811 – 1816.
- Alhabib, Samia, Ula Nur, and Roger Jones. 2010. "Domestic Violence Against Women: Systematic Review of Prevalence Studies". *Journal of Family Violence* 25: 369–382.
- Armstrong, Tisha G, Julia Y. Wernke, Krista L. Medina, and John Schafer. 2002. "Do Partners Agree about the Occurrence of Intimate Partner Violence? A Review of the Current Literature". *Trauma Violence Abuse* 3(3): 181–193.
- Braun, Virginia and Victoria Clark. 2006. "Using thematic analysis in psychology". *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2): 77–101.
- Chibber, Karuna S. and Suneeta Krishnan. 2011. "Confronting Intimate Partner Violence: A Global Health Priority". *Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine* 78: 449 – 457.
- Flood, Michael. 2011. "Involving Men in Efforts to End Violence Against Women." *Men and Masculinities* 14(3): 358–377.
- Fulu, Emma, Rachel Jewkes, Tim Roselli, and Claudia Garcia-Moreno. 2013. "Prevalence and risk factors for male perpetration of intimate partner violence: findings from the UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific". *The Lancet Global Health* 1(4): 187–207.
- Garcia-Moreno, Claudia, Lori Heise, Henrica Jansen, *et al.* 2005. "Public health: violence against women." *Science* 310: 1282–1283.

- Gupta, Jhumka, Jay G. Silverman, David Hemenway, Dolores Acevedo-Garcia, Dan J. Stein, and David R. Williams. 2008. "Physical violence among intimate partners and related exposures to violence among South African men". *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 179(6): 535–541.
- Hamel, John. 2007. "Domestic violence: A gender-inclusive conception". In *Family interventions in domestic violence: A handbook of gender-inclusive theory and treatment*, edited by John Hamel and Tonia Nicholls, 3–26. New York: Springer.
- Hamel, John. 2009. "Toward a gender-inclusive conception of Intimate Partner Violence Theory and Research: Part 2 – New Directions". *International Journal of Men's Health* 8(1): 41–59.
- Jewkes, Rachel. 2002. "Intimate partner violence: causes and prevention". *The Lancet* 359: 1423–1429.
- Jewkes, Rachel, Michael Flood, and James Lang. 2015. "From work with men and boys to changes of social norms and reduction of inequities in gender relations: A conceptual shift in prevention of violence against women and girls". *The Lancet* 385 (9977): 1580–1589.
- Joachim, Jutta. 2000. "Shaping the human rights agenda: the case of violence against women". In *Gender politics in global governance*, edited by Mary K. Meyer and Elisabeth Prugl, 142–160. Lanham: Rowman and Little Field.
- Katz, Jackson. 2006. *The macho paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help*. Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebooks Inc.
- Lipskya, Sherry, Raul Caetano, Craig A. Fielda, and Gregory L. Larkin. 2005. "Psychosocial and substance-use risk factors for intimate partner violence". *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 78: 39–47.
- Medeiros, Rose A. and Murray A. Straus. 2006. "Risk factors for physical violence between dating partners: Implications for gender-inclusive prevention and treatment of family violence". In *Family interventions in domestic violence: A handbook of gender-inclusive theory and treatment*, edited by John Hamel & Tonia Nicholls, 59–86. New York: Springer.
- Moore, Todd M. and Gregory L. Stuart. 2005. "A review of the literature on masculinity and partner violence". *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 6(1): 46 – 61.
- Moore, Todd M., Gregory L. Stuart, James K. McNulty, Michael E. Addis, James V. Cordova, and Jeff R. Temple. 2010. "Domains of masculine gender role stress and intimate partner violence in a clinical sample of violent men". *Psychology of Violence*

1: 68–75.

- Morrell, Robert. 2001. "The times of change: men and masculinity in South Africa". In *Changing men in Southern Africa*, edited by Robert Morrell, 3 – 33. London: University of Natal Press.
- Ricardo, Christine, Marci Eads, and Gary Barker. 2012. *Engaging Boys and Young Men in the Prevention of Sexual Violence: A Systematic and Global Review of Evaluated Interventions*. Pretoria: Sexual Violence Research Initiative.
- Ross, Jody M. 2011. "Personality and Situational Correlates of Self-reported Reasons for Intimate Partner Violence among Women versus Men Referred for Batterers' Intervention." *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 29: 711–727.
- Shenton, Andrew K. 2004. "Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects". *Education for Information* 22: 63–75.
- Smith, Marilyn E. 2007. "Self-Deception Among Men Who Are Mandated to Attend a Batterer Intervention Program". *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care* 43(4): 193 – 203.
- Sonke Gender Justice Network. 2012. *Scorecard on GBV Laws and Policies: Engaging men and boys in the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence (GBV) on the African continent*.
- Tilley, Donna S. and Margaret Brackley. (2005) Men who batter intimate partners: A grounded theory study of the development of male violence in intimate relationships. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 26, 281–297.
- Wei, Christina C. and Margaret Brackley. 2010. "Men Who Experienced Violence or Trauma as Children or Adolescents and Who Used Violence in Their Intimate Relationships". *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 31: 498–506.
- Weldon, Sarah and Elizabeth Gilchrist. 2012. "Implicit Theories in Intimate Partner Violence Offenders". *Journal of Family Violence* 27: 761–772.

“Man Up”: Observing the Social Construction of Boys’ Masculinity

Elan Justice Pavlinich

KEYWORDS: Baseball, competition, play, violence

Toby gave his Aunt a big hug before he rounded the bend of the cement dug out and joined his teammates of eight-year old boys. The paved and dusty floor was littered with pleather gloves, each decorated with athletic insignia or super heroes, strewn along with caps, all black and yellow, each one indistinguishable from the others, apart from the initials marking the tags on the inside to ensure that each cap corresponds to one particular player. The boys stirred in the shade, scuffling about, pushing, jabbing, laughing. They craned their heads upwards, squinting into the sun to see the faces of the coaches, all men with stubble shading their faces just below the imprints of crows feet around the eyes, and light wisps of silver sprouting from their temples. The men talked sternly about nothing in particular, breaking the monotony of their poker faces with periodic and abrupt sounds that registered as something seeming like amusement. Most of the boys kept their distance, but maintained their attention on the menfolk. They feigned interest in their conversations about work, the renovations on Main Street, and the recent political scandal, but actually none of them understood the significance of any of this. Not the boys, nor the men who uttered these trivialities. The only strand of fascination that the young ones gleaned from this meaningless exchange of words was that this was guy talk. This is the stuff about which men converse. Performing comprehension equates to a kind of currency, and so if one acquires the currency, deploys the proper cues, one might be able to buy one’s way into manhood. To talk with the big boys is to be one of the big boys. Toby kept to the corner in the shade, where he would not be assaulted by roughhousing, or lose his cap.



From this huddle, one of the coaches turned his head in the direction of the boys. Facing them, but not looking at them, he formed a small shriveled opening with his mouth and spit a streaming arch of filth that hit the cement of the dugout with a splat, congealed in an instant, and made of itself a point of convergence for the gaze of every lad looking for cues to compose their own identities in the image of the father. The pool of spit soon grew as each uniformed youth attempted to demonstrate the precision of his own expulsion of spittle. Some stood directly over the bubbled gob, as clear streams ran down their chins and dribbled with patters that sounded like footsteps creeping closer to their mark. It was something more than a demonstration of personal corporeal control, or the ability to aim and move matter in accordance with one's will. For some, it seemed, that by combining his own bodily fluid with that of the father's was like concocting an elixir. If his spit mixed with his spit, then they were one and the same. Toby watched nervously, and swallowed the lump in his throat.

Later, well enough into the game's innings that the spectators had forgotten how many were left, parents exchanged small talk, compared teachers, and took regular breaks to shout the name of their particular child whenever he took to home plate for an opportunity to crack the ball. Toby played shortstop when it was his turn in the field. He enjoyed this position because after the thrill of the game wore off in the first three innings, he was able to turn his attention to the soft dirt between first and second base. It was smooth, running through his fingers, and he thought to himself that if the granules were only a bit smaller this dirt would be more like liquid, a burnt-orange pool on which they could barely stand. He liked these moments of peace in which he could be alone in spite of the clamor and structured play around him, where he could feel the breeze and enjoy the simplicity of the clear sky and the soft dirt. Just then, an abrupt wind broke his self-indulgent solitude, and he realized that it was the game ball that had soared by his head. The shouting of teammates and parents pressed in on him. From the opposite direction another body moved quickly by him. It was a runner. Toby missed the ball aimed at him, and the runner gained second base. "Get your head in the game!" his mother shouted from behind a chain-link fence on the sidelines.

"Man up," the coach said from the central location of the pitcher's mound, like an authority bearing down on him, both of them playing their part in some play-

ground panopticon. Toby felt ashamed and afraid, like he had failed. The social order saw his flaws. He was a dreamer, and there was no time or exceptions made for a young man who could not engage the other fellows in their assigned tasks. Between first base and second base, he wanted that soft dirt to become liquid and permit him to sink and hide.

Toby averted his eyes from the father on the mound and strained to suppress his tears. Avoiding the feeling of emptiness opening in place of his guts, he focused all of his attention on the next play. The coach softly pitched the ball at the next batter who swung awkwardly, relying of chance to connect his bat with the baseball. It did. With a sharp peel, the ball arched upward into the air, culling the attention of all those young men in uniform to squint past the oversized brim of their baseball caps, and calculate the trajectory of the plummeting mass. It came down in the outfield just before the batter made contact with first base. Toby intently watched his teammates scuttling to retrieve the ball as one boy in left field picked it up, looked deliberately in his direction, aimed and threw. The ball hit Toby's glove with a satisfying thud as the runner jogged past him towards second base. Coerced by the command to "man up," Toby put all of his strength behind his throw. He centered on his target with feigned but hopeful precision and hit his mark perfectly. The ball held Toby's shame and regret, but the dull thump that it made on impact resounded in his mind and echoed over the feelings of dread that he had only recently experienced. The runner went down into the dirt, instead of Toby, just after the ball took his breath from him by striking just between his shoulder blades. Toby was overjoyed. The runner was overcome. He was lifted by Toby's coach – just like a baby, Toby thought. The coach delivered the downed runner, gasping for breath and stained by tears mixed with fine burnt-orange dirt, to his mother on the other side of the chain-link fence.

The rest of the game passed quickly as Toby soaked in the exhilaration of accomplishment. He felt like he had earned his rank as a team member, as one of the other boys, but special. His mark was not composed of a pool of collective spit that would evaporate from the cement. His mark was made on the skin of the opposing team. He was accepted by them, as one of the boys. His claim to manhood was announced to every witness on and around the baseball diamond with the gasps and cries of that fallen runner.

Toby's peers congratulated him after the game. The coaches had very little to

say beyond announcing the next time and place for their next practice session. With an orange slice in one hand and a juice box in the other, Toby trundled over to his Mom, and Aunt, and Grandmother. He asked if they could go out for a special treat, to celebrate his achievement like the coaches who met up at the tavern across the street for beers after the boys' game.

His Aunt took him to a local fast food chain where he got an ice cream cone for wearing his uniform in the restaurant and all of the meals from the kids' menu came with a little toy. This week the toys were either miniature automobiles or pocket dolls with freely moving strands of hair and fluorescent wings. Toby told his aunt that he wanted the fairy. They looked so pretty and fun. In his mind, the idea of pushing a piece of plastic across the floor while supplying revving sounds seemed so boring. Where was the toy car to go? How much fun is it to pretend to be seeking out a destination? And, should the toy ever arrive, would it not then be rendered obsolete. No, the fairy was more appropriate for him. Fairies represented possibility. Their wings were transportation, and once they arrived they had the means by which to facilitate imaginary dialogue, action – an entire narrative potential was embodied by the fairies.

Toby's Aunt let him order his own food. He enjoyed this responsibility. He even got to hold the money so that he could pay for everything. He felt smart and special as he informed the clerk that he wanted a kids' meal with a fairy. The young man behind the counter looked puzzled, like he hadn't quite heard the request. Toby felt self-conscious again, like maybe he wasn't ready to order his own food, like he was unintelligible or deficient. The clerk's eyes moved toward Toby's Aunt for comprehension. She nodded her head in affirmation and the young man processed their order. Toby not only paid for their meal, he also received the change, and counted it back to his Aunt as they waited for their food to be placed on the counter before them.

They sat together at the table and Toby parceled out their food while his Aunt asked him what he thought about today's game. She seemed concerned, but he was not. He was proud, and he was excited to unwrap his new toy before he started eating. With his Aunt, the rule was always that the toy was to be placed on the table, and only after he had made his best effort to eat everything would they then go outside and play with whatever the latest plastic loot happened to be that promotional season. So Toby pulled out the bag and was excited to see the bulbous

shadowy eyes of a human face looking at him through the plastic. He was anxious to stretch that bag to point of tearing so that he could free the glittering wings that were hastily crammed into the packaging. With the toy set aside he removed the other contents of the box, including a burger, some fries, and something else. Something wrapped in plastic at the bottom of the box.

It was another toy. Toby was thrilled! In an instant his mind leapt to the possibility of fairy friends. Now that he had two, they would each have someone with whom they could speak. They could fly around the room, singing songs to which only Toby new the lyrics. At night they would sleep together just above Toby's pillow on the headboard of his bed, so that he could look up at them before following their glittering wings into dreams.

He inspected the newfound treasure to see if his friends would be identical twin fairies, or if they would be entirely dissimilar. He had already hoped that this one would have the bright pink dress to go with the bright green dress of the other one whom he had already placed on the table. Instead, he saw shiny red. It was a car. The clerk called over to them from the other side of the counter. He explained that he wanted Toby to have both toys because he assumed that when Toby got home he would feel bad because he had picked the wrong toy. Toby didn't understand. The plastic car in the plastic bag didn't seem to amount to much. It did not signify anything the way that the fairy had. Toby felt bad when he looked at it. He felt bad about himself. Toby had not realized that he was wrong, but now he felt it.



Loving Conqueror: Psychologization of Masculinity in Contemporary Kerala

Ranjini Krishnan

ABSTRACT: This paper tries to engage with the shift in the ways in which the idea of ‘man’ and the notion of the ‘intimate’ are imagined in their mutual imbrications in Kerala, South India. It is anchored around the idea, practice and experience of *aadyaraathri* or first night, a privileged moment of heterosexuality in the given culture. The paper treats first night as a distinct vantage point and as a ‘surface of emergence’ to study the contestations and re-negotiations over ideas, ideals and norms of masculinity. It argues that the surveillance around this practice which takes one particular form, the form of psychologization, is constitutive in the making of the gendered (male) subject and the intimate. The paper documents the diagnostic gaze deployed around the practice of first night which creates the figure of a ‘savage man’, who in turn embodies violent sexual impulses. The paper tries to show how the civilizing mission of the psychological discourses in Kerala displaces the violent masculinity with a carefully crafted rhetoric of intimacy which reproduces the mind-body dualism.

KEYWORDS: Masculinity, Sexual Violence, Pop Psychology, Psychologization, Mind- Body Dualism

This paper tries to engage with the shift in the ways in which men and the notion of ‘intimate’ are imagined in their mutual imbrications in contemporary Kerala¹. It is anchored around the idea, practice and experience of *aadyaraathri* or first night, a privileged moment of heterosexuality in the given culture². It is imagined as a self-conscious exploration into the domain of heterosexuality and is believed to be cru-



cial in addressing the “unexamined heterocentricity” (Rich, 1986, p. 24) at the heart of theory. The present paper engages with the practice of first night to foreground the made-up cultural edifice of heterosexuality as an institution. This exercise is homologous to the effect of drag (Butler, 1990) and helps to understand the cultural labor involved in the production of the naturalness associated with heterosexuality.

First night is popularly represented as an intimate experience which unfolds within the conjugal space. The practice of first night emerged in Kerala as an identifiable one in the early twentieth century in response to the legal and structural transformations in the family. Until the middle of the twentieth century, diverse forms of marriage and cohabitation practices existed in Kerala, framed by diverse modes of lineage and inheritance practices. Powerful elements in the traditional society accepted non-patrilineal and non-conjugal forms of lineage and marriage. There were clear legislative moves in favor of modern monogamous conjugal marriage and patrilineal inheritance during the colonial times (Arunima 2003; Kodoth 2001)³. Many discourses around sexuality, virginity, chastity and conjugality converge at this practice, making it an identifiable event of institutionalized intimacy. The cultural premium attached to this event provides a distinct vantage point to understand modern erotic speaking and agency. The present paper is an attempt to track the positions the gendered subject occupies in this speech and to show how the psychological discourses and the ‘pedagogies of self’ offered by these discourses entail the logic of government and graft the relations these subjects have with themselves and their body, desire and pleasure. The paper starts with a discussion on the existing theorizations on Kerala modernity and shows how first night by invoking the sexed body presents a crisis to modern notions which posits interiority and intimacy as a prerequisite of sexual relations. The next section tries to think how or why institutionalized psychology is deployed at the moment of discussions on first night. The paper then documents different sites of institutionalized psychology and argues that this psychology invisibilizes the patriarchal norm and leads to the psychologization of masculinity where questions of love and consent are bypassed with/through a normalized rhetoric of intimacy.

Marriage, Modernity and the Question of Love

Along with the emergence of modern monogamous conjugality surfaced the idea of romantic love in late nineteenth-century Kerala. The matrilineal joint house-

holds went through a series of renegotiations and changes and the intra household arrangements gave way to small patrifocal families. Puthenkalam (1977) traces the trajectories of these changes and observes that by the 1960s Kerala had entered into stable conjugality. Romantic love was a key structuring principle in the production of monogamous family and gendered selves (Arunima, 1997; Devika, 2007; Lukose, 2009). Arunima (1997) analyses two Malayalam novels to show how romantic love formed the rationale for the conjugal couple who anchored a number of changes in the family structure and property relations. The love marriage is presented as being capable of erasing the barbaric promiscuity of the matrilineal past and becomes a civilizing project. In the process love and marriage become synonyms, making marriage the natural and the only possible culmination of love (p. 279). This love was imagined as an *internal force* providing stability to monogamous conjugality (Devika, 2007, p. 68). Devika treats this as an important moment of individuation as this love was 'seeking not the body but the internality of the other' (p. 69). Here love appears as a regulating force which reserves bodily desires for the realization of them in the conjugal relation. She attributes the prominence given to *Anthakkarana Vivaham* (Marriage of inner instruments) in Malayalam novels from the nineteenth century to this notion of love which was circulating along with ideals of stable monogamous conjugality. This should be understood in relation to the emergence of the new individual who is individuated sufficiently to experience and express love. This love was seen as an inner attribute of the mind and other qualities emanating from the mind. This love was also placed in opposition to lust and was more about the mind than about the body (p. 69). Though not addressing the conjugal union directly, modern Malayalam poetry also used the notion of love as an internal force to understand the man-woman couple (Kumar, 1997). In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the discourse on romantic love and the social and community reform presented love marriage as an ideal man-woman union where love was privileged over kinship laws and other social imperatives of match making.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, an equally powerful institution called *arranged marriage* emerged and placed itself against the *love marriage*. Arranged marriage, which was gaining momentum in the early twentieth century, was an institution where everything but love was privileged, and this form of marriage was placed diametrically opposite to love marriage.⁴ In contemporary

Kerala arranged marriage is one of the major institutions (Jones 2010). There is an expanding marriage market in Kerala and the practice of dowry is getting institutionalized (Kodoth, 2008). It reproduces caste and class matrices consciously. The logic of private property cements the conjugal ideal and elevates arranged marriage as one of the major institutions.

The moment of first night undercuts both these ideas of marriages, revealing their inherent fragilities when addressing the questions of love and sexual relations. It reveals an unresolved crisis in Kerala modernity where all of the founding assumptions around individuation and intimacy are caught in the claustrophobic space of the bedroom. As the above discussion shows, scholarship on Kerala modernity suggests the presence of a nascent individual(ism) and an emerging internality as a major requirement in defining the modern subject. This internality is also presented as the locus of desire. Internality acts as the regulating force that defines expressions of carnal desire. For the modern Keralite 'union of mind' as represented in the discourse around romantic love is a pre-requisite of the sexual relation. But first night presents a moment of crisis in this modern narrative. First night and the practice of arranged marriage together creates a moment of institutionalized heterosexuality where none of these requirements are necessary to initiate a physical relation. This paper argues that first night presents a fissure in the discourse of Kerala modernity.

The love proposed by the reformist ethos was devoid of carnal pleasures and bodily exchanges and left no space for an exchange which first night represents. And whenever presented, carnal exchanges were presented as potential sites of danger (Kumar 1997). On the other hand, arranged marriage, by its very definition, lacks the notion of love as a structuring principle. Love is something which is projected upon the conjugal unit with retrospective effect. The culturally available mode of negotiation of this moment of first copulation was that of ritualization. There were some highly codified ways of going about this moment and first copulation was not the duty of the husband. For patrilineal Brahmins this kind of ritualized first copulation was called *Sekam* or *Nishekam* and gods were supposed to copulate with the bride before the bridegroom touched her (Fawsett 1900, 65). Early travel writings on the Malabar Coast such as that of Duarante Barbosa (1866, 184) and Ludo Vico De Varthema(1863) document the ritualized first copulation among matrilineal groups. Colonial anthropology also documents the matriline-

real first copulation which was ritualized through *Talikettu Kalyanam*. This rite was outside the customary marriage where the Brahmin priests, the landlords or men in authority were invited to perform the first copulation (Gough 1952, 1955; Fuller 1976; Moore 1985). To accentuate the crisis, all such rituals and ceremonies are absent in the modern marriage⁵. It can be said that the making of the modern marriage resulted in the production of the bedroom as a modern secular space. The nuptial chamber where ritualized first copulation was carried out was not an everyday space. The arrangement of space and objects allowed invocation of divinity. Such a creation of space might have connections to the way virginity was treated in the culture. Whether there were some cultural taboos operating around virginity and first copulation demands further exploration. Modern marriage doesn't ritually acknowledge either nuptial chamber or first copulation. This paper calls the modern bedroom a secular space to suggest the break from the production of a sacral space of nuptial chamber and also to foreground the presence of state legality and community in constituting an intimate space like bedroom.

The scene of first night offers a condensed moment to observe how the object domain delineated by body, desire and pleasure responds to the structural transformations in the family and in the lineage practices. The account that follows is taken from a modernist Malayalam novel – *Mayyazhippuzhayude Theerangalail (On the Banks of River Mayyazhi)* (Mukundan, 1974) – which is set in a French Colony named Mayyazhi (Mahe) in the mid-1970s. The female protagonist Girija is individuated sufficiently and has entered into a romantic relationship with a person where she almost married him in her mind. When confronted with an individualized Girija and her love affair, the novel takes another route, different from nineteenth century novels which presented a steadfast heroine and her unwavering dedication to love. In the novel Girija is forced to enter into an arranged marriage. And this is the first modern marriage in the family. There is no explicit reference to the transformations in the arrangements of sexual relations in the text; but it provides a detailed description of their wedding night and thus reveals the significance of first night in imagining lifelong monogamy. The text does not recapitulate the wedding scene; rather, it draws its dramatic energy from the wedding night. As mentioned earlier, by the time this novel was written the bedroom was a modern secular space devoid of ritualization and ceremonies to face or negotiate through the first act/instance of copulation. Here the man is not only negotiating

with the individual female subject, but also articulating a series of changes related to the sexual order and his position in it. It shows a man and woman caught inside an exchange that creates the patrifocal small family and a monogamous conjugal couple.

Achu was tired by the time the last guest left. His hands were shivering while locking the front door of the house. Finally that day has come –the day when Achu realizes *Purushartha*⁶. While walking to the bedroom his legs too were shivering. He hasn't seen Girija after coming back to his place. He was busy with the guests. But her face was always in his mind. He was eager to smell Girija's tear-soaked face powder. He wanted to wipe off her tears. It was dark inside. He stood at the door steps hesitantly for a moment. He waited without entering the room. He knows she is angry with him. He has been watching her tears. But he has many resolutions- *I will wipe off your tears with my love. I will burn away your past with my love. I will conquer you with love* . . . He waited for her reply. Moments passed. He entered the room. He could not smell the jasmine flowers and powder; instead could smell varnish. He lighted the matchbox. The coat which carpenter Raman made was vacant (Mukundan, 1974, p. 190)

The narrative places the night and the man at the threshold of a potential relationship which is the culmination of long waiting. The waiting and the fantasies around sexual union place the narrative literally at the doorsteps of an impending amorous encounter. The narrative shows the anxieties involved in imagining a monogamous conjugal unit at the centre, where a man is supposed to conquer his partner with love. The woman's past and memories of a previous relationship appear threatening to the man and are treated as something to be destroyed to ensure her devotion to the conjugal unit. Here love becomes an instrument employed with many purposes, conquering being the most important of them. This deployment of love as a conquering force points towards some of the fundamental questions related to equality, freedom and subjection in marriage. The popular ideas of first night as a moment of *conquer* reflects the sexual privileges or rights men have over woman's sexuality in marriage. Marriage could be treated as a concrete instance that foregrounds the power differentials embedded in heterosexuality. Contract theorists such as Pateman(1988) have treated marriage as a sexual

contract between state and man. Pateman argues that when a man marries, he gains sexual access to the woman's body and to her labour as wife. These rights are clearly sexual in nature and they reproduce a conventional understanding of man woman relationship. The co-deployment of love and conquer together at the scene of first night presents an illuminating moment where both the promise of equality which is embedded in marriage as a social contract and the problem of woman's subjection inherent in marriage as a sexual contract are foregrounded⁷. Continuing with the same fictional construction can help to understand the nature of this love which is imagined as a conquering force throughout the narrative.

He found her standing, outside the house, in the backyard, near the tree, under moonlight. His rock solid hands encircled and lifted her as easy as a baby. The man who took the virginity of many girls in *Mayyazhi*, stormed to the bedroom with Girija in his arms. The door slammed. The night bulbul was singing. Girija's sobbing was audible beyond the closed doors. But when the Church bells of Mother Mayyazhi rang the next morning, one could hear her laughter along with the tinkling of her bangles. There were no marks of tears when she came out the next morning with a broken hymen. Her cheeks were blushed and eyes were drooping. The most delicate sound or movement distracted her. She was ecstatic. The man named Achu had taken away all her sorrows. Girija's eyes were not teary after that. (p. 191)

If this representation reveals the anxieties involved in imagining a successful or culturally desirable conjugal unit, the narrative resolution offered to this anxiety further reveals the cultural logic of first night. A duty which was initially performed by a powerful figure – the gods, the king, the Brahmin or even the white man – is now directly transferred to the 'ordinary' man or the modern husband. Or this night makes a husband modern through presenting him as someone possessing certain rights over the virgin body. It is through recognizing and exercising those rights over the virgin body that the modern husband is born. The successful resolution of first night depends on whether he is able to perform the duty of copulation assigned to him by state legality and community through modern marriage. The legal and juridical authority to initiate sexual relations with a woman is conferred to the man through marriage, but it is not sufficient to provide him with

sensual competence. Here the narrative enforcement of the sexual and sensual pleasure of the virgin bestows him with the legitimacy retrospectively. The narrative starts with the resisting female figure, who refuses to enter the bedroom and whose sobbing can be heard outside the walls and closed doors of the bedroom. But it concludes with the ecstatic figure of the conquered female. What Achu felt after the night is absent in the text. It is through a sensual description of the conquered female that Achu's success as a husband is established. Here first night reconstitutes the masculine by deflowering the virgin.

Through taking away a woman's virginity, the man conquers her and it is this act that gets referred to as 'love' in the text. Here defloration acts as the key structuring principle of love and ensures woman's subjection to the newly formed family. This text, even when it employs love as a major binding force between the heterosexual couples, reveals the nature of this love to be physical. Here love does not shift its locus to the internal, but rather employs the broken hymen as a crucial signifier of the love. This broken hymen and the constitutive role it plays in making and managing the conjugal unit is clearly an unresolved issue in the modern reformist discourse around sexuality, which projects a sufficiently individuated heterosexual couple and their satisfactorily interiorized love. It also provides a glimpse of the nature of love, which in arranged marriage is seen as the binding force. The instrument of love, at least in the discourse around first night, is not the mind or qualities that stem from the mind. On the contrary, it is the physical act, which later gets referred to as love. First night thus becomes the *surface of emergence*⁸ for mind-body dualism to emerge for observation and foregrounds the unresolved moment of modernity. The next section of this paper attempts to understand the presence of psychological surveillance around first night and in light of the present discussion, tries to think through the dynamics of the domain of the intimate that legitimizes the psychological gaze.

Surveillance around First Night and the Psy-Complex

Being a crucial location in the production of modern conjugality where the virgin bride transforms to the chaste wife, first night invites the community's surveillance. In the beginning of the twentieth century this surveillance was carried out

through familial instruments of coaching where dominant ideas around sexual relations were passed onto the bride and the bridegroom. Now the idea of coaching is more regimented where the familial instruments are replaced with community-driven premarital coaching classes. Initially premarital counseling was practiced only among the Christian cross sections of the population. And it was more of a theological initiation into the Christian idea of family. Given the hegemonic conjugal patronage in contemporary Kerala, (Kodoth, 2006) it is unavoidable that this site becomes a major zone of conflict which anchors negotiations around gendering and power. The deployment of psychology in such sites might not be accidental. The rationalizing discourse of modern psychology figures in this scheme as a prominent technology of surveillance and subjection.

Psychology here does not operate as a repressing force or coercive apparatus. Rather, psychology provides a new rationale of government and entails an attention to human individuality. Drawing from Michelle Foucault's notion of government (1991), Nikolas Rose (1998) places the production of the psychological subject in the genealogies of 'technologies of subjectification'. He argues that by providing regulatory systems to codify and calculate human functioning, psychology interiorizes surveillance. Psychology here invents what can be termed as the 'pedagogies of self' and the psychological authority created so is profoundly subjectifying by appearing to be emanating from our individual desires. It provides the conditions under which it is possible to take up the position of the speaking subject and make certain forms of utterances intelligible. Here psychology is treated not only as a system of knowledge, but it is also treated as a discursive constellation where the institutionalized knowledge forms interact with many other dominant categories and networks to create a consensus over the language to describe self. This can be termed as psy-complex where psy-complex becomes the network of theories and practices that include academic, professional and popular psychology (Parker, 1994). It covers the different ways in which people in modern culture are categorized, observed and regulated by psychology, as well as the ways in which they live out psychological models in their own talk and experience.

The pervasiveness of psy-complex in Kerala demands careful attention. Kerala has around 4 percent of India's population and about one third of institutions dealing with mental illness and related disorders (Franke and Chasin, 1994). A psychological culture that understands and relates to life in a therapeutic way ex-

ists here. During the arrival of psychoanalysis or psychiatry in India in the colonial times, it was restricted to urban pockets (Hartnack, 2001). But in contemporary Kerala, (practice of) psychology is not confined to an urban location. Psychological language pervades the commonsense and graft the way people relate to their work place, family and to themselves. This is connected to the pervasiveness of print culture and visual media culture in Kerala. The present paper focuses on print culture. The print culture of Kerala from the nineteenth century is well documented and studies have focused on how print contributed to the making of the Malayali public sphere (Menon, 1994; Ramakrishnan, 2000; Jeffrey, 2003). Arunima (2006, p. 74) observes how print culture enabled “co-existing and intersecting communities: based on language, kinship, faith or caste origin”. Ratheesh Radhakrishnan (2006) and Navaneetha Mokkal Maruthur (2010) contend that print culture is privileged in Kerala and it intercuts the sexuality debates and Maruthur (2010) argues that print culture “provides an important medium to track the specificities of the sexuality discourses in Kerala and its linkages to regional imagination” (p. 41). Drawing from these analyses, I wish to argue that print culture becomes a major medium for the proliferation of the psy-discourse.

To understand the surveillance around first night and the distinct engagement it has with psy-complex, this paper tries to capture the diagnostic gaze deployed around first night in the major circuits of popular print culture. It engages with self-help books and advice columns as the location of popular print culture, which reproduces the rationale of modern psychology. This documentation tries to analyze how the psychological gaze constitutes first night as a domain that needs corrective coaching and how the correction offered by the discourse psychologizes masculinity and the domain of the intimate. The discussion helps to throw light on how the community's relation to the virginal body and sexual relation becomes an individual subject's 'conduct issues' which demands 'behaviour modification therapies'.

‘First Night Talk’ in Self Help Books

The self-help book is a location where popular print culture and pop psychology converge⁹. It imagines an individual who is completely autonomous, who is self-contained in finding and resolving his or her problems. The diagnostic gaze presented by the self-help book is not an external gaze of surveillance. Instead,

it comes from within the subject, making the subject a detached observer with a distinct psychological gaze. This gaze raises some foundational questions regarding the way in which the modern subject relates to the world. De Vos (2013) argues that self-help books invent a subject who is quintessentially modern and psychologized in the sense that the subject redoubles to the one who acts and the one who observes the acting from an “objective and neutral position from where things can be assessed” (p. 20). He considers this as a quintessentially modern problem and considers this as “an extra subject, a redoubled subject” (p. 21).

The self-help books written by practicing psychologists are a major location of Pop Psychology in Kerala. These books address conjugality as an important site which requires psychological help to meaningfully negotiate through the experience. Self-help books discuss a whole range of issues from family disputes to finance management under the ambit of conjugality. However, there is primacy given to the conjugal unit and the dyadic communication between the husband and wife. The diagnostic gaze falls onto the communications that graft the everyday of the conjugal life while giving special focus to the events that punctuates this every day. First night is one such event and probably the most important event in these books on conjugality and they are replete with questions and answers on ‘how to conduct first night successfully.’ First night is treated as an ‘interpersonal event’ that marks the beginning of the relationship. This is a recurring concern that is addressed by this corpus of writing where first night is presented as a decisive night that could influence the success and endurance of conjugality. When ‘how to conduct a nice wedding’ becomes a general topic that any women’s magazine or lifestyle magazine would be interested in, ‘how to conduct a successful first night’ becomes a proper psychological topic where the professional expertise of the psychologist is warranted.

In one of the early writings which quotes from a psychologist’s case diary, first night becomes the *Agni Pareeksha* (Test of Fire) where it is considered as setting the stage for the “first performance of sexual dissatisfaction that could destroy the health of conjugality” (Nair PAG, 1979, p. 67). The psychologist continues, “Some people inaugurate discord on that night and for some others the discord exacerbates on the first night itself” (p. 64). In a recent writing, first night is described as the ‘dream space where thousands of colors bloom’ (Basheerkutty, 2001, p. 72). It goes on to add:

“For those who await first night after the engagement, the very thought of it gives the feeling of mild electric shock passing through the body, because the experience of first night is really important. There is only one first night in the life of a bride and bridegroom. The experiences of this night could affect the person’s entire post marital life in a positive or negative way. So it is the duty of each bride and groom to make this night beautiful”(p. 72).

An article titled *Vivekapoorvamaaya Samyogam* (Enlightened Union) by one of the most famous psychologists in Kerala, Dr. P. M. Mathew Velloor, which appeared in his anthology of articles *Dampathyam- BandhamvBandhanam* (Conjugality- Bond and Bondage)(2006) shows what happens when people approach first night without proper psychological coaching. It has the subheading *Purushathwam Theliyik-kaan* (To prove masculinity). I present this excerpt for its formulaic narration of the psychological difficulty embedded in first night.

Rajam’s face went pale when she described her experiences during first night. Hate and vengeance flickered in her eyes. Rajam who entered the bedroom with a glass of milk was startled when she saw her husband’s face. He was so tense. The look of a hungry Wolf! She was attacked by him in the next fifteen minutes. Though she hadn’t protested explicitly, she felt insulted. The disgust and hatred she felt on that night left dark shadows in her sexual relation with him. Most of the threads holding together the marital relation broke away. The remaining threads were so slender that they would have broken anytime. Thus after six months, to strengthen those threads, Rajam and her husband approached the psychologist (2006, p. 107).

This representation creates the image of a wild male body which brims with irrepressible sexual impulses. By narrating the story from the female angle, it reconstructs the sexual relation as a coercive one. Continuing with the same text shows how psychological discourse addresses this violation. The metaphor of locked door appears in the writing to suggest the anatomy of the female body linking it with popular notions of female sexuality and penetrative sex. The psychologist says, “It needs love, sense of security and tender approach to open the door which has been locked for years. Wild and aggressive moves will only destroy the lock,

bend the key or tear down the door” (p. 108). The article attributes the violence from the husband to ‘ignorance’ and it is the duty of the psychologist to help the man come out of ignorance and “help the woman realize that it is ignorance of the man that was causing *behavioral maladjustments*” (Emphasis mine) (p. 108).

This discourse normalizes sexual violence as a behavior maladjustment arising from lack of proper coaching. The psychological parlance is employed here to provide corrective coaching. This corrective coaching presents the double register of the body and the mind where the body is the seat of violence and the mind is the seat of love and the taming force. What is more interesting is the way one register displaces the other in this psychological rhetoric. First night being a culturally sanctioned moment of sexual relations, the body takes on a major role in the scene of first night. This body becomes an obstacle to the psychological project of intimacy and what the psychologist demands of the man is the taming of his own crude impulses; as if only a tamed male body would literally be able to embody intimacy. But this renewed focus on intimacy is provided as a psychological technique that could enhance the sensual competence of the man. The instrumental nature of intimacy deployed here is revealed by the dominant assumptions around sexual relations that the discourse reproduces. The man appears as the active agent and woman is the body to be penetrated. Psychology here aligns with the man to execute the legal, juridical and cultural right he has over the female body.

The same anthology contains a number of illustrations where the psychologist P. M. Mathew Velloor himself appears as the psychologist trying to resolve



Fig: 1 *Monster's Cot* Illustration from the book *Conjuality: Bond and Bondage*.

marital disputes. He appears as a fire-fighting cop who is pouring water on the scene of heated debate among a couple (p. 41), as a music composer who conducts a symphony for a married couple (p. 116), as an angel who touches upon a man's head with his magic wand to invoke love (p. 79), etc. The illustration (Figure 1) (p. 18) shown on the left is part of this series of illustrations that appear in the book

and shows the self-perception of the discipline. The illustration shows a woman lying down on a cot, helpless and completely disarmed; a man approaching her with a sharp sword in a violent frenzy and the psychologist trying to stop him from behind by holding on to his sword with a piece of cloth. The psychologist here appears as being engaged in a civilizing mission of controlling and holding back the savage male who embodies crude and violent impulses. The illustration is titled *Rakshasante Kattil (Monster's Cot)*.

First Night Talk in Advice Columns

Here I analyze two texts from locations that are not directly connected to institutionalized psychology. These texts show the proliferation of psy-discourses to the extent that even non-psychological locations are bound to reproduce the psychological gaze. Both texts reproduce the above discussed psychological discourse of 'conduct issues' faithfully. One is a question written to an advice column and the other is an answer given in another advice column; but they did not appear on the same column or even media. The question was posed in a 1989 Malayalam cinema and the answer appeared in 2010 in a popular health magazine. The question asked in the cinema goes unanswered in the cinema; the health magazine does publish an answer but presumes the question. I take these two disparate texts for analysis and combine them to make a single advice column text for their structural specificity complements the lack of the other wherein one misses the answer and the other misses the question. An analysis sensitive to this complementarity might be helpful to show how certain questions and certain answers presuppose each other revealing the contours of certain modes of speech. Together they show the success of the logic of advice columns where even without an answer the subject is healed. It is by seeping into the thought process and grafting the relation one has with oneself that advice columns entail the logic of government. By perceiving a crisis or imperfection in the self and seeking the help of an expert as a corrective measure, one institutes a psychological relation with the self and succumb to the diagnostic gaze. The absence of answer in the narrative is telling of how the subject is healed even without the direct intervention of the expert. Similarly the answer that is given without an explicit question shows the disembodied voice of psy floating in the culture where it could inhabit any

subject at any critical juncture. This voice clearly recognizes and revels in the recognition that the subject is ready to be addressed by the voice and inhabited by the logic of psyche. Keeping this discussion in mind I first present the question and then the answer.

Thalathil Dinesan and Will to Therapy

The question appears as a letter written to a psychologist by the lead character Thalathil Dinesan (Dinesan from here onwards) in the film *Vadakkunokkiyanthram* (The Compass 1989, dir: Sreenivasan). The film was critically acclaimed and was commercially successful at the time of its release. The frequent reproduction and replay of the comic scenes from the film on television comedy shows contributed to the elevation of the film to a cult status. The film revolves around the anxieties of Dinesan (Sreenivasan) regarding entering the conjugal union and negotiating it successfully. The film starts with a 'normal Dinesan' about to enter an arranged marriage. Dinesan desperately attempts to make himself worthy of the conjugal relation and this comes from the self-awareness that he lacks certain attributes of ideal masculinity essential for a 'successful' conjugal life. What accentuates this self-appraisal is the 'extreme beauty' of the girl who is going to become his wife. As the narrative progresses, Dinesan's masculinity crisis intensifies and after marriage he becomes suspicious of his wife and narrative ends where he becomes 'abnormal'. Radhakrishnan (2005) has observed that "the pathological male subject is narrativised in 1990s Kerala, not necessarily as a man with a mental illness, but as man who is *driven to madness* by the modern emancipated women" (p. 292, emphasis mine). While Radhakrishnan's analysis is focused on the 'crisis in masculinity,' my focus is on how the psy-sciences are deployed to address the perceived crisis in masculinity and what are the areas this discourse present as 'areas of intervention'. This analysis treats first night as a moment where the figure of the woman appears as threatening to the man and a successful resolution of the moment is crucial so that psychological expertise is called upon. This analysis tries to show how psy-sciences offer a modern solution to a modern problem.

The cinematic image of Sreenivasan and the nature of stardom associated with this image mediate the circulation and reception of the text under analysis. The stardom of Sreenivasan undercuts questions of caste, subalternity and visual-

ity within the body of popular cinema and it has been observed that Sreenivasan is placed as the other of the mainstream Malayalam heroes (Sanjeev and Venkiteswaran 2002; Rowena 2004). The making of Dinesan also resonates with these elements of stardom associated with Sreenivasan as a film star. Reverting to the 'question' that appeared without an obvious answer – There are many online platforms that reproduce film-based jokes and 'Thalathil Dinesan jokes' are an essential part of them. For the purpose of the analysis, I reproduce one such joke here. The actual text of the joke is a letter supposedly written by Dinesan to the psychologist seeking 'psychological help' to face his first night. The text is accompanied by a picture of Dinesan's post-wedding photo, which has cropped upon many such online platforms. It is a common practice to take a studio portrait of a couple shortly after the wedding and this is usually exhibited along with other family photos on a wall, mostly in the living room. It is essential to acknowledge the layers of mediation that produce the new text out of a 1989 movie sequence and make it a widely circulating digital text. Below is a translation of the letter which is circulating on online platforms.

Dear Psychology Doctor,

Sir, I am totally confused. Please write on women's psychology as early as possible in your weekly. Because my marriage is fixed. The girl, who is going to be my wife, is extremely beautiful. The thought that I am going to marry a girl whom I don't deserve, upsets me. I have lived my life so far as per the valuable guidance you have provided through the weekly. Thank you for that guidance. First, let me tell you a naked truth. Doctor, I am not at all handsome. I am dark. I am not tall. So, I can conquer this beauty, who is going to become my wife, only through a psychological approach. I have to win a space in her heart. I have to do it on the first night itself. Please advise me on all known techniques for that. I don't smoke and I don't use alcohol either. I have the habit of saving. I think these are the qualities that have attracted the girl's family. I don't see any other reason for them to like me. I am asking you as if you are my elder brother. Is there any technique to increase height? Is there any technique to increase facial beauty? I haven't used any creams yet. What is your opinion about *Vicco Turmeric*? Does that make you fair? I kindly request you to answer all these queries and save me from this difficult situation¹⁰.

The letter shows Dinesan as someone who perceives himself as lacking in certain ideal attributes of masculinity. This self-perception needs an extended analysis. The letter places Dinesan firmly in the marriage market and what is perceived as being valuable in the market reveals some of the aspects that could contribute to the making of the ideal masculine figure. The letter shows that 'character' and money management skills are valued highly in the marriage market. It is observed that the logic of arranged marriage reproduces class and caste matrices and helps to control the boundaries of the community and private property (Karve, 1993). The self-presentation or self-perception of Dinesan clearly reproduces the institutional logic behind arranged marriage. The next concern is 'character'; for men it is always connected to abstinence from drinking and smoking and for women it is their readiness to take up subservient gender roles and premarital sexual inactivity. Here Dinesan is an ideal bridegroom with respect to the priorities of the family and he is aware of that status. He perceives certain shortcomings in comparison with the extremely beautiful girl who is going to become his wife. What is to be noted here is the self-perception splitting the subject in two – the one who looks upon oneself, and the one who becomes the object of that gaze. This is the diagnostic gaze and it is through internalizing this gaze that the solution foregrounded to the problem becomes a psychological solution. As pointed out by De Vos this splitting or doubling of the self is integral to the psychologized relations one institutes with oneself. De Vos (2013, 9) argues that "the subject is hailed into a kind of proto psychologist position from where it, together with the experts weighs up its psychological double".

The anxieties and concerns around first night expressed in the letter reproduce the formulaic narrative around first night. The letter presents the popular idea that the man should conquer the woman and that too on the first night itself. What pushes Dinesan to seek 'psychological techniques' that would help conquer his partner is his perceived lack of physical attractiveness. Though the letter and the concerns remain unanswered in the text of the film, psychological advice columns now employ Thalathil Dinesan to invoke a masculine subject who is in need of psychological services to equip him to face and negotiate conjugality. The same subject produced by the psy-complex is re-deployed in the psy-discourses to gain authority. For instance, a recent article that appeared in *Mangalam* weekly on doubting syndrome (*samsayarogam*) is titled *Thalathil Dinesanivitokkethann eyundu* ("Thalathil Dinesan is around here")¹¹. The article belongs to the genre of

popular psychological writing and it starts with recounting Thalathil Dinesan and moves onto what appears as expert psychological talk. The return of Thalathil Dinesan in popular culture and the way he is invoked in popular psychological writing shows how the diagnostic gaze creates a pathological subject and how the pathological subject is later deployed to justify or lend meaning to the psychological intervention. This is the circularity of the discourse, where psychological discourse first creates a domain of pathology and a pathological subject through the diagnostic gaze and then the pathological subject is presented as a problem which needs psychological subjection. The focus is not on pathologization per se, but on the splitting and doubling of the subject where one becomes a proto-psychologist and internalizes the psychological ideal and perceives pathology in oneself. This could be seen as a high point of psychologization. The psychological discourse not only creates a rationale for its intervention, but also reaffirms the psychological authority as the indisputable one. In this move of self-validation, the psychological presents itself as the *only* problem and psychology presents itself as the only answer or the authentic way to tackle a problem.

Prescriptions: What is it to be a man?

One of the sample answers to the question aired by Dinesan, which has been echoing in different circuits in Kerala for the past two decades appeared in *Mathrubhumi Arogyamasika*, one of the popular health magazines in the Malayalam language.¹² Its focus clearly is on the ambivalent moment in first night – the sexual act. This discourse provides the prescription for ‘what is it to be a man in an intimate encounter’ and in this process reconstitutes both masculinity and the domain of the intimate in a single turn. The entire discussion is made possible through reifying the popular or the dominant idea of first night that it is about sex. But it is precisely this idea that psychology debunks in the process of establishing a diagnostic gaze. The psychological language escapes from being designated as a complex know-how by exercising the expertise to affirm human ethical virtues. For that, it has to first create room for its expertise and this is created through the deployment of a language that urges individuals to relate to themselves in a rational scientific way offered by psychology.

The article that follows appeared as a box within a larger article with the title

'Sex –the founding stone of conjugality'. The layout of the page clearly represents first night as a subset of problems marital therapists usually encounter in relation to conjugal sexual relations. But this box layout also suggests the distinctness of this moment and justifies the special treatment given to it. The tone of the article is one of advice. It is not the usual advice column that presents a letter and an answer to the problem presented in the letter. It has been observed that such advice columns present two different voices to make the voice of the expert more authentic where the confessional tone of the letter grant the therapist the authority to speak (Wilbraham, 1997). Such texts also work with the careful production of unidimensional and seamless flow of meaning. In the given text such a letter is not present, but the assumption is that the text is a response to a question which is present in the culture and this contributes to the authorial voice of the expert. The advice draws parallels between the game of cricket and first night. Sports and sex share one of the most popular double entendres in language with cricket being the most popular sports form in India, the psychologist invokes cricket as an easy and intelligible way to invoke the affective spectrum ranging from anxiety, suspense and exhilaration, which is common to both sports and sex. A specific focus is given to the aggressive, violent and competitive nature of sports and the attempt of the psychologist to invoke this analogy to displace it later as a popular misconception.

Men usually think marital sex is like twenty-twenty cricket¹³ where one is supposed to strike in the initial overs to win the game. But experts of psychology think this is not the right attitude. As per their opinion, first night is like test cricket where one should know the opponent, know the pitch and anchor oneself at the crease, to slowly build the innings. Most men close the door to first night with half anxiety and half excitement. Most of them have been given the advice that one has to establish dominance over your mate on the first night itself. Such people will never succeed. First night is not just about jasmine flowers, grapes, milk and intercourse as it is portrayed in films. *First night provides the first opportunity to conquer your partner's mind* (Emphasis mine) ("First Night is Like Test Cricket", 2010, p. 41).

The article starts with the popular idea that first night is all about sex. But the psychological or therapeutic authority is established by adopting a rhetorical stance

that sounds like it is debunking this very idea. Psychological discourse, which privilege mind over body, poses itself against the popular discourse on first night centered on the female body and the sexual act. It shifts the locus of action from body to mind. Here one can see a shift from the 'broken hymen,' the crucial signifier of a conquered female body, to more abstract mental attributes. The mind-body dualism does not leave the discourse and priority is given to conquering the mind as opposed to the popular belief of conquering the female body. It is interesting to note that conquering as a metaphor does not disappear or change. What does change though is the idiom of conquer. The article goes onto explain how to conquer the mind.

The bride and bridegroom will be exhausted by the time they reach the first night. Not only that, they might not have had a chance to familiarize and to get to know each other. In such a situation, initiating a sexual relation could even create the feeling of rape within your partner's mind. Sexual act must be attempted only after creating mutual understanding and intimacy. What would be beneficial is to take first night as an opportunity to open up the mind, to talk and to know each other. This night should be spent to create a hearty, soulful relationship (p. 41).

'Conquering the mind' and not just the body (or perhaps the body is conquered through the mind; one is reminded of the frequent invocation of cricket as a 'mind game') here becomes a careful psychological act that can be attained through creating 'mutual understanding and intimacy', 'opening up the mind', 'knowing each other' and through 'creating a soulful relationship'. This conquering is more authentic, legitimate and acceptable. Intimacy is deployed here as a prerequisite to all the exchanges that can be termed sexual or erotic that might happen on first night. This is a conquering that does not appear to the woman as conquering. The rhetoric of intimacy makes the conquering less visible. The irrational and impulsive male body is displaced through the deployment of psychological language. The sexual act is reconstituted here as coercive and displaced with a modern notion of intimacy and experientially particularized sexual encounter, where the locus of experience is not the body, but two sufficiently individuated minds that understand and touch each other only after adequately knowing each other.

This knowing happens through opening up the mind, which in turn can be done through talking. This narrativization of self becomes a necessary prerequisite to create the relation. The paper does not suggest that this 'will to discourse' diffuses consummation as an idea. Rather it reaffirms the power relations embedded in the sexual act with the deployment of carefully crafted psychological language. Intimacy grants the authority to "deflower" a woman, not the law directly¹⁴. The law here takes the form of intimacy and through the deployment of this normative intimacy the act upon the female body is sanctioned. It is through the deferral of this act that the performance of masculinity is reoriented around the axis of abstract mental attributes. This 'psychological hermeneutics' reinvents the domain of intimate where abstract mental attributes and the ability to create intimacy defines the successful man and the success of the night. The psychological hermeneutics recast the domain imagined conventionally to be mediated by body and carnal pleasures. It creates a savage man, creating a space for its civilizing mission in the process, displaces the savage man through psychological expertise and gives birth to intimacy.

It is illuminating that the key term that connects the two independent texts analyzed here in their mutual complementarity is 'conquer'. Dinesan's letter asked the 'psychological techniques' that can be used to 'conquer' the bride/the virgin/the future wife and this piece of advice clearly delineates those techniques. Conquer as a signifier and as metaphor represents anxieties that animate both the texts –anxieties around unbound female sexuality and the need to first conquer and then control it. Dinesan's letter represents a moment that has the potential to fall out of the domesticated scene of sexuality. And this fear of losing control over a threshold situation makes him think of conquer. The resistance shown by 'conquer as a concept' to yield to the intimacy rhetoric offers some valuable insights into the psychologization of the domain of the intimate and why this psychologization is problematic. The discourse of psychology works at the slippage between love and consent; sometimes collapsing the distinction between the two and sometimes keeping these two separate. It sometimes posits love as an instrument for eliciting consent and sometimes posits love as consent, confounding the two idioms of speech. This consent cannot do away with the power differential involved in the exchange; it rather reproduces the same through providing the *techne* for conquer. This psychology which lacks the ethical impetus to create the conditions for

love that go beyond the conquering impulse could only cover up conquer with the rhetoric of love. The linguistic or narrative construction of this form of masculinity and intimacy shows the psychological 'foldings' through which gendered subjects relate to themselves. The subject of desire is here referred to as a psychological entity where the 'autonomous self' comes as a regulatory ideal that defines the affective relations. The 'pedagogies of self' offered by psychology forecloses an ethical engagement with the self and produces the psychologized subject who interiorizes surveillance.

Acknowledgements

I am extremely indebted to Dr. Anup Dhar, my doctoral supervisor, for his critical insights and sustained encouragement. This paper draws from my doctoral work and I wish to acknowledge CSCS, Bangalore and Manipal University for their support.

Endnotes

- ¹ Kerala situated at the southern end of Indian subcontinent, is one of the 29 states in India. The princely states of Travancore and Kochi and parts of Madras Presidency, which were under the direct control of the British colonial administration, were merged in 1956 to form Kerala bound by the language, Malayalam, which was spoken by the majority of people.
- ² 'First Night' is the literal translation of the Malayalam word *aadyaraathri* which denotes the wedding night. It is the night following the publicly conducted marriage rite when the marriage is expected to be consummated. It is a pan-Indian practice and the name varies slightly region-to-region. The present paper focuses on the practice as it is observed in Kerala.
- ³ This shift has connection to structural transformations in the family, legal and juridical changes imposed by colonial courts and social and community reform. Colonial courts which followed English contractual marriage and patrifocal family structure presented matrilineal arrangements as promiscuous and barbaric. The social and community reform also responded to this reading of matriliney and argued for a legal abolition of matriliney that would give way to new marriage system that is in alignment with English contractual marriage or Vedic marriage where both these forms involved exchange of a virgin from one family to another. The main points of contestation were the easy solubility of alliances, lack of culturally validated ways of acknowledging biological fatherhood, lack of property rights for men (Kodoth 2001, p. 371). The legal moves along with reformist

interventions were successful in presenting matrilineal arrangements as primitive. The colonial court made a series of legal interventions in the beginning of the twentieth century which prohibited matrilineal alliances and gave validity to new marriage practices in the matrilineal communities and introduced land as formal property that could be inherited. Matriliney was legally abolished in Kerala by The Joint Family System (Abolition) Act, 1975 by the Kerala State Legislature.

- 4 Whether they are actually two different notions of marriage is not the question addressed here. Caroline Osella (2012) stresses the need to look at the two as two representational fictions that are placed against each other.
- 5 Modern marriage here represents the state sanctioned marriage which is similar to Vedic marriage –Kanyadan- in the rituals, in post marital residence and in property relations. This marriage came into practice in the early twentieth century in Kerala and resulted in the making of small patrifocal families out of matrilineal joint households.
- 6 *Purushartha* represents the battery of four principles guiding ethical conduct namely, *Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha*. This can be considered as a culturally available prescription around the ‘conduct of conduct’.
- 7 This article documents the deployment of this formulation in more than one site and tries to account for the tenacity of the concept of conquer in the concluding discussion
- 8 Foucault describes ‘Surface of Emergence’ in *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) as the discursive field in which an object arises first for observation, description and analysis. He terms this ‘first surfaces of emergence’ (p. 41) and later modifies it to ‘planes of emergence’ (p. 42).
- 9 Pop psychology as used here suggests a particular psychological language which finds its space in the circuits of media production and adopts a scientific tone while trying to explain the concepts and *techne* of psychology in a way accessible to laypeople. In this writing Pop Psychology is not treated as simplistic, superficial or pseudoscientific; rather it is treated here as an ideological position available for psychology to inhabit. Jan De Vos (2015, 250) argues that pop psychology and self-help books are “adjacent parts of psy-complex [which] use and reinforce mainstream psychology”.
- 10 The letter can be accessed from many online sources. I have accessed it from <https://ml.wikiquote.org/wiki/വടകംകുറോക്കിയന്തരം> (Accessed on 2014 November 11). The translation of the letter has tried to be as faithful as possible to the Malayalam phrases and tone of the original letter, as I think it is crucial to throw light on the self-description of the subject.
- 11 <http://www.mangalam.com/mangalam-varika/166104>
- 12 *Mathrubhumi* is one of the leading publishing houses in Kerala with the legacy of having been part of the nationalist movement and freedom struggle. *Mathrubhumi* daily and literary weekly are their major publications The *Mathrubhumi* health magazine is a recent addition which started publishing in 2000.
- 13 Twenty 20 cricket is a recent addition to the sport of cricket. When compared to Test Cricket, Twenty 20 is packed in a shorter time slot and is more aggressive. The game

encourages higher strike rates and there is compulsion on the batsman to keep a higher strike rate from the very beginning of the game. In test cricket, initial overs and sometimes an entire day is spent to 'know' the character of the pitch and the bowler and this obviously results in a lower strike rate. In the analogy strike rate represents the cultural assumptions and compulsions around sexual intercourse.

- ¹⁴ The law here represents the patriarchal norm. Here I wish to reinvolve the understanding of marriage as sexual contractual that gives legal rights for a man over a woman's sexuality. Indian legal system reaffirms this patriarchal right in Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code where it says that sexual intercourse by a man with his wife, who is 15 or above, is not rape even if it is without consent. Recently the Supreme Court rejected a plea to criminalize marital rape and upheld the legal right a man has over a woman's sexuality in marriage (Sinha, 2015). So here Law becomes both the patriarchal value system or 'Law of the Father/Man' and the concrete laws represented by the Indian Penal Code. The psychological discourse around first night invisibilizes this work and force of law through a rhetoric of intimacy.

References

- Arunima, G. 2003. *There Comes Papa: Colonialism and Transformation of Matriliny in Kerala, Malabar, c.1850–1940*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.
- _____. 1997. "Writing Culture: Of Modernity and the Malayalam Novel". *Studies in History* 13(2): 271–290.
- _____. 2006 "Imagining Communities Differently: Print, Language and the 'Public Sphere' in Colonial Kerala," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 43(1): 63–76.
- Barbosa, D. 2005. *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century*. New Delhi: Asian Educational Service. First Published in 1866.
- Basheerkutty, A. 2001. "First Night" (AadyaRathri) in *How should be the Life Partner* (JeevithaPankaliEngane). Calicut: Saab Desktop Publishers.
- Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Devika, J. 2007. *En-gendering individual: The Language of Re-forming in Twentieth century Keralam*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman.
- De Vos, J. 2015. "Self Help and Pop Psychology" in *Handbook of Critical Psychology* edited by Parker, I. New York: Routledge. 250–258.
- _____. 2013. Psychologization and the Subject of Late Modernity.

- Houndmills:Palgrave.
- Fawsett, F. 1900. "Notes on Some of the People of Malabar." *Madras Government Museum Bulletin*3(1).
- Franke Richard W. and Barbara H. Chasin. 1994. Kerala: Radical Reform as Development in an Indian State. California: Institute for Food and Development Policy.
- Foucault, M. 1972. *Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. New York: Pantheon.
- _____. 1991 "Governmentality" in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, edited by Burchell G. Gordon C. and Peter M.87–104. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- "First Night is like Test Cricket". (*Adyarathri test cricket pole*). 2010. *MathubhumiArogyaMasika* 14(7): 40–42.
- Fuller, C.J. 1976. *The Nayers Today*. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.
- Gough, K. E. 1955. "Female Initiation Rites on Malabar Coast." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. 85: 45–80.
- Hartnack, Christiane.2001. *Psychoanalysis in Colonial India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jeffrey, Robin.2003. *Politics, Women and Well-being: How Kerala Became 'A Model'*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Karve, Irawati. 1993 "The Kinship Map of India" in *Marriage Family and Kinship in India*. Edited by Patricia Uberoi, 50–73. New Delhi: Oxford University Press
- Kodoth, P. 2001. "Courting Legitimacy or Delegitimizing the Custom? Sexuality Sambandham and Marriage Reforms in Late Nineteenth -Century Malabar." *Modern Asian Studies*35(2): 349–384.
- Kodoth, P. 2008. "Gender, Caste and Matchmaking in Kerala: A Rationale for Dowry" *Development and Change*.39(2): 263–283.
- Kumar, U. 1997. "Self, Body and Inner Sense: Some Reflections on Sree Narayana Guru and Kumaran Asan." *Studies in History*13(2): 247–270.
- Loukose, Ritty. 2009. *Liberalization's Children: Gender, Youth, and Consumer Citizenship in Globalizing India*. Durham N. C: Duke University Press.
- Maruthur, N. M. 2010. *Sexual Figures of Kerala: Cultural Practices, Regionality and the Politics of Sexuality*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. *University of Michigan, Ann Arbor*.
- Mathew, P. M. Velloor. 2006. "Enlightened Union" (VivekapoornamaayaSamyogam) in Conjuality- Bond, Bondage(Dampathaym-Bandham, Bandhanam).

- Kozhikkode:Poorna Publications.
- Menon, Dileep. 1994. *Caste, Nationalism and Communism in South India: Malabar. 1900–1948*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Moore, Melinda. 1998. “Symbol and Meaning in Nayar Marriage Ritual” *American Ethnologist*.15: 254–273.
- Mukundan, M. 2012 [1974].*MayyazhippuzhayudeTheerangalil (On the Banks of River Mayyazhi)* Kottayam: DC Books.
- Nair, P.A. G.1979. “The Testimony of Chastity”(ChaarithryathinteSaakshipathram) in *Unsatisfied Wives(AsamthrupthakalaayaBhaaryamar)*.Trivandrum: Prabhath Book House.
- Osella, Caroline. 2012. “Desires Under Reform: Contemporary Reconfigurations of Family, Marriage, Love and Gendering in a transnational South Indian Matrilineal Muslim community”.*Culture and Religion*.13 (2): 241–264.
- Parker, I. 1994. “Reflexive Research and Grounding of Analysis: Social Psychology and the Psyc-Complex” *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 4(4): 43–66.
- Pateman, Carole. 1988 *The Sexual Contract* Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Puthenkalam, J. 1977. *Marriage and the family in Kerala: with special reference to matrilineal castes*. Calgary: University of Calgary.
- Radhakrishnan, Ratheesh. 2005. “PE Usha, Hegemonic Masculinities and the Public Domain in Kerala: On the Historical Legacies of the Contemporary”. *Inter Asia Cultural Studies*.6 (2): 187–208.
- _____.2005. *Masculinity and the Structuring of the Public Domain in Kerala: A History of the Contemporary*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Mahe: Manipal Academy of Higher Education.
- Rich, Adrienne. 1987. “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” in *Blood, Bread and Poetry*. Selected Prose 1979–1985. 23–75. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Rose, Nikolas. 1998. *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power and Personhood*. Cambridge University Press: London.
- Rowena, Jenny. 2004. ‘*Karutha Sreeniyum Velutha Lokavum*’ (‘The Black Sreeni and the White World’). *Pachakuthira* 1(5): 5–10
- Sanjeev. S. and Venkiteswaran, C.S. 2002. “Sreenivasan” *Drisyathalam*. 1: 65–73.
- Sinha, Bhadra. 2015, February 18. “SC rejects plea to make marital rape criminal offence” *Hindustan Times*.

Wilkinson, Sue and Celia Kitzinger, eds. 1993. *Heterosexuality: A Feminism and Psychology Reader*. Sage. London.

“When they found out I was a man, they became even more violent”: Autoethnography and the rape of men

Gcobani Qambela

ABSTRACT: It is important to understand sexual and gender based violence (GBV) in South Africa which has one of the world’s highest rates of sexual and GBV. In this paper, I focus and interrogate sexual assault and rape of men by other men. I consider harm done by boys/men not one dimensionally (i.e. boys/men harming women), but through the violence and aggression boys/men inflict on other men/boys. Through the qualitative research method, autoethnography, I look at the ways in which men harm other men through the prism of male rape. I demonstrate how autoethnography, grounded in personal experience, hindsight and reflexive writing is of great usefulness in exploring sensitive, traumatic and sensitive events. Through my own narrative, I show autoethnography is important in the analysis of individual experience to make sense of social phenomena. I contend male rape is used as a stopping device for men and boys who do not fit the hegemonic moulds of idealised masculinity, boyhood and manhood. I call for greater attention to the sexual violence of boys and men by other men, which albeit promising international work and scholarship, still remains scant and ignored in current South African literature outside of institutionalised settings like prison and military.

KEYWORDS: male rape, South Africa, sexuality, masculinities, violence



Underpinning every act of sexual violence is a struggle for the supremacy of gendered identities

(Couturier, 2012, p. 1).

Once upon a time I thought it was a female thing, this fear of men. Yet when I began to talk with men about love, time and time again I heard stories of male fear of other males. Indeed, men who feel, who love, often hide their emotional awareness from other men for fear of being attacked and shamed

(hooks, 2004, p. 8).

South Africa is a noted paradox. The country has what is seen as one of the most progressive constitutions in terms of gender and sexual rights inclusivity. Yet, the paradox lies in that South Africa has one of the world's highest reported levels of sexual and gender-based violence (Ndashe, 2004; Stauffer, 2015; Vetten, 2014). It is very high rates of rape, along with various violent forms of sexual assault and sexual violence that have caused some to contend South Africa has the worst known figures of rape for a country that is not at war (Moffett, 2006). The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) notes that according to the South African Police Service the reported cases of rape continue to decrease from 2008/9 (46,647 cases) and 2014/15 (43,195 cases) (Lancaster, Gould, Vetten and Sigsworth, 2015). ISS argues official police statistics cannot be taken to be accurate measures of the extent of sexual crimes for various studies make the case that as little as one in thirteen rapes ends up reported (Lancaster, Gould, Vetten and Sigsworth, 2015). Moreover, the National Victims of Crime Survey shows a decrease in reporting by rape victims by 21% in the period between 2011 and 2014 (Lancaster, Gould, Vetten and Sigsworth, 2015). ISS echoes earlier work by Jewkes and Abrahams (2002) noting the elusive nature of the available data and statistics. Jewkes and Abrahams (2002) cautioned that there was still insufficient infrastructure to support crime reporting although undeniably the levels of forced and non-consensual sex are very high. The high rate of sexual and gendered violence, as well as underreporting of cases, has brought to the fore many calls to understand sexual violence in post-conflict South Africa (du Toit, 2014; Gentry, 2004; Reproductive Health Matters, 2000; Thomas, Masinjila and Bere, 2013).

It's recognised in literature that post-conflict settings carry legacies of violent struggle that inform post-conflict experiences of interpersonal violence especially

sexual violence (Bourgois, 2001 cited in Wood, Lambert and Jewkes, 2007). Posel (2005) posits that what makes sexual violence in post-apartheid South Africa different to the apartheid era is that it has come to be politicised. This politicisation of sexual violence in South Africa is seen through Mardorossian (2011) who has shown how in literature for instance, violence that is committed in white liberal contexts is seen as naturalised violence and is not subject to critique in the same way as the attention that is paid to “black on white sexual violence”. Scholars like Morrell (1998) make recognition of the existence of multiple masculinities that are tied to the history of southern Africa through the period of colonialism, through to the apartheid era where race, class and geographic location were of primary importance in the formation of gender identities. Suttner’s work (2005) has shown with the liberation party, the African National Congress, that the organisation carries with it multiple ongoing legacies of manhood including ‘warrior traditions’ and ‘cultural systems’ that may have negative implications including sexual violence that has the implication of limiting the ability of women to live freely (p. 103).

Current existing studies in the South African context have looked at sexual assault from various angles. These include studies of patriarchal norms permitting sexual assault to occur (Claassens and Gouws, 2014; Kottler and Long, 1997), while other studies have looked into risk influences of young girls and the conditions that render them vulnerable to sexual assault (Petersen, Bhana and McKay, 2005). Others have looked at more “extreme” forms of male violence, including the rape of infants by men (Posel, 2005; Praeg and Baillie, 2011). Although Kapp (2006) notes in South Africa – women, children, boys and girls have been raped, what is striking in the literature on sexual assault is its women centric nature. This is justified as women and children continue to be the most vulnerable to sexual assault and rape (Gentry 2004), for Gqola (2015) maintains that there are prevailing notions by men in South African society that see the pain of women as negotiable. The harmful prevailing notions and philosophies carried by men and boys about entitlement to sex and the bodies of women have raised concerns and calls from various sectors of South African society for a deeper engagement of boys and men about sexual violence. As Davis (2015) has written, and in light of prevailing male sexualised violence, it is important to look at the lessons that boys and men learn, and the meanings that they come to attach to what it means to be a man.

In this paper, I intend through autoethnography to use my experiences from pre-and-teenage years as a boy, and later a man, with other men and boys to unpack the silence in South African literature and studies of men and masculinities on the serious issue of the rape of men. I begin by providing some background and context into work on men and masculinities in both South Africa and internationally, particularly as it relates to sexual violence against women and men. I proceed to unpack the current available literature on the rape of men. Thereafter, I provide some context through literature on the importance of the autoethnographic method of writing and its particular usefulness in addressing sensitive and ignored issues including sexual trauma. I thereafter go on to share my story, contextualise it in light of larger violence in South Africa against men deemed gender non-conforming and thereafter provide some concluding remarks.

Men, masculinity and masculinities

hooks (2004) critiques the focus on male power that assumes all males are powerful and have it all. This critique is in line with existing work on masculinities that complicates the conception of men as one homogenous group. Certainly, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) have shown that there are multiple hierarchies in gender construction. Through the lens of hegemonic masculinities, we can understand that not all ways of being “a man” are honoured, but rather it requires that ‘all other men to position themselves in relation to it’ and that the concept gains legitimacy through subordinating men and women (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). hooks (2001) has gone on to show how ideas around domination and subordination as ‘a natural order’, and ‘that the strong should rule over the powerless by any means’ are central in justifying abuse (p. 24). hooks (2001) writes that men who believe in the notion of men as the superior sex, and women/the feminine as the weaker sex often make use of physical assault in order to subordinate. Yet, as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) note, men are not passive to these processes; they note that men can move between multiple interpretations of manhood according to the intersecting needs of the men. Thus, although men may choose to adhere and adopt to hegemonic masculinity when it is desired, men may also choose to move away and keep hegemonic masculinity away from them at other times. Men, according to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) therefore

'position themselves through discursive practices' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 841).

The recognition that gender is socially constructed – and that masculinity and femininity are always loosely defined, variable and not natural practices simply tied to the genitals that people inhabit is to Gardiner (2004) one of the most important accomplishments of 20th century feminist theory. Men now have to be accounted and considered as complex and gendered beings (Mellstrom, 2003), and engaging daily in the active politics of doing gender (Connell, 2000). There has to be a reflection on the dynamic ways in which men enact masculinities, as well as the toxic effects on both men themselves as well as the negative effects on the lives of others particularly through the enactment of rape, domestic and homophobic violence (Connell, 2000). Recently, Ratele (2014) has argued, based on two reported cases of homophobia in South Africa and Malawi that homophobia is used to protect the dominant forms of manhood, and that the violence against gay and lesbian persons can in part be read as resulting from the unattainability of the dominant masculinity. This echoes Ratele, Shefer, Strebel and Fouten (2010) who observed that boys often express heterosexuality as a way of distancing masculinity from femininity – and thus perform heterosexuality through a distancing from homosexuality. Francis and Msibi (2011) have argued (through Kimmel, 2000) that the fear of being perceived as 'a sissy', means that men who do not meet the social requirements of what being a man means, are exposed and more vulnerable to violence and discrimination as they are seen to be 'selling the side' (p. 160). This is consistent with Pierterse's (2014, p. 365) observations that homosexual men are seen as feminine and Othered:

... men who display other (non-sexual) characteristics associated with femininity (for instance, looking or dressing androgynously, being timid or introverted, speaking in a high voice, taking care of their appearance), are conversely typecast (and outcast) as being homosexual. 'Real' men must thus consistently distance themselves not only from women, but also from 'effeminate / feminine' (homosexual) men.

Pierterse (2014) continues saying that this distancing takes the form of violence and aggression and thus much of the dominance males have over both women

and other men is constituted through both actual and threatening physical and/or sexual violence. hooks (1990: 59) invoking rape in Robin Morgan's book *The Demon Lover: On The Sexuality of Terrorism* continues that this behaviour by men, allows men across various strata's (including race, class and nationality) to bond on the notions of manhood that make assertion of masculinity through violence and terrorism tantamount. This means that the patriarchal power that men use is not exclusive to upper and middle class white men, but that men across class and race enjoy the patriarchal power (hooks, 1982).

Morrell, Jewkes and Lindegger (2012) note in South Africa, through the leaders of the leading political party, African National Congress and its youth wing, a resurgence and valorisation of African masculinity that places a premium on the superiority of men. Recent work by Shefer, Kruger and Schepers (2015) shows that young men often internalise that as men they should be feared (although some of the men were finding other non-dangerous forms of expressing manhood). This is related to Ratele's (2015) recent work showing despite evidence of healthy masculinities, there is still resistance that opposes an engagement with boys which includes problematic cultural traditions and as well as limits tied to socio-economic status.

Yet as Javaid (2014) notes, it is also important to understand the ways in which men not only dominate women, but they themselves are dominated by other men. Javaid (2014) shows that there is wide literature showing that men as well are harmed and victimised by gender expectations and sexism. Ignoring men poses the danger of maintaining not only patriarchal order, but also then serves to privilege hegemonic masculinities (Javaid 2014). In the next section I set out through the prism of literature on the sexual victimisation and rape of men to show that there is enough evidence to warrant concern about the ways in which men harm, hurt and abuse other men through sexual assault, and later through autoethnography I show how we can, through this method, start lifting the silence on this topic.

The rape of men

Couturier (2012, p. 1) writes that there are dangerous repercussions if sexual violence is not understood in its full gamut. The rape of men is cloaked in secrecy, and remains hidden in the consciousness of both the domestic and the international. Couturier (2012) contends the rape of men is shrouded in secrecy for dealing with

it requires a necessary interrogation of cultural constructions of gender, as well as a rethinking of normative frameworks in society. As Chapleau, Oswald, and Russell (2008) have illustrated, rape is used as a tool to ensure that women *and* men are not going astray from prescribed gender roles. Ron and Hugo (2013) note that the rape of men brings with it necessary reconsideration of normative and gendered binaries about what it means to be strong, weak, a guardian and victimised. Bringing the rape of men into the discussion of gender requires a rethinking and different analysis that requires moving beyond seeing rape as something that only women are primarily on the receiving end of 'by hegemonic forms of masculine gender oppression' (Couturier, 2012, p. 1).

Struckman-Johnson (1988) reports on sexual victimisation of men in the United States of America as being on the rise since the 1970's. Despite reports, men in research on sexual victimisation were for decades asked to respond in research only as perpetrators, and not as potential victims of sexual assault (Struckman-Johnson, 1988). In their study of 507 men and 486 women looking at the differences between the experiences of women and men with regards to unwanted sexual activity, Muehlenhard and Cook (1988) found that women (97.5%) more than men (93.5%) were most likely to experience unwanted sexual activity whereas men (62.7%) were more likely than women (46.3%) to experience unwanted sexual intercourse. Recent work by French, Tilghman and Malebranche (2015) with 284 adolescents and young adult males from diverse backgrounds shows that four in 10 of the participants in the study had experienced sexual coercion (43%), including physical coercion (18%). Walker (2005) in a non-clinical setting study of 40 men who had survived rape in the United Kingdom notes that during their sexual assault, a number of the men were subjected to misogynistic and homophobic comments including one of the men being called 'a filthy queer' (p. 74). The long-term effects of the rapes for the men included psychological harm, self-blame, depression and self-harming acts amongst others (Walker, 2005).

In South Africa, the rape of men outside of the prison context still attracts very little attention (Ron and Hugo 2013). This does not mean that rape in institutional contexts like prison is unimportant. Rather, as Ghanotakis, Bruins, Peacock, Redpath and Swart (2007) have argued, prison rape is not isolated, but rather works to reinforce rape culture and perpetuates the use of sex to express dominance. Moolman's work (2015) is instructive, expands and shows how prisons are constituted

through heteronormative practices that intersect on gender, race, class, sexuality and age. Working with 72 incarcerated sex offenders in South African prisons, Moolman (2015) notes how in prison homophobic statements are uttered to reiterate 'the naturalisation of heterosexuality', where males are sexually assaulted and are deemed responsible even where it is not consensual (p. 6745).

Javiad (2014) writes that there has been a lot of work that has been done to uncover the harmful ways in which male violence harms women in very particular gendered ways, yet there has been little interrogation of the ways in which men harm other men, particularly through the lens of rape and sexual assault. When sexual assault of men by other men is acknowledged it is often through the prism of war as with Couturier (2012), and not as a daily encounter in everyday life. Exposés such as Storr's (2011) show the ways in which rape of men by other men is viewed only through the lens of something that occurs only in conflict driven societies and not something that also occurs in everyday practice. It is no surprise when male rape and sexual assault by men to other men occurs, it is often scandalised as something barbaric and that is not ordinary or common in society. Storr (2011) writes for instance:

Men aren't simply raped, they are forced to penetrate holes in banana trees that run with acidic sap, to sit with their genitals over a fire, to drag rocks tied to their penis, to give oral sex to queues of soldiers, to be penetrated with screwdrivers and sticks.

Storr's (2011) narrative perpetuates the idea that when male rape happens it is always violently pushed to the limit, where men are made to do the most extreme, uncommon and terrifying acts. The silence socially around male rape is based around notions of idealised manhood that says that men cannot rape other men and where it has occurred it is always extreme and extraordinary (Merz, 2014; Ron and Hugo, 2013). Ron and Hugo (2013, p. 88) note that:

We are conditioned in this country [South Africa] that a male is nothing more than a machine. They can't have feelings. They can't show emotions and above all else men don't cry. We are supposed to be strong and brave. So when you do not fit that mould, you are not a man anymore ... most girlfriends I had left me

soon after they heard [that I was raped]. I've been told that I must have been gay for letting a man touch me. I've been asked if maybe I wanted it. I've been told maybe it was just experimental.

Javiad (2014) contends that notions such as these espoused by Ron and Hugo (2013) are based on social ideas of heterosexuality that posit that men are the penetrators and not penetrable, as well as seekers of sex and not the ones pursued for sex. Davies and Rogers (2006) in their review of literature on perceptions of sexually assaulted male victims, find that gay male rape victims are judged to be at fault more often than male heterosexual victims for gay male rape victims are seen to have enjoyed the act. It is further speculated that gay male victims deemed to look effeminate are blamed more than those who are 'straight-acting' (Davies and Rogers, 2006, p. 375). Moreover, although my focus in this article is on male rape by other men, it is worth noting that even when the perpetrator of the sexual assault is a woman, it is noted to be perceived as impossible for women to sexually assault men (Davies and Rogers, 2006). Men are perceived as incapable of resisting sex and thus take any opportunity presented (Davies and Rogers, 2006). This notion is tied to ideas of male prowess and strength, and that men ought to have resisted or fought back against their assault (Davies and Rogers, 2006). The embarrassment that victims of male rape often feel is attributable to the constructions of male sexuality that expects men to always be virile and ready to satisfy women (Javiad, 2014). The stigmatisation and demonization of male rape is made particularly worse where there is confusion about consensual sex between two men (homosexuality) and male rape (forced) for both of these according to Gear (2007) are 'smothered in taboo and stigma' (p. 210). Gear (2007) further writes that because homosexuality has historically been outlawed in many countries and still is in many, there is very little reported cases because victims of male rape would by reporting their rape be charged for sodomy or breaking the laws thus there are still silences on male rape. Yet, Nthabiseng Motsemme (cited in Gqola 2015: 171) notes that even silence has value:

... we need to read silences not as absences but as spaces rich with meaning. In asking why these silences exist, why they are forced and/or chosen, by whom and when, lies a wealth of knowledge.

A noted limitation of much of the existent literature on the sexual victimisation of men is that much of it sampled student populations, but as Davies and Rogers argue, this does not mean that findings, even from narrow samples do not have generalizable implications for the wider general population. This is a lesson we have had to learn in April 2016 in South Africa with the #RURferenceList and following protests and responses. The #RURferenceList was a list of reported sexual assault perpetrators at 'the university currently known as Rhodes¹' University, eRhini in South Africa that was released anonymously online. The list was first released through a university confessions page on Facebook, which spread through other social networks such as Twitter via screenshots taken by observers. Following the list, a number of women led protests against rape culture at the university and at other campuses in South Africa more broadly took place. The list and following protests as Dlakavu (2016) writes, served to provide a social cost to rape, and part of efforts to bring an end 'a social system that still wants to let sexual assault be swept under the carpet.' This was an incredible moment not only on the university campus, but also nationally. A key limitation of the events was that the conversation was still centred primarily on women survivors, and rightly so in that context of the list, but this does not mean that men are not affected by sexual assault on university campuses. Turchik (2012) has shown that among British college students, 51.2% of the college men reported having experiencing sexual victimisation at least once since the age of 16. This supports earlier research by Holmes and Slap (1998) showing that adolescent boys are at highest risk of sexual victimisation. Troublingly, Holmes and Slap (1998) further observed that the boys most at risk came from low socio-economic backgrounds, were non-white and were not residing with their fathers. The authors, at the time, noted that the sexual abuse of boys still remained underreported and under recognised. It is the meaning and uncovered wealth of knowledge in the silence on male rape that I want to focus on next. I will first provide a brief introduction into autoethnography and thereafter proceed to share my narrative followed by a discussion.

Autoethnography

There have been increasing calls in the past years for new ways to document and express experiences (Gibson, 2013; Giordano, 2014; Roberts-Smith, 2012; Tomaseli, 2013). Autoethnography is an unexplored method and form of writing

noted to make for uncomfortable reading (Blinne, 2012; Denshire, 2014). Part of what makes the autoethnographic account different is that it breaks down the barriers or disjuncture between the self-other dichotomy by placing the researcher as the central locus of study (Anderson, 2012; Denshire, 2014; Ellis and Bochner, 2000). In autoethnography, the subjective experiences of the researcher are seen as important and the researcher is encouraged to make meaning of experiences alongside the persons who are the object of the study as they make meaning in their complex and varied lives (Siddique, 2011).

In autoethnography, personal experience through research is used in order to make sense of larger cultural experiences – combining autobiography and ethnography. As a qualitative research method, ‘autoethnography is both process and product’ (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011). Autoethnography allows the researcher to ground personal experience and what Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) term ‘experiences shrouded in silences.’ Autoethnography recognises that although the writer does not live through experiences for the sake of documenting through research, the hindsight from reflexive accounts can provide “epiphanies” about remembered moments that have had a significant impact of the trajectory of one’s life. What stretches autoethnography further than personal reflection, is that social science publishing conventions require that the recollections be accompanied by an analysis of the experience(s) (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011). One way in which an autoethnographer can achieve analysis, is through contrasting existing literature against the personal experience one has had (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011). This is especially important for one of the critiques of autoethnography is that it is narcissistic and cannot be generalised into larger populations. Philaretou and Allen (2006, p. 73) write:

Since autoethnographies are usually on sensitive topics and produced by a very elite sample of college professors and other intellectuals, whose educational background and academic training necessarily and in unknown ways influences the reconstruction of their lived experiences, they will always have the limitation of being nonrepresentative of the general population. For this reason, mixing and matching various research methodologies – for example, utilising both mainstream qualitative and quantitative methods in conjunction with autoethnographic accounts – can help strengthen research findings as each method provides its unique contribution.

Reflecting on the process of writing the autobiographies of her childhood, hooks (1999) shares that the yearning to share one's story is at the intersection on the one hand of wanting to recover the past, and yet on the other hand experience both re-union and release from the process of writing. hooks (1999) shares that in sharing aspects from the past even as those experiences might not be part of present day life, one can look at how that 'living memory' (p. 84) is not a singular and isolated even but forms part of a continuum. Scott (2014) maintains autoethnographic writing allows for the examination of individual complexities along with singularities on various aspects of social reality. As Mkhize (2005) has theorised, the lived personal experiences of individuals are not isolated, but is deeply entrenched in the larger social contexts together with the limitations that frame them. Gilbourne, Jones and Jordon (2014) posit that autoethnography is particularly useful in accounts of circumstances that are particularly traumatic and challenging. This is further affirmed by Run (2012) who shows the usefulness of autoethnography in understanding postcolonial contexts, as the method allows one to unpack the personal narratives while being able to frame it in larger collective experiences of 'other' people. In this way, autoethnography places high value on story sharing as a deeply pedagogical practice that is not separated from the making of meaning in social phenomena (Reitan, 2015).

Various authors have used autoethnographic writing in diverse ways. Rickard (2014) used autoethnography to make sense of her experiences as a teacher and self-identifying lesbian at a school in Ireland in the 1990s. Rickard (2014) looked at the ways in which hegemonic narratives silence non-conforming ideas and identities by using her experiences to explore ways in which heteronormativity can be challenged and an environment accommodating of everyone created. Trivelli (2014) uses autoethnography to make sense of personal experiences with self-medication while suffering from clinical depression, unpacking the ways in which various factors including the discursive, the human, the non-human and the personal and the political come together in the economy of the pharmaceuticals. Cohen (2012) on the other hand utilised autoethnography to make sense of floods in Bangkok in 2011 to excavate larger implications of the experience in relation to community responses.

Despite the growing literature and application of autoethnography in various contexts including erotica [Ott, 2007; Ott, 2007a] there is still scant literature using autoethnographic methods to make sense of sexual trauma and sexual assault,

particularly with men. Philaretou and Allen (2006) make the case that autoethnography is best suited for studying sensitive topics including consumption of pornography on the internet, addiction to sex as well as various forms of sex work. In addition to the benefits of validity and reliability, autoethnography also provides much therapeutic benefits particularly for people seen as *Other* while contributing to the enhancement of social scientific knowledge (Philaretou and Allen, 2006)

Beyond Ron and Hugo (2013), there are virtually no other scholarly narratives in South African literature that contribute to understanding and the unpacking the rape and sexual assault of men through autoethnographic method. Moreover, the existing narratives are almost all exclusively focused on middle class white men, and very little on non-white persons. Black feminist scholars have gone some way to show that one's race, class, sexuality, gender amongst many other factors play an important role in how one experiences oppression (Collins 2000), and that all these factors intersect along race and gender (Crenshaw 1993). Crenshaw (1993, p. 1277) for instance in her work looking at the interaction between gender and race in context of violence against women of colour notes that:

... Black women who are raped are racially discriminated against because their rapists, whether Black or white, are less likely to be charged with rape, and when charged are less likely to receive significant jail time than the rapists of white women.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) has argued that autobiographical and life history methods are critical and characteristic in work on men, for such methods allow for the centering of individual subjects. In writing my narrative below, I therefore attempt to locate myself in this tradition of reflexive autoethnographical writing to locate my experience in larger processes that in the words of Collins-Buthelezi and Higginbotham (2015) refer to as 'the ordering of sexual lives in Africa' (p. xiii).

“Why do you seem like isitabane nje [a gay]? ... I will rape you”

I was born in 1988, in Lady Frere in a village called Bangindlala in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The province is most famous for being the birthplace of two former presidents in post-apartheid South Africa, these being Thabo Mbeki

and Nelson Mandela. Yet, the area that I grew up in was for all intents and purposes pretty isolated from the rest of the country, the metropolitan areas and the cities. Earliest memories include making mud structures, swimming in the river and herding livestock in the early years. I started school ("Sub A") when I was four years old, which I would later learn was unusually young. Although my parents were married and still are, growing up it was mostly my mother and I in the house. My siblings (older brother and sister) were in boarding school already, and my father worked in the mines. My father formed a part of the well-documented migrant labour system arising from the colonial and apartheid history of South Africa where men had to leave the homestead to work up North in the mines. My father was one of the men who went to the mines, sent home remittances and came home once or twice at most in any year.

When I was in Standard three (Grade five), my mother made a decision to find me a school in nearby Queenstown. This town had much better resourced schools in the areas that were predominantly designated 'for whites only' under apartheid. At this time in the late 1990's and early 2000's many of the South African schools were increasingly opening up to black students. I was a part of this move from rural schools and into urban schools in efforts to garner a better education. Most rural schools, were, and are still incredibly under resourced. It was also at this point that for the first time I learned to speak, read and write English as my home language is isiXhosa. It was also the first time that I was in a school where there was a diversity of racial groups, at least amongst the teachers. I lived in a boarding school with other predominantly black boys and girls, many of whom came from similar settings to mine and sometimes-surrounding villages to mine.

In 2000, I changed schools again and moved to a school in a metropolitan area. The school was in Port Elizabeth. In my time at the school, I had an opportunity join a prestigious boys' choir associated with an Anglican church close to my school as one of my extra-curricular activities. I lived in one of the peri-urban centres and walked to town where my school was. I also had choir practice in town, as the church was in town. Choir practice took place several times a week if I recall correctly, on Thursday, Saturday mornings and one last rehearsal on Sunday morning before church service. At this point I was living with my older sister who was in her early twenties and we did not have a car or our own transportation. We either had to walk or use public transportation for a long time. It was

about a 10–20-minute walk to town and back to the flat we rented, depending on the pace.

There was an incident one time. Usually once every end of the month we would get a little stipend in church as a gratitude to our services. It was not a lot, about twenty to thirty South African Rands (about two dollars), and about five hundred Rands (twice a year or every six months). The choir was predominantly white, and my black choir mates were one of the first intake of black students. Many of the fellow black students came from the townships and peri-urban centres with only one of my black choir mate living in the suburbs. On getting our stipends at the end of the month, usually me, and my black choir mates would hang out in town rewarding ourselves with ice cream, playing computer games and so on. It was amazing what one could do with twenty Rands back then.

On this particular day it was a similar situation. We finished choir practice around 11:30am and my friends and I went to town, played and hanged out. It became time for us all to disperse and we said goodbyes and went separate ways around 15:00 that day. Many shops in town are closed around this time on Saturdays and the town was quite still and quiet. Upon separating from my peers, I started making my way up the steep hill going home. I remember feeling so happy this day. I guess to my 12/13 year old self it felt like ‘pay day’ – a day to reap the fruit of hard work. On my way home I remember playing in the fields, waving hands all around, picking up stones and so many other things. As part of the walk home on this particular route, I passed through a park, with a very long staircase that had metal support in the middle of the staircase to hang to. It was dead quiet, but it was not unusual for a Saturday in that particular area. When I was about halfway through I remember three guys coming towards me from the top, and I do not know what it was about them but my heart immediately knew I was in danger. It could have been the force and very fast pace at which they were walking but I remember feeling scared, with no place to run and frankly too scared to run.

They arrived and as I suspected, they asked me for money and at this point I barely had any having just spent it with friends entertaining ourselves. They started to surround me and started to touch and feel me all over my body. They were looking for a cellular phone, and I did not have one. They kept asking for one, and I said I do not have one. In the process of searching me, out of the three there was one man that was particularly aggressive. In this process he made a number of ut-

terances I do not now remember verbatim, but I remember they were around how 'uthetha njenge moffie' (loosely: 'you speak like a faggot'). His mumbling centred around my voice and how I spoke either like a 'moffie', and 'intombi' (a girl). After they were done searching me, and satisfied that I really did not have a phone or valuables, they started to walk away. Then as my heart was relaxing and I was proceeding to continue walking one stopped, he looked back and uttered: "kutheni ingathi usisitabane nje? Ndakuzeka mna" (loosely meaning: why do you seem like a gay, I will rape/fuck you). For a while it looked like he was going to come back, but two of the other men that he was with continued to walk, and I did not respond. I continued to walk home. I never told anybody at home. But this would be my first introduction to the threat of rape, as a boy, deemed at the time feminine and gay at the time. While it did not reach a point where it happened to me in this one particular incident, I have always known it happens, and it could happen to me. This was a trend that continued throughout most of my late primary school and high school life. I was severely bullied in high school, and often when I spoke back some of my male classmates would retort "ndakuzeka mna" (I will rape/fuck you). I learned very early on that a penis in this instance was a tool for disciplining me for not only speaking back, but for not fitting the predominant mould and vision they say in what made a boy / a man.

Discussion

The reason why I did not share this incident or threat, and did not even think to report it to the police when I think about it in retrospect lies with the shame I felt. I felt if I shared it at home then they would ask questions about my sexuality and I did not know how I would answer if they did. Associated with this is then is the added risk of rejection and violation from a very homophobic society and the threat of destabilising the relative peace I was able to have at home. Sharing the incident would have meant a further risk of victimisation should my family not have liked the idea of me being 'gay'. This is why Couturier (2012) notes many men are scared to report sexual assault, for there is persisting stigma against homosexuality. Couturier (2012) continues that heteronormativity means that homophobia ends up intensified to the extent that male victims of rape are not only made invisible, but also that should they share, they are also concurrently persecuted for being 'gay' (p. 8).

In South Africa we have the violent hate crime called corrective/curative rape, occurring primarily against black lesbian women (Anguita, 2012; Hunter-Gault, 2012). Corrective/curative rape is the distorted act of sexual violence where men rape and target primarily lesbian women in order to “cure” or change the women into heterosexuality through rape (Saunders, 2012). Lesbian women, particularly if they are butch, as Swarr (2012) has observed are targeted for such sexual violence because they deviate from compulsory heterosexuality and are seen to be a threat to heterosexuality and normative sexual norms. Moreover, it not just the way in which lesbian women threaten the heteronormative order that makes them particularly vulnerable, but also the economically marginal position black lesbian women occupy in South African society. Scholars have therefore called for a queer politik that takes seriously into account the ways gender, class, sexual orientation, abilities and religious expression amongst others intersect with homophobia (McGlotten and Davis 2012). What is often ignored is that gay men and transgender men are also in South Africa raped primarily because of their sexuality and gender identity.

In the past years there have been greater calls to bring the challenges transgender men face (including rape) to the fore (Currier 2015), and yet these are still barely sufficient. Matebeni (2012) documents for example, how transgender men experience abuse not only from wider society, but also within lesbian circles where the experiences of transgender men are excluded. Louw (2014) reports that most ‘men, thanks to social stigmas, are ashamed to report sexual hate crimes – but they are almost as common as they are against lesbians’. Making sense of male rape however seems a little more complicated although Louw (2014) notes that ‘the dynamics are different when people born [biologically] male are attacked, but one thing remains constant: the violent action of supposedly “teaching” those who deviate from society’s patriarchal norm a lesson.’ So, when the guy makes the linkage to me appearing like a ‘gay’, and when he made the assertion that he would rape me, he was asserting something being wrong with me, and the rape would be a punitive to bring me into his idealised ideas about how a boy/man is supposed to be. To him, there was something wrong with me that needed violent correction and this at the time confused and terrified me greatly. I felt confused, embarrassed but also exposed and vulnerable.

The history of ‘correcting’ non-heterosexual identities in South Africa is not

just restricted to sexual violence. In the apartheid era there were many “corrective measures” designed to “cure” homosexuals in the country. McGreal (2000) reports that thousands of gays were put through electronic therapy, hormone treatments as well as chemical castration in the 1970’s and the 1980’s in the period where national service was obligatory for white men, and homosexuality was deemed to a crime. Kaplan (2004, p. 1416) continues that:

The rationale for giving homosexuals reassignment surgery, in complete ignorance of the scientific literature on transsexualism, can only be described as repulsive. It was based on simplistic belief that male homosexuals were sissies, female homosexuals were tomboys, and surgery would end their preference for the same-sex by allowing them to fulfil their projected role in the opposite sex. The only conclusion that can be reached is that the psychiatrists involved were not only woefully and balefully ignorant but functioned as an extension of the military ethos.

Although South Africa in the post-apartheid era has made a lot of headway in the inclusion of sexual and gender minorities, particularly as one of the few countries in the world where “gay marriage” is legal is often perceived to be a safe haven. Yet in this section, and through my own narrative, I have shown that this is not so. There are still prevailing norms in society, specifically in this context, on how one is supposed to perform masculinity and failure to adhere still is subject to “correction” and social sanctions that can, and does include sexual assault and rape. This is why it important to look beyond just the legalisation of “gay marriage”, as Scott (2013) has cautioned, but into the social processes that allow some people to live out their identities fully, while others are punished and not acknowledged.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that the rape of primary gay and transgender men in South Africa is used as a stopping device to discipline and punish men who do not conform to valued and idealised ideas of normative manhood and masculinity. The title of this paper is taken from Louw’s (2014) report. In the report, which tells the story of a transgender man who was sexually and violently assaulted by other

men, the informant shares that a group of three men ambushed his apartment. The informant continues, “they thought I was a woman, and when they found out that I was a man, that’s when they became even more violent”, shares (Louw 2014). In this paper, I argued that such incidence is not coincidental, but rather forms part of the violence and aggression levelled against men who do not meet the social requirements of being a ‘man’.

My opening quote by Couturier (2012: 1) reminds us that such violences are direct struggles for the supremacy of certain sexual identities, over others. And as hooks (2004) remarked, men who are seen to be soft, are subject to attack. I argued that ignoring men who are also harmed and exist outside hegemonic masculinities harms and does a lot of damage. It is important that we also look at the ways in which men harm other men particularly when it comes to sexual assault. It is important that we go beyond scandalised narratives of war, conflict societies and prisons and look critically into everyday practices of sexual violence and assault by men, against other men.

I have argued here, because of the sensitivities around the sexual assault of men by other men and the difficulties in people sharing individual narratives, the methodology of autoethnography has much usefulness in helping us make sense of individual experiences and how they relate to larger collective challenges, particularly around sexual trauma and sexual assault.

I did a lot of thinking in the process of writing this narrative, and faced a lot of doubts internally – ‘do I really want to share this?’, ‘Have I shared too much?’, ‘What will people think when they read?’, ‘What goes up on the internet stays forever’, ‘Is my story worth a whole article?’, ‘Am I being self-indulgent?’ and many other thoughts as I reflected on this experience. I found the works of bell hooks (1999), and how she has used autobiography ‘not to forget the past but to break its hold’ (p. 80) extremely useful both as a researching writer, and as form of personal enrichment encouraging the worthiness of my truth being told. In a public talk in late 2015 at the university currently known as Rhodes, South African sociologist, Babalwa Magoqwana talked about becoming ‘abantu abapheleleyo’, becoming whole human beings. In writing this narrative, my hope is not only that it will contribute to knowledge on understanding of masculinities and sexual violence against men, but as Magoqwana shared, that it will contribute to knowledge that can help men find wholeness outside violence, misogyny and homophobia.

Yet, I also am reflective of that I am able to share my narrative because of various privileges that I have in society (including higher education, access to research resources, amongst others), and this in the context of South Africa is not available to many young boys and men who occupy marginal positions because of their chosen genders and sexualities. There have also been other efforts though the Inkanyiso² Project started by Zanele Muholi and others to give platform to primarily transgender and lesbian women who would generally not have the opportunity, to write their own narratives, and publish them on the site, I recognise that the glass is still half-full.

Writing this autoethnography, as cliché as it may sound, has been cathartic for me – and allowed me to tell the story, in my own words, interpretation and terms. It also most importantly showed me, that I was ready to be present, and that I am not defined, and refuse to be defined by what happened – and this recognition *indenza ndizive ndiphelele*, to feel whole.

Endnotes

¹ ‘Rhodes University’ in Rhini, in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa is currently known as ‘the university currently known as Rhodes’ (UCKAR) reflecting ongoing conversations about changing the name of the university, from ‘Rhodes’ which glorifies Cecil John Rhodes, a well-documented mass murderer and colonialist, to a name more reflective of the values espoused in the constitution of South Africa including dignity.

² <http://www.inkanyiso.org>

References

- Anderson, Jon. 2012. “Reflective Journals as a Tool for Auto-Ethnographic Learning: A Case Study of Student Experiences with Industrialised Sustainability.” *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 36(4): 613–623.
- Anguita, Luis A. 2012. “Tackling corrective rape in South Africa: the engagement between the LGBT CSOs and the NHRIs (CGE and SAHRC) and its role.” *International Journal of Human Rights* 16(3): 489–516.
- Blinne, Kristen C. 2012. “Auto(erotic)ethnography.” *Sexualities* 15(8): 953–977.
- Chapleau, Kristine M., Oswald, D.L., and Russell, B.L. 2008. “Male Rape Myths: The Role of Gender, Violence, and Sexism.” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 23(5): 600–615.

- Claassens, Juliana L, and Gouws, Amanda. 2014. "From Esther to Kwezi." *International Journal of Public Theology* 8(4): 471–487.
- Cohen, Erik. 2012. "Flooded: An Auto-Ethnography of the 2011 Bangkok Flood." *Australian Journal of South East Asian Studies* 5(2): 316–334.
- Collins, Patricia H. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Collins-Buthelezi, Victoria, and Higginbotham, Derrick. 2015. "Imagining Intersections: Sexuality, Gender, Law, and the Politics of Solidarities." In Higginbotham, D., and Collins-Buthelezi, V (eds). 2015. *Contested Intimacies: Sexuality, Gender and the Law in Africa*. Cape Town: Siba Ink.
- Connell, R.W. 2000. "Understanding men: gender sociology and the new international research on men." Clark lecture, Department of Sociology, University of Kansas, 19 September 2000.
- Connell, Raewyn W., and Messerschmidt, James W. 2005. "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." *Gender and Society* 19(6): 829–859.
- Couturier, Don. 2012. "The Rape of Men: Eschewing Myths of Sexual Violence in War." *On Politics* 6(2): 1–14.
- Crawley, Ashon T. 2012. "Can You Be Black and Work Here? Social Justice Activist Organising and Black Aurality." In McGlotten, Shaka, and Davis, Dana-Ain. 2012. *Black Genders and Sexualities*. England: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1993. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43: 1241–1299.
- Currier, Ashley. 2015. "Transgender Invisibility in Namibian and South African LGBT Organising." *Feminist Formations* 27(1): 91–117.
- Davies, Michelle, and Rogers, Paul. 2006. "Perceptions of male victims in depicted sexual assaults: A review of the literature." *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* 11: 367–377.
- Davis, Rebecca. 2015. "How rape became South Africa's enduring nightmare." *The Guardian* 29 September. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/29/south-africa-rape-nightmare-crime-stats> (accessed 30 September 2015).
- Denshire, Sally. 2014. "On auto-ethnography." *Current Sociology* 62(6): 831–850.
- Dlakavu, Simamkele. 2016. "Why I support the Rhodes rape list." *City Press* 24 April. Available: <http://city-press.news24.com/Voices/why-i-support-the-rhodes-rape->

- [list-20160424](#) (accessed: 30 May 2016).
- du Toit, Louise. 2014. "Shifting Meanings of Postconflict Sexual Violence in South Africa." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 40(1): 101–123.
- Ellis, Carolyn S., and Bochner, Arthur. 2000. "Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject." In Denzin, N.K., Lincoln, Y.S (eds). *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. University of South Florida: Sage.
- Ellis, Carolyn., Adams, Tony E, and Bochner, Arthur P. 2011. "Autoethnography: An Overview." *Social Research* 12(1).
- Francis, Dennis, and Msibi, Thabo. 2011. "Teaching About Heterosexism: Challenging Homophobia in South Africa." *Journal of LGBT Youth* 8(2): 157–173.
- French, Bryana H., Tilghman, Jasmine D., and Malebranche, Dominique A. 2015. "Sexual Coercion Context and Psychosocial Correlates Among Diverse Males." *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 16(1): 42–53.
- Gardiner, Judith K. 2004. "Men, Masculinities and Feminist Theory." In Kimmel, S.M., Hearn, J., and Connell, R.W (eds). 2004. *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*. London: SAGE.
- Gear, Sasha. 2007. "Behind The Bars of Masculinity: Male Rape and Homophobia in and about South African Men's Prisons." *Sexualities* 10(2): 209–227.
- Gentry, Caron E. 2004. "Has Anything Changes: Sexual Violence in South Africa." Conference paper presented at International Studies Association. 2004 Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada. P1–11.
- Gibson, Jade N. 2013. "Visual ethnographies of displacement and violence: land(s)scapes in artists' works at Thupelo Artists' Workshop, Wellington, South Africa, 2012." *Critical Arts: A South-North Journal of Cultural and Media Studies* 27(5): 531–552.
- Gilbourne, David., Jones, Robyn., and Jordon, Spencer. 2014. "Applied utility and the auto-ethnographic short story: persuasions for, and illustrations of, writing critical social science." *Sport, Education and Society* 19(1): 80–92
- Giordano, Sara. 2014. "Scientific Reforms, Feminist Interventions, and the Politics of Knowing: An Auto-ethnography of a Feminist Neuroscientist." *Hypatia* 29(4): 755–773.
- Ghanotakis, Elena., Bruins, Marianne., Peacock, Dean., Redpath, Jean., and Swart, Raoul. 2007. "Stop Prison Rape in South Africa." *Agenda* 1(3): 68–80.
- Gqola, P. 2015. *Rape: A South African Nightmare*. Johannesburg: MFBooks Joburg

- Hasselberg, Ines. "“Illegal” Traveller: An auto-ethnography of borders." *Etnográfica: Revista do Centro de Estudos de Antropologia Social* 17(1): 207–209.
- Holmes, William C., & Slap, Gail B. 1998. "Sexual Abuse of Boys: Definition, Prevalence, Correlates, Sequelae, and Management." *JAMA*, 280(21): 1855–1862.
- hooks, bell. 1982. *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. London: Pluto Press.
- hooks, bell. 1990. *Yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- hooks, bell. 1999. *Remembered rapture: the writer at work*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- hooks, bell. 2001. *Salvation: Black People and Love*. New York: Perennial.
- hooks, bell. 2004. *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Hunter-Gault, Charlayne. 2012. "Violated Hopes." *New Yorker* 28 May.
- Javiad, Aliraza. 2014. "Feminism, masculinity and male rape: bringing male rape 'out of the closet'." *Journal of Gender Studies* 1–11.
- Jewkes, Rachel, and Abrahams, Naeema. 2002. "The epidemiology of rape and sexual coercion in South Africa: an overview." *Social Science and Medicine* 55 (7): 1231–44.
- Kaplan, Robert M. 2004. "Treatment of homosexuality during apartheid: more investigation is needed into the shameful way homosexuality was treated." *British Medical Journal* 329(7480): 1415–1416.
- Kapp, C. 2006. "Rape on trial in South Africa." *The Lancet* 367(9512): 718–719.
- Kempny, Marta. 2012. "Rethinking Native Anthropology: Migration and Auto-Ethnography in the Post-Accession Europe." *International Review of Social Research* 2(2): 39–52.
- Kottler, Amanda, and Long, Carol. 1997. "Discourses, videos and talk about sexual violence: A multi-disciplinary enterprise." *South African Journal of Psychology* 27(2): 64–76.
- Lancaster, L., Gould, C., Vetten, L., and Sigsworth, R. 2015. "FACTSHEET: South Africa's 2014/15 assault and sexual crime statistics." *Africa Check*, Institute for Security Studies: Pretoria. Available: <https://africacheck.org/factsheets/factsheet-south-africas-201415-assault-and-sexual-crime-statistics/> (accessed: 28 May 2016)
- Larsen, Jonas. 2014. "(Auto)Ethnography and cycling." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 17(1): 59–71.
- Louw, Angelo. 2014. Men are also 'corrective rape' victims. *Mail and Guardian* 11 April.

- Retrieved from: <http://mg.co.za/article/2014-04-11-men-are-also-corrective-rape-victims> (accessed 30 September 2015).
- Mardorossian, Carine M. 2011. "Rape and the Violence of Representation in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*." *Research in African Literatures* 42(4): 72–83.
- Matebeni, Zethu. 2012. "Feminising Lesbians, De-Gendering Transgender Men: A Model for Building Lesbian Feminist Thinkers and Leaders in Africa?" In McGlotten, S., & Davis, A-A. 2012. *Black Genders and Sexualities*. England: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McGreal, Chris. 2000. "Gays tell of mutilation by apartheid army." *The Guardian*. 29 July Retrieved at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/jul/29/chris-mcgreal> (accessed: 22 September 2015).
- Mellstrom, U. 2003. *Masculinity, Power and Technology: A Malaysian Ethnography*. Aldershot: Ashgate
- Merz, Theo. 2014. "Men and boys get raped too." *The Telegraph* 24 February. Retrieved from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/thinking-man/10657485/Men-and-boys-get-raped-too.html> (accessed 18 September 2015).
- Mkhize, Nomalanga. 2005. "Am I Just a white-washed black woman? What transformation means to a privileged young black woman." *Agenda*, 19(65): 116–122.
- Moffett, Helen. 2006. "'These Women, They Force Us to Rape Them': Rape as Narrative of Social Control in Post-Apartheid South Africa." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 32(1): 129–144.
- Moolman, Benita. 2015. "Carceral Dis/Continuities: Masculinities, Male Same-Sex Desire, Discipline, and Rape in South African Prisons." *Gender and Behaviour* 13(2): 6742–6752.
- Morrell, Robert. 1998. Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and Gender in Southern African Studies. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24(4): 605–630.
- Morrell, Robert., Jewkes, Rachel., and Lindegger, Graham. 2012. "Hegemonic Masculinity/Masculinities in South Africa: Culture, Power, and Gender Politics." *Men and Masculinities* 15(1): 11–30.
- Muehlenhard, Charlene L, and Cook, Stephen W. 1988. "Men's Self-Reports of Unwanted Sexual Activity." *The Journal of Sex Research*. 24: 58–72.
- Ndashe, Sibongile. 2004. "The Duty to Protect Women from Sexual Violence in South Africa." *Feminist Legal Studies* 12(2): 213–221.
- O'Connor, Stephen J. 2011. "Context is everything: the role of auto-ethnography, reflexivity and self-critique in establishing the credibility of qualitative research find-

- ings." *European Journal of Cancer Care* 20(4): 421–423.
- Ott, Brian L. 2007. "Television as Lover, Part II: Doing Auto[Erotic]Ethnography." *Cultural Studies*. 7(3): 294–307.
- Ott, Brian L. 2007a. "Television as Lover, Part I: Writing Dirty Theory." *Cultural Studies/Critical Methodologies* 7(1): 26–47.
- Petersen, Inge., Bhana, Arvin., and McKay, Mary. 2005. "Sexual violence and youth in South Africa: The need for community-based prevention interventions." *Child Abuse and Neglect* 29(11): 1233–12–48.
- Philaretou, Andreas G., and Allen, Katherine R. 2006. "Researching Sensitive Topics through Autoethnographic Means." *The Journal of Men's Studies* 14(1): 65–78.
- Pierterse, Marius. 2014. "May Real Men Cry in Court? Masculinity, Equality and the South African Constitutional Court." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 40(2): 361–379.
- Posel, Deborah. 2005. The scandal of manhood: 'baby rape' and the politicisation of sexual violence in post-apartheid South Africa. *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 7(3): 239–252.
- Praeg, Leonhard and Baillie, Mike. 2011. "Sexual Violence: Mythology, Infant Rape and the Limits of the Political." *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies* 38(2): 257–274.
- Ratele, Kopano, Shefer, Tamara., Strebel, Anna., and Fouten, Elron. 2010. "'We Do Not Cook, We Only Assist Them': Constructions of Hegemonic Masculinity Through Gendered Activity." *Journal of Psychology in Africa* 20(4): 557–568.
- Ratele, Kopano. 2014. "Hegemonic African Masculinities and Men's Heterosexual Lives: Some Uses for Homophobia." *African Studies Review* 57(2): 115–130.
- Ratele, Kopano. 2015. "Working through resistance in engaging boys and men towards gender equality and progressive masculinities." *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 17(2): 144–158.
- Reitan, Ruth H. 2015. "Paradoxical Peace: A Scholar-activist's Auto-ethnography on religious Pacifism and Anti-capitalism." *Globalizations* 12(1): 25–42.
- Reproductive Health Matters. 2000. "Rape in South Africa, Uganda and Zambia." *Reproductive Health Matters* 8(16): 180.
- Rickard, A. 2014. "'A Not-so-simple Story from My Life': Using Auto-ethnography and Creative Writing to Re-frame the Heteronormative Narratives of School life." *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education* 21(4): 348–358.
- Roberts-Smith, Jennifer. 2012. "Modeling Meaning-Making in Introductory Theatre

- Studies: Auto-Ethnography as Explicit Instruction." *Theatre Topics* 22(1): 73–87.
- Ron and Hugo. 2013. Talking about male rape: two narratives. *Agenda* 27(1): 84–89.
- Run, Peter. 2012. 'Out of place'? An auto-ethnography of refuge and post-colonial exile. *African Identities* 10(4): 381–390.
- Saunders, T.L. 2012. "GROUPO OREMI: Black Lesbians and the struggle for safe space in Havana." In McGlotten, S., & Davis, A-A. 2012. *Black Genders and Sexualities*. Palgrave England: Macmillan
- Scott, Jessica. 2013. "The Distance between Death and Marriage: Citizenship, Violence and same-sex marriage in South Africa." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 15(4): 534–551
- Scott, Joy D. 2014. "Memoir as a form of auto-ethnographic research for exploring the practice of transnational higher education in China." *Higher Education Research and Development* 33(4): 757–768.
- Siddique, Salma. 2011. "Being in-between: The relevance of ethnography and auto-ethnography for psychotherapy research." *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research* 11(4): 310–316.
- Shefer, Tamara, Kruger, Lou-Marie, and Schepers, Yeshe. 2015. "Masculinity, sexuality and vulnerability in 'working' with young men in South African contexts: 'you feel like a fool and an idiot... a loser'." *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 17(2): 96–111.
- Smuts, Letitia. 2001. "Coming out as Lesbian in Johannesburg, South Africa: considering intersecting identities and social spaces." *South African Review of Sociology* 42(3): 23–40.
- Stauffer, Carolyn S. 2015. "The Sexual Politics of Gender-based Violence in South Africa: Linking Public and Private Worlds." *Journal for the Sociological Integration of Religion and Society* 5(1): 1–16.
- Struckman-Johnson, Cindy. 1988. "Forced Sex on Dates: It Happens to Men, Too." *The Journal of Sex Research* 24: 234–241.
- Storr, Will. 2011. The rape of men: the darkest secret of war. *The Guardian* 17 July. Retrieved from: <http://theguardian.com/society/2011/jul/17/the-rape-of-men> (accessed: 18 August 2015).
- Suttner, Raymond, 2005. "Masculinities in the African National Congress-led liberation movement: The underground period." *Kleio* 37(1): 71–106.
- Swarr, Amanda M. 2012. "Paradoxes of Butchness: Lesbian Masculinities and Sexual Violence in Contemporary South Africa." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and*

- Society* 37(4): 962–988.
- Thomas, K., Masinjila, M., and Bere, E. 2013. “Political transition and sexual and gender-based violence in South Africa, Kenya, and Zimbabwe: a comparative analysis.” *Gender and Development* 21(3): 519–532.
- Tomaselli, Keyan G. 2013. “Visualising Different Kinds of Writing: Auto-ethnography, Social Science.” *Visual Anthropology*. 26(2): 165–180
- Trivelli, Elena. 2014. “Depression, performativity and the conflicted body: An auto-ethnography of self-medication.” *Subjectivity: International Journal of Critical Psychology* 7(2): 151–170.
- Turchik, J.A. 2012. “Sexual Victimization Among Male College Students: Assault Severity, Sexual Functioning, and Health Risk Behaviours.” *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 13(3): 243–255.
- Vetten, Lisa. 2014. “Rape and other forms of sexual violence in South Africa.” Institute for Security Studies. Policy Brief 72 Retrieved from: <https://www.issafrica.org/uploads/PolBrief72.pdf> (accessed 30 September 2015).
- Walker, Jayne, Archer, John, and Davies, Michelle. 2005. “Effects of Rape on Men: A Descriptive Analysis.” *Archives of Sexual Behaviour* 34(1): 69–80.
- Wood, Kate, Lambert, Helen, and Jewkes, Rachel. 2007. ““Showing Roughness in a Beautiful Way”: Talk about Love, Coercion, and Rape in South African Youth Culture.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 21(3): 277–300.



Introducing perpetrator counseling in Western Balkan countries: The challenge of gender-transformative action in a patriarchal society

Maja Loncarevic and Roland Reisewitz

ABSTRACT: In cooperation with two locally based NGO initiatives in the strongly patriarchal contexts of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania, professional psychosocial counseling of perpetrators has been introduced. Through targeted skills development with professionals from psychosocial working fields and opening of two men's counseling services, a foundation has been laid for future system-integrated perpetrator treatment programs. Key lessons learned address the necessary basic prerequisites for successful perpetrator counseling. Experience shows that standardized training programs and proceedings for psychosocial perpetrator counseling are not sufficient to promote sustainable changes in the gender-related value and norm system of perpetrators of violence. For the counselors themselves, a personal reflection of their own experiences and socialization with gender, masculinity and violence is an important gender-transformative learning process that forms an important basis for empathic, competent and sustainable anti-violence counseling of perpetrators. The attentive consideration of intercultural dynamics combined with a clear human rights based approach are further relevant factors contributing to successful counseling.

KEYWORDS: Gender-based violence, domestic violence perpetrators, psychosocial treatment, counseling skills, gender-transformative learning



*If we want to build a ship, we must know how to put it together.
We also need to learn how to navigate it, but we also have to deal
with our own fears, resistances, insecurities and sometimes our
own overestimation before we are ready to start the journey.*
– A male counselor in Albania on the process of learning and developing perpetrator counseling work

This paper deals with the challenges of introducing professional and context-sensitive perpetrator¹ counseling services in a region that is marked by a past and present with high rates of violence and a strong patriarchal culture. It explains the process and learning in the context of training male professionals to counsel domestic violence perpetrators and set up men's counseling services in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania. It shows the key elements required for effective, gender-transformative work with men who use violence in a context that until now has not witnessed any men-focused approaches, apart from judicial sanctioning. A short description of the working contexts of the two countries helps to set the framework for this work. In the second section, the conceptual framework for perpetrator counseling and gender-transformative work is explained and grounded in theory around gender, men and development. The third section describes and analyzes the experiences of counselors in the two countries and leads to conclusions that highlight the relevance of applying a gender-transformative lens to perpetrator counseling work in a systematic, but at the same time contextualized and self-reflective, manner.

The contexts of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania: patriarchy, post-conflict and transition

Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania are both countries in South Eastern Europe with a deep rooted patriarchal tradition. Male dominance over women is enshrined in the family and in clan systems from birth. Women are perceived as the property of the family, first in their families of origin, and later in the families of their husband.² Both countries have gone through a period of communism that significantly impacted them. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, as part of former Yugoslavia, the communist system was established after World War II under the Tito regime. In Albania, un-

der the dictatorship of Enver Hodza, communism completely isolated the country from the outer world from 1944 to 1990. The fall of communism only five years after the death of Enver Hodza in 1985 turned Albania into a young democracy that is still marked by party thinking, nepotism and dominant power structures along political lines. The brutal war from 1992–1995 in Bosnia-Herzegovina that accompanied the breakup of Yugoslavia put an end to the communist phase. The war was ended through the Dayton agreement in 1995, when a new country with a tripartite state structure and a divided territory came into existence. Both countries are still marked by this system change as well as different crises. Political disruption, economic hardship, rising poverty and high internal and external migration rates continue to destabilize community cohesion. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the effects of the war can still be felt today. Men as well as women have experienced heavy violence during the war, but only a few of them can share their stories with their loved ones. A culture of silence has been established and keeps traumatization and its effects at a high level. Furthermore, many men have been unable to regain their position as breadwinners and heads of household, and suffer from disrupted identities and a questioning of their masculinity. In Albania, the vacuum that remained after the fall of the communist system had a reinforcing effect on traditional patriarchal values. In combination with high unemployment rates but persisting pressure on their roles as heads of households and family representatives, men tend to over-articulate their dominance and stereotypical masculine behavior over women.

Both countries have very high rates of domestic violence, with some of the incidents even resulting in the death of the victim.³ While a substantial legal basis for protection of families from violence has been created and put into force in the last ten years, implementation is still lagging behind and is mainly in the hands of NGO-initiatives, without any government funding. A dozen shelters and counseling centers for victims of domestic violence have been built by dedicated women's organizations, and important professional capacities in psychosocial counseling, psychotherapeutic work, and legal aid among other interventions, have been developed in this framework. It was only in 2009 that the leading organizations addressing gender-based violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania began to reflect on the necessity of addressing the root causes of the violence in many families, by starting to work with the violent men.

Basic assumptions about perpetrator counseling work

Perpetrator programs are important elements of an integrated and comprehensive approach to preventing and combating violence against women, which, in turn, should be part of a comprehensive national policy or strategy. Since the 1980s, work with perpetrators that is rooted in women's safety and domestic violence prevention has increasingly become recognized as a key element of domestic violence support services (Hester & Lilley, 2014).

Perpetrator programs aim at holding men accountable for having used violence and for ending their use of violence while also believing in their potential to change. As summarized by Taylor & Barker (2013, p. 5), "Perpetrator programs are characterized by three common features: 1) a theoretical orientation (i.e. what they believe ends men's use of violence); 2) the voluntary or mandatory nature of men's participation (i.e. the extent of the justice system's role); and 3) the degree of coordination with related health sector services, the criminal justice system, and the community, referred to as coordinated community response (CCR)". Cognitive-behavioral, psychotherapeutic, and gender-based approaches are the most common approaches and theories used and combined in programs for violence perpetrators. Violence is seen as a learned behavior that can be unlearned. Most men who have used violence do not show evidence of psychological or personality disorders, and most programs require or encourage men to accept responsibility for past use of violence. The majority of interventions are also framed within a gender analysis of the belief system in which men feel entitled to control women in a relationship. In leading perpetrators to accept responsibility for their violence, it is crucial for perpetrator programs to focus on overcoming belief systems that tolerate, justify or outright condone violence against women (Hester and Lilley, 2014).

The broad program review conducted by Taylor & Barker reveals that programs for men who use violence vary greatly in the numbers of men they reach. "In North America and Europe, some programs admit several hundred men each year, whereas others may be run by a private psychologist, for instance, who hold one small group per year. Furthermore, programs throughout the world show differences in terms of duration, recruitment and attrition mechanisms (volunteer or court referrals and monitoring), the role of justice systems, and contact with

the partner.” (Taylor & Barker, 2013, p. 7). Also recruitment mechanisms can vary from mandated referrals to voluntary referrals that rely more on collaboration with social services and some start as voluntary programs and are later linked to the justice system. Evaluations show a need for follow-up after program completion to monitor men’s progress beyond treatment, while the provision of such follow-up has proven to be a common challenge (Taylor & Barker, 2013; Texeira & Maia, 2011).

Evidence has affirmed that the effectiveness of perpetrator programs depends on the program’s degree of integration among complementary services and support systems (Hester & Lilley, 2014; Taylor & Barker, 2013). It is suggested that these services should work in tandem through a coordinated community response. This offers multiple pathways for men to enter programs by broadening referral, support and accountability mechanisms.

A gender-transformative approach to address violence from men’s side

Gender-transformative approaches have been identified as an essential measure for a more equal distribution of power in gender relations and as a key to reduced gender-based violence (Greene & Levack, 2010). This entails introducing alternative forms of masculinity and redefining manhood in a way that new perceptions about relationships, intimacy, women, shared responsibility and happiness can result. It is also important to examine how gender is tied to societal tolerance of violence and norms around masculinity, and how a man’s lack of attainment of social power in other spheres (work, community, etc.) influences his social entitlement and use (or non-use) of violence with an intimate partner (Taylor & Barker, 2013).

Counseling work with perpetrators of violence addresses men who are used to expressing their feelings of powerlessness and helplessness by using violence, and who consider their violent behavior legitimate. It addresses men who have internalized the dominant values and norms as a reflection of their cultural and societal embeddedness. Masculinity is marked by historical and biological influences and by the specific situations within which men find themselves.⁴

Growing social inequalities in the globalized world affect men’s and women’s lives in manifold ways, and in spite of very different experiences of fundamental

changes in livelihoods, both sexes experience serious disempowerment at various levels. “Although in the vast majority of countries, women continue to bear a disproportionate share of material, social, and civil disadvantage, trends suggest that an increasing number of men, especially among the young and poor, are subject to mounting vulnerability and marginalization” (Chant and Gutmann, 2000, p. 1). If one draws a more differentiated picture of men’s lived experiences, it becomes visible and clear that patriarchy as well as globalization disadvantage men as well (Calkin, 2013). These vulnerabilities and levels of marginalization very often lead to increased dominant behavior towards women, and violent behavior as an expression of power and authority.

Working with perpetrators means not only focusing on their lived masculinity expressed through power and force, but also paying attention to their own vulnerabilities and sense of marginalization as men in hegemonic patriarchal systems. In so doing, it is important to recognize the interlinkages between dominant masculine norms, experienced vulnerability, and violent behavior. Working with perpetrators requires carefully understanding their living environment, their experiences, and their reality. It includes talking about their vulnerabilities and their own needs, about their fears, resistances, insecurities and over-estimations. The counseling work supports the intention and the process of change, by supporting men to deal with their own perceptions, by addressing emotions, and finally through in-depth work on self-awareness and responsibility. This path is very individual, and needs to be understood and recognized as a delicate and also vulnerable advancement.

If counseling work enters specific cultural and societal contexts, practitioners must be aware of the image of masculinity that men have learned through socialization. Men carry their convictions about right and wrong deeply rooted inside them. During counseling, they are offered the possibility to become aware of the inequalities between women and men, but also about the inequalities and vulnerabilities they experience as a man in a society that imposes its own rules and expectations.

In this sense, gender-transformative means:

- to address men not only through their dominant expression of masculinity, but also through their own vulnerabilities and needs;
- to make them recognize and understand the oppressive effects of gender inequalities on women, but also on themselves;
- to help them understand that they must not conform to dominant forms of

masculinity, because it is about themselves, and not the others;

- to draw on men's responsibilities from a human rights based perspective and help them define spaces for change;
- to empower men to take action at an individual but also societal level and accompany them in this process.

This is not only valid for clients, but equally for those who offer counseling and perpetrator treatment programs. Also these men are dealing with their perceptions of being a man and of masculinity. This aspect is important and has been a guiding element in the work and experiences made in the Western Balkan region during the setting up of first perpetrator treatment services.

First grounds for developing work with perpetrators in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania

In Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania, development of services and treatment programs for perpetrators was initiated in the frame of IAMANEH Switzerland's Western Balkan program, building on a decade old process of developing and implementing mostly NGO-led services for victims' protection. The experience that women-only focused interventions were insufficient to address the root causes and to reduce domestic violence in a sustainable manner prompted the recognition to start working with men and boys. IAMANEH Switzerland is a specialized Swiss NGO working in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights in Western Africa and the Western Balkan region. Working jointly with local women's organizations, they identified additional intervention mechanisms on the side of the perpetrators as being indispensable for the long term protection of women and children enduring violence and exploitation. In 2008, they started the pioneer work of introducing perpetrator counseling in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania. The newly created services for perpetrators are based on well-grounded assessments. They adopt an integrated approach that also incorporates governmental and non-governmental actors such as police, social and health system, the judiciary.⁵ The recently adopted laws for protection from domestic violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Albania build an important reference frame.⁶

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, a standardized training program based on a Dutch model with a group treatment approach⁷ has provided 25 professionals from governmental and non-governmental services with specialized skills for working with

perpetrators. The training lasted six months and comprised six modules of three days each. In a second, partially parallel step, four trained male professionals took the initiative to establish a Men's Centre in 2010 under the umbrella of the local NGO Buducnost in Modrica (Republika Sprska), which has been the main provider in victim's protection in this region for the last ten years. The first aim was to counsel perpetrators of violence who come voluntarily, however counseling is also provided to mandated clients referred by the justice system.

In Albania, a three-year training process for future counselors for perpetrators started in 2012 with a group of twelve male professionals who had a background in psychology or social work. The training consisted of six, three-day training modules, and four in-between coaching days. The focus is on individual perpetrator counseling work based on a cognitive-behavioral approach that places the responsibility for dealing with one's own thinking and acting in central focus. The strategies of legitimization and minimization of violence are made visible. Alternative solutions are worked out on the basis of a personal intention building for changing one's behavior, and its goals include the development of empathy and responsible thinking.

The first Men's Counseling Office in Tirana opened in 2013 under the leadership of the Counseling Line for Abused Women and Girls. It was the first center to offer counseling services and protection for victims of domestic violence in the country. A second men's counseling office was later opened in 2014 in the north of the country by the male sub-branch of Woman to Woman, a formerly women's NGO offering domestic violence prevention and protection services in the rural northern parts of Albania. Referral rates in the first three years for both areas were still low (from zero to three per month), but grew slowly after intense awareness raising work in public services. Intense lobbying with the justice system is ongoing in order to enforce law implementation and systematize the referral of perpetrators to the newly established specialized counseling services.

From a standardized treatment program to deep relational work: processes and experiences in Bosnia-Herzegovina

The process of setting up the first Men's Centre in Bosnia was motivated by the termination of a six month standardized training cycle for perpetrator treatment. Four

young social workers who finished the training took the initiative to set up a first counseling service for men and youngsters with violence problems in their community. As a starting point, they conducted a survey of the male population of Modrica in order to find out more about beliefs and attitudes of men with regard to violence, about the situation of men themselves and their problem solving behavior. The physical presence of the male counsellors and some mobilized volunteers in the streets of Modrica created high visibility and attention for the upcoming new center.

Once the Men's Center opened, the young team was immediately confronted with the non-application of the law that guides sentenced perpetrators of domestic violence directly to psychosocial treatment. It was difficult to form perpetrator treatment groups and men showed high levels of resistance in coming to the center for perpetrator counseling of their free will.⁸

Reflecting on the survey results, and following the felt needs for low level entry points and opportunities for trust building at the center, the team started enlarging the service offer.⁹ The Men's Center was turned into a men's place and meeting point where men could meet and drink coffee together, where they could consult the internet and read newspapers, and where educational workshops and study groups were offered along topics that were of interest to men and their living situation. The more the team became involved with the men frequenting the center, more new activities were developed, responding to the problems and vulnerabilities of the men that were encountered. The center's service provision was further expanded with resource-oriented handicraft workshops and outdoor anti-stress activities, as well as offers of individual counseling in social, legal and psychological aspects.

Dealing with men on an interpersonal, individual level made the team start dealing with the manifold problems and concerns of these men. Together they started a process of questioning and reflecting on the existing values and norms in their society (for example, regarding gender, masculinity, authority and obedience). This was prompted by questions such as whether it is acceptable to beat a child, or whether men should be allowed to show their frustrations in front of others. A process of mutual understanding and learning between counselors and clients began. While at first they were trained professionals offering a standardized treatment program, they later became involved counselors who entered into deeper relational work with their clients.

The learning process has only started. A recent evaluation has confirmed the

important development process of the center, but also identified some gaps that require attention. Getting deeply involved with men at the center and following their broad needs as vulnerable men in a war-torn society opens access to deeper understanding of masculinity. It also provides the first grounds for questioning existing values and norms, and for engaging in gender-transformative action. However, the broad offer of services around the manifold needs of the clients easily distracts the attention from the issue of violence and the direct addressing of, and working on, individual crisis situations. For this to be possible, the counselors themselves need to work on and understand their own mechanisms of dealing with crises and to find a language to describe and talk about these experiences. Such a process needs time and tight follow up; first on the level of training and skills development of the counselors themselves, and later on the level of anti-violence counseling work with men who use violence.

Working on oneself as a prerequisite for working with other men: processes and experiences in Albania

In Albania, the training of future counselors for perpetrators has been a three-year process with a group of twelve men who were interested in the topic of violence counseling. All of them had a university degree in psychology or social work and also some work experience in these fields. Many of them were either unemployed or underemployed. Their primary motivation for the training was to gain an additional qualification that would help them to find an appropriate job in a related field. The training consisted of a program with binding elements of perpetrator counseling skills, but also with deliberate space for self-reflection and process orientation.

The beginning of the joint learning process was marked by expectations and resistance. The trainees expected a structured teaching program that would be easy to adopt without having to get involved too personally. They showed resistance to dealing with their own role models. They stuck to their own learned values and norms, and argued from this cemented perspective. These tendencies showed clearly that without distinct self-reflection from the counselors' side, there is a high risk of trivializing violence. This would make changes of attitudes through the counseling process with men who use violence impossible.

The experience with men in the training process in Albania confirmed that the development of new intentions and a changing of attitudes regarding gender equality, as well as the development of zero-tolerance towards violence, requires patience. The trainer and the trainees began an intensive process of deep relational and self-awareness work. This process required a continuous adaption of the contents of the training in response to these experiences with the men, and through understanding and integrating cultural and contextual influences and imprints. The participants have continuously been confronted with their own conceptions of masculinity and society, with their own life story, and their own experiences and sensations.

Today, the certified counselors report that it was due to the continuous and repeated confrontation with how they deal with their own way of thinking and acting, with their emotions, and with their own communication patterns, that has led them to a point at which they feel empowered. They became ready to access and accompany perpetrators in a reflective, respectful and more targeted manner. In addition to the consolidated knowledge and skills for violence counseling work, the Albanian counselors highlight their personal transformation. They reported this work on themselves as the biggest benefit from the training process, and as their tool to encounter perpetrators and to accompany them in an effective way. They emphasize their improved capability for relationship building.

Conclusions

Viewing perpetrator counseling approaches through a gender-transformative lens

Both experiences in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Albania confirm the benefit of a context-adapted and self-reflective development process as a fundamental basis for establishing perpetrator counseling services.¹⁰ Standardized training programs and proceedings for psychosocial perpetrator counseling taken from other contexts and applied in a rigid “handbook” manner are insufficient to promote sustainable changes in the gender related value and norm system of violent men.

Work on one’s own experiences and socialization with gender, masculinity and violence is an important gender-transformative learning process. It represents a *sine qua non* basis for empathic, competent and sustainable anti-violence coun-

selling with men using violence. Apart from reflecting on violence, reflecting on gender is an indispensable working process for both sides: the male professionals who offer counseling and the perpetrators who are being counseled.

As in all perpetrator treatment programs, content-oriented topics of violence counseling form the primary and visible roof of perpetrator intervention. They address violence in a differentiated way and help the perpetrator to become aware and reflect on different forms of violence. Seeing the violence circle as underlying pattern and understanding the effects and consequences of exposure to vio-

lence for the victims, they engage in the reconstruction of the violent incident(s), work on risk factors, emergency plans for avoiding future violence, and alternative ways of dealing with stressful situations. In this process the perpetrators are called upon to take responsibility for their own actions and to clearly decide to solve conflicts in a violence-free way.

On the other side, it is equally important to address and reflect on gender. This means promoting awareness and working on the societal and individual value and norm systems regarding gender and violence. The following key elements of gender-transformative work must be understood as fundamental for perpetrator counseling in a broader sense:

- Dealing with masculinity (How am I integrated in society as a man, which definitions and ideologies determine my identity as a man?)
- Reflecting on societal and personal norms and values (Where do I agree? With what do I conform? What would I like to change? And what do I do, if I don't agree with the values and expectations of society and want to act in a different way?)
- Changing relationships (How do I shape a relationship, what does equality mean? What changes need to be addressed from my side? What am I ready for? What are the advantages if I change my relationship towards more gender equality?)
- Training on respectful collaborative communication (How do I communicate



Fig. 1: Counseling model interlinking standard perpetrator counseling elements and gender-transformative topics

in conflict situations? How can I avoid depreciation and violation of personal borders? How can I succeed to communicate in conflict situations in a way that allows a possibility for exchange?)

- Understanding responsibility and respect (How do I manage to be respectful?)

To engage in these processes in a competent and sustainable way is not self-evident, and cannot be fixed to specific training contents. It is the interpersonal exchange and reflection about feelings and mindsets that needs to take place. Without these self-reflective elements a transformation of behavior will not, or only barely, be possible.¹¹

In order to reach out to violent men, counselors need the capability to engage in relationships.¹² They need to perceive themselves and others with the respective needs and emotions. They need to be able to express themselves and to communicate. Working with perpetrators involves a differentiated and sensitized dealing with oneself (Paul and Charura, 2015). Perpetrator counseling will be more effective when counselors have gone through these processes themselves. The effects can be seen in two directions: the involved men, who have started to reflect on and deal with their role and responsibility in a differentiated way, not only have the necessary skills and prerequisites to provide professional counseling to men who have used violence, they also engage themselves as men with changed values and norms in their society.

This paper has argued that domestic violence work with perpetrators needs a supportive framework. It is important to develop a collaborative network with public institutions and services in order to establish a coordinated community response that is binding. The more the trained counselors can step out and dialogue in a sound professional manner based on a personal experience of gender-transformative self-reflection, the more persuasiveness they can develop. This may have a multiplier role since it gives the possibility to influence and to become influential on systems level.

Endnotes

¹ 'Work with perpetrators' is an established term to denominate counselling work with violent men. The term 'perpetrator' bears the risk that violent men are only being reduced to their violent behavior and not being perceived with a holistic view. Although men become violent, they still are and remain men with other resources and capabilities.

In spite of their violent attitudes they can be caring fathers or responsible members of society. We would therefore like to enlarge the term perpetrator with the concept of ‘men who use violence’, in order not to etiquette men only as ‘perpetrators’.

- ² These gender stereotypes and beliefs are tend to be widespread in the two countries, but should in no way be generalized to all men living in these societies in order to avoid culturalization of individual behavior and experiences.
- ³ See chapters on domestic violence rates and on legislation in: INSTAT: Domestic Violence in Albania: 2013 National population-based survey (http://www.instat.gov.al/media/225815/domestic_violence_in_albania_2013.pdf) and in: Gender Equality Agency of BiH (2013): Prevalence and characteristics of violence against women in BiH (<http://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2011/01/prevalence-and-characteristics-of-violence-against-women-in-bih#view>)
- ⁴ For more theoretical background on men and masculinity in the frame of the gender equality debate, see Connell, R. (2005). Change among the gatekeepers: men, masculinities, and gender equality in the global arena. *Signs*, vol. 30 no. 3: 1801–1825.
- ⁵ As already promoted by the Duluth Model. Developed in 1980, the Duluth model (DAIP – Domestic Abuse Intervention Project) advocates a coordinated community approach to tackling domestic abuse, putting the safety of women and children at the center and requiring agencies to work together to protect victims whilst consistently holding perpetrators accountable for their abuse or violence through intervention that offers them an opportunity to change. See <http://theduluthmodel.org/about>.
- ⁶ Bosnia-Herzegovina: National Law on Gender Equality, passed in 2003 and amended in 2010 as overall frame and entity strategies and laws, among which the most important are the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence (2012) in Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Law on Protection from Violence in Families (2012) in Republika Srpska; Albania: Law ‘On Measures against Violence in Family Relations’, passed in 2006 and amended in 2012. In addition to the law “On Measures Against Violence in Family Relations” specific provisions that address crimes related to domestic violence have been added to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania following amendments of 2012 and 2013 (see also INSTAT 2013 and Agency for Gender Equality of BiH, 2013).
- ⁷ The training was implemented by the Society for Psychological Assistance DPP from Zagreb, Croatia, a specialized training and treatment center for violence intervention who has developed the first perpetrator intervention service based on a Dutch group treatment approach in the Western Balkan region.
- ⁸ On the issue of the link between masculine norms and help-seeking, consider different literature such as e.g. Galdas et al. (2005) or Vogel et al. (2011).
- ⁹ This strategic shift can be embedded in what in the literature is referred to as a masculine sensitive approach in terms of adapting the treatment context and setting to attract males, rather than expecting them to adapt to treatment. See also Englar-Carlson et al. (2014).
- ¹⁰ On the issue of training for practitioners that includes space to challenge own potentially harmful or biased views and the need for contextually and culturally adapted programs,

see also Rothman et al. (2003) as well as Saunders (2008) and Williams and Becker (1994)

¹¹ See also Rothman et al. (2003).

¹² The therapeutic relationship is considered to be the most significant factor in achieving positive therapeutic change. As such, it is essential that trainee and practising therapists are able to facilitate a strong working alliance with each of their clients. See also Paul and Charura, 2015.

References

- Calkin, Sydney. "From Absent Obstacles to Allies: Creating space for men in theories of women's empowerment." Presentation at the 3rd European Conference on Politics and Gender, Barcelona, March 21–23, 2013.
- Chant, Sylvia, and Matthew Gutman. 2000. *Mainstreaming men into gender and development: Debates, reflections, and experiences*. Oxford: Oxfam GB.
- Connell, RW. 2005. "Change among the gatekeepers: Men, masculinities, and gender equality in the global arena." *Signs* 30(3): 1801–1825.
- Englar-Carlson, M, M P Evans, and T Duffey. 2014. *A counselor's guide to working with men*. Alexandria: American Counseling Association.
- Galdas, P M, F Cheater, and P Marshall. 2005. "Men and health help-seeking behaviour: literature review". *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 49(6): 616–623.
- Greene, Margaret E, and Andrew Levack. 2010. *Synchronizing Gender Strategies: A Cooperative Model for Improving Reproductive Health and Transforming Gender Relations*. Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau for the Interagency Gender Working Group of USAID.
- Hester, Marianne, and Sarah-Jane Lilley. 2014. *Domestic and Sexual Violence Perpetrator Programmes: Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention: A collection of papers on the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Paul, Stephen, and Divine Charura. 2015. *An Introduction to the Therapeutic Relationship in Counselling and Psychotherapy*. London: Sage.
- Rothman, E, A Butchart, and M Cérda. 2003. *Intervening with perpetrators of intimate partner violence: a global perspective*. Geneva: World Health Organisation.
- Saunders, D.G. 2008. "Group Interventions for Men Who Batter: A Summary of Program Descriptions and Research". *Violence and Victims* 23(2): 156–172
- Taylor, Alice, and Gary Barker. 2003. *Programs for Men Who Have Used Violence with*

- an Intimate Partner (PM-IPV): Reviewing Global Practices and Effectiveness*. Rio de Janeiro and Washington, DC: Promundo, Rutgers WPF, MenEngage and MenCare+.
- Vogel, D L, S R Heimerdinger-Edwards, J H Hammer, and A Hubbard. 2011. "Boys don't cry": examination of the links between endorsement of masculine norms, self-stigma, and help-seeking attitudes for men from diverse backgrounds." *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 58(3): 368–382.
- Williams, O J, and R L Becker. 1994. "Domestic partner abuse treatment programs and cultural competence: The result of a national survey." *Violence and Victims* 9(3): 287–296.

Thank you, reviewers!

Editors and guest editors of the Graduate Journal of Social Science would like to express their sincerest gratitude to the following reviewers for reviewing manuscripts for the issues 'Sexualities & Disabilities' (Vol 12, Issue 1), 'Men, Masculinities, and Violence' (Vol 12, Issue 3), and 'Blurred Lines: The Contested Nature of Sex Work in a Changing Social Landscape' (Vol 11, Issue 2):

Abel Knochel *University of Minnesota-Duluth*
Alankaar Sharma *University of Minnesota-Twin Cities*
Alexander Jabbari *University of California, Irvine*
Alexandra Gruian *University of Leeds*
Alicia Kozma *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*
Allan Tyler *London South Bank University*
Andrea Prajerová *University of Ottawa*
Anette Bringedal Houge *University of Oslo*
Anindita Majumdar *Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities*
Anita Chikkatur *Carleton College*
Ben Belek *Hebrew University of Jerusalem*
Benita Moolman *Human Science Research Council*
Bryana French *University of St. Thomas*
Cassandra Jones *University of Bristol*
Debbie Ging *Dublin City University*
Diditi Mitra *Brookdale Community College*
Ebtihal Mahadeen *University of Edinburgh*
Élise Féron *University of Tampere*
Emily Cooper *University of Central Lancashire*
Holly Brown *University of Kentucky*
Jacob Bartholomew *Syracuse University*
Jane Haladay *University of North Carolina at Pembroke*
Jed Meers *University of York*
JoAnna Murphy *Bowling Green State University*
Jonathan Beacham *Lancaster University*

Juan Portillo *University of Texas at Austin*
Kimberly Robertson *California State University, Northridge*
Laura Johnson *Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*
Lisa Tatonetti *Kansas State University*
Lucy Binch *University of Sheffield*
M. Geneva Murray *Ohio University*
Maggie Wykes *University of Sheffield*
Mahima Nayar *Tata Institute of Social Sciences*
Mary Jo Klinker *Winona State University*
Matt Ignacio *University of Washington*
Megan Dean *Georgetown University*
Mia Liinason *University of Gothenburg*
Michaela Rinkel *Hawaii Pacific University*
Michele Friedner *Stony Brook University*
Molly McCourt *University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*
Nathan Beel *University of Southern Queensland*
Nicole Bedera *University of Maryland, College Park*
Opinderjit Kaur Takhar *University of Wolverhampton*
Rose Løvgren *Danish Institute for International Studies*
Sarah Harper *University of York*
Shruti Devgan *Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*
Shruti Mukherjee *Stony Brook University*
Sikata Banerjee *University of Victoria*
Sivan Balslev *The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute*
Synnove Jahnsen *The Norwegian Police University College*
Tara Turner *First Nations University*
Teela Sanders *University of Leicester*
Tomasz Fisiak *University of Łódź*
Tony Laing *New York University*
Valandra *University of Arkansas*
Vimal Mohan *John St. Berchmans College*