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Two Challenges for Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities: The Hegemony of Men, and Trans(national) patriarchies

Povzetek

Dva izziva za kritične študije moških in moškosti: moška hegemonija in trans(nacionalni) patriarhati

Članek ponuja kratek pregled področja kritičnih študij moških in moškosti (KŠMM), ki ga avtor razume kot široko podpodročje feminističnih študij, študij spolov in ženskih študij; tematizira tudi nekatere napetosti in kontradikcije. Osrednji del prispevka je namenjen dvema velikima izzivoma sodobnih KŠMM. Prvi je vprašanje konceptualnega in političnega premika od moškosti in hegemone moškosti k hegemoniji moških. Drugi izziv je vprašanje premika od etnografije h globalnim in transnacionalnim procesom, še zlasti k spremembam v patriarhalnih sistemih, ki se iz lokalnih in nacionalnih preobražajo v transnacionalne, kar označuje termin trans(nacionalni) patriarhati. Avtor prouči temeljne značilnosti takšnih transpatriarhatov. Ključna naloga KŠMM je po njegovem mnenju prav preizpraševanje razmerja med moškimi in moškostmi ter lokalnimi in transnacionalnimi patriarhalnimi sistemi.

Ključne besede: moški, moškosti, hegemonija, transnacionalno, patriarhati

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Abstract

This article provides a brief overview of Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (CSMM), a broad sub-field of Feminist Studies, Gender Studies, and Women's Studies, and some of the tensions and contradictory processes there. The main body of the article explores two major contemporary challenges for CSMM. The first concerns the conceptual and political move from masculinities, and hegemonic masculinity, to the hegemony of men. The second addresses the move from the ethnographic moment to global and transnational processes, and specifically the transformations of patriarchy from the local and the national to the transnational, as summed up in the term trans(national)patriarchies. Characteristic features of such transpatriarchies are examined. Challenging both the relations of men and masculinities and the relations of local and transnational patriarchies are key tasks for CSMM.

Keywords: men, masculinities, hegemony, transnational, patriarchies

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Introduction

Gender is a shorthand for a very complex set of embodied, institutionalized structures, practices and processes, and one of the most fundamental and powerful structuring principles of most societies. Gender is not equivalent to either sex or sexuality, nor to women and femininity; rather, it equally concerns men, masculinities, and indeed LGBTIQ+ people and social movements. Gender is a matter of relations constructed with local and broader gender orders. Global gender relations are still characterized by various forms of male dominance, even with the huge variations in the extent of that dominance, and the myriad complexities and complications in gender regimes.

For a long time, the concept of gender was used largely to mean 'women' while men were often seen as ungendered, neutralized; this is now less so. Studying men, and indeed policy development on men and boys, has become more popular in recent years in many parts of the world. Yet studying men is not anything special, and not anything new. Men, and women, have studied men for centuries, but often as an 'absent presence'. Academia, libraries, disciplines and canons are full of books by men, on men, for men! And studying men is not necessarily in itself linked to progressive social change; it all depends on how it is done.

In this article I focus on Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (CSMM), a broad sub-field of Feminist Studies, Gender Studies, and Women's Studies, and some of the tensions to be found there. More specifically, there are a number of contradictory processes in and around CSMM. Following some initial discussion of these issues, this article explores two fundamental changes for CSMM: first, the conceptual move from masculinities, and hegemonic masculinity, to the hegemony of men; and, second, the move from the ethnographic moment to trans(national)patriarchies.

Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities

Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (CSMM) are a series of attempts to study men and masculinities differently from the malestream. CSMM have expanded considerably over the last 40 years or so (see Kimmel et al., 2005), with, for example, at least 16 international specialist journals. CSMM refers to critical, explicitly gendered studies of men and masculinities that engage with feminist and other critical gender scholarship, as opposed to (supposedly) non-gendered, non-feminist or anti-feminist scholarship. Thus, CSMM stands opposed to work under the ambiguous label of 'Men's Studies' (as if most academic work is not already), as well as more explicit interventions, such as men's rights and 'men's liberation' approaches. CSMM comprise *historical*, *cultural*, *relational*, *materialist*, *deconstructive*, *anti-essentialist* studies on men (Hearn and Pringle, 2006). The idea that the gender of men derives from a fixed, inner trait or core is antagonistic to CSMM:

men are not essentialized or reified. Certain themes have been stressed, often in contradiction with dominant definitions and priorities of men. Studies range from masculine psychology to broad societal and collective analyses of men; they include ethnographies of particular men's activity and investigations of masculinities in specific discourses. They have often been local, personal, bodily, immediate, interpersonal, as in the 'ethnographic moment' (see Connell, 2000) rather than facing the 'big (historico-socio-political) picture' (Connell, 1993).

While not wishing to downplay debates and differences among recent traditions in studying men, the broad critical approach to men and masculinities that has developed in CSMM is characterized in several ways. These studies, in recognizing men and masculinities as *explicitly gendered*, emphasize men's differential relations to *gendered power*. They entail *specific*, rather than an implicit or incidental, *focus* on men and masculinities, informed by *feminist, gay, queer and other critical gender scholarship*. Moreover, in this broad approach men and masculinities are seen:

- as *socially constructed, produced, and reproduced*, rather than as 'naturally' one way or another;
- as *variable and changing* across time (history) and space (culture), within societies, and through life courses and biographies;
- spanning the *material and the discursive* in analysis; and
- through *intersections of gender and gendering with other social divisions* (Connell et al., 2005: 3).

In debates in and around CSMM the most developed and most cited approach is that which can be called masculinities theory (for example, Connell, 1987; 1995; Carrigan et al., 1985), in which various masculinities are framed in relation to the theorizing of patriarchy and patriarchal relations. Within this approach, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been a central pillar and especially influential, while other concepts, such as complicit masculinity, have been taken up far less. Hegemonic masculinity has been defined in various ways, but most notably as "... the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women." (Connell, 1995: 77) Key features of this approach are:

- the critique of sex role theory;
- the use of a power-laden concept of masculinities;
- emphasis on men's unequal relations to men as well as men's relations to women;
- attention to the implications of gay scholarship and sexual hierarchies more generally;
- distinguishing between hegemonic, complicit, subordinated, and marginalized masculinities;

- emphasis on contradictions, and at times resistance(s);
- analysis of institutional/social, interpersonal and intrapsychic (psychodynamics) aspects of masculinities;
- exploration of transformations and social change.

Masculinities theory has been extremely important and influential, and there have been very many applications and many different interpretations of masculinities theory, and hegemonic masculinity in particular, in theoretical, empirical and policy studies (see Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Hearn et al., 2012; Morrell et al., 2012), along with a range of critiques of masculinities theory and the concept of hegemonic masculinity (see Hearn, 1996b; 2004; 2012).

From masculinities to the gender hegemony of men

I now turn to two key challenges for masculinities theory and for CSMM more generally. Returning to the definition of hegemonic masculinity just cited, I focus first on the naming and problematizing of men: "... the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of *men* and the subordination of women." (Connell, 1995: 77; italics are mine) Specifically, in focusing primarily on and thereby de-naturalizing masculinities, men as a social category may be re-naturalized in some applications and interpretations – in assuming it is masculinities that vary, with less attention to the given social category of men. This focus may inadvertently divert attention from the interrogation of the social category of men and even naturalize it. In this sense, the concept of hegemony has been used in a restricted way in some applications of hegemonic masculinity. On the other hand, what is more hegemonic than the social category of men?

Thus, I have been more concerned with *the hegemony of men* and gender hegemony more generally, in contrast to hegemonic masculinity (see Table 1). When I speak of men here, I am not referring to any essence or given-ness. Men-ness is inessential and non-given. Men are best understood both as a *social category* formed by the gender system, and *collective and individual agents*, often dominant agents, though not necessarily so, together constituting the hegemony of men (Hearn, 2004) or more widely gender hegemony. For these and other reasons, over the years, my own research and political concerns have been not so much with masculinity, or even masculinities, *per se*, but the naming, identification, construction, historicizing, problematizing and deconstruction of men, both as persons and as a gender category. To put this directly, even though there is a large literature and politics problematizing 'women' as a category, 'men' as a social category

has typically *not* been problematized within CSMM.

Table 1: Broad emphases in hegemonic masculinity and hegemony of men framework (Hearn, 2012: 598)

	hegemonic masculinity framework	*hegemony of men framework*
focus	**masculinity**	**men**
use of hegemony	**adjectival to masculinity, though hypothetical and elusive**	**noun applied ambiguously to category of 'men' and men's enactments**
relation to masculinity	**central in analysis**	**part of analysis**
relation to men	**assumed**	**named, problematized**
relation to women	**emphasized femininity**	**named, problematized**
gender influences	**socialist feminism gay studies social constructionism**	**materialist feminism queer studies post-constructionism**

Dominant uses of the social category of men are contested and contingent in many ways. First, the assumption that men are based in the biological is typically seen as foundational, even though, from intersex studies, it is difficult to give a precise, foundational definition of what male is: chromosomal, hormonal, genital, somatic, and so on. The sex of 'male' is a variable, a 'summary', category, summarizing many and various bodily – or assumed to be bodily – variations. Some of these can be changed to an extent, some not. 'Male' is used to include creatures ranging from some foetuses to traces of the long dead, human and non-human. Next, the notion of men is variable historically across time and anthropologically across cultures – this is clear in the multifarious gender patterns, including transgender, non-binary, and third sexes/genders across societies.

The category of men is used differentially; it operates in many ways, as individual men, groups of men, all men, the gender of men, in state, military, educational, medical, and religious discourses, and in discursive, rhetorical and other ploys. There are also the challenges of shifting *relations* of claimed identity, physiological variation, embodiments, and social movements, as in the challenges that LGBT*IQ+, gender ambiguous, gender plural (Monro, 2005), and gender diverse politics and practice bring to any hermetically closed category of men. Somewhat similarly, the very differential definitions of age and generation, in terms of the social definitions of boys, young men, old men, disabled men, dying men, as well as men cast as insane or outcast in other ways, may problematize a clear concept of men. Complex issues arise from the diffusion of ICTs and virtualization, and machine/technology-human interfaces more generally – and the creation of virtual men or non-binary categories more broadly. The social category of men is (re)cre-

ated in everyday life and institutional practices, and in interplay with other social categories, such as class, ethnicity and sexuality. Finally, there are human-animal interfaces – where does the man end and the dog begin? To develop analysis of the hegemony of men, men need to be thoroughly denaturalized and deconstructed, just as postcolonial theory deconstructs the white subject or queer theory the sexual subject.

From the ethnographic moment to trans(national)patriarchies

The context of much, probably most, research on men and masculinities within patriarchy has been national or societal, 'methodologically nationalist' (Scott, 1998), rather than transnational. Despite critical insights on the relations of men, masculinities, nations and nationhood, the gendering of men often remains primarily within the context and confines of the nation-state or supra-nation-state, such as the EU. Similarly, formulations of both hegemony and patriarchy have characteristically been based on a single particular society or nation (Bocock, 1986).

Thus, a second challenge for CSMM concerns moves from the local ethnographic moment(s) in studying masculinities to more global, postcolonial and transnational approaches (e.g. Ouzgane and Coleman, 1998; Pease and Pringle, 2002; Cornwall et al., 2011). This raises the question of how, for example, in the cited definition of hegemonic masculinity, it is patriarchy that needs to be reconsidered and transnationalized, as in: "... the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of *patriarchy*, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women." (Connell, 1995: 77; italics are mine) This leads to reconsiderations of neopatriarchy, neoliberal patriarchy and 'neoliberal neopatriarchy' (Campbell, 2014), as ways of making sense of both neoliberalism and globalization.

To be more specific, while local patterns of work, or its lack, are still the major context for much labour market activity, in some ways globalization challenges gendered work divisions, for example, through economic restructurings and migrations. The impacts of gendered global relations of production and reproduction are very uneven, often contradictory, even paradoxical. Globalization both creates, even liberates, and constrains, even oppresses – even at the same time for the same gendered people and groups. In many global processes, both physical and virtual, particular groups of men are the main purveyors of power (Connell, 1993; Hearn, 1996a; 2015). Intensification of gender inequalities proceeds by extending the means for accumulation and concentration of resources around those already with more resources. This can be through, for example, increased mobility of labour, technologies, industry, production and reproduction, and finan-

cialization of capital. Concentrations of capital are increasing, with gendered forms and effects, and increasing inequalities in China and many parts of Europe and North America, though not so in parts of Latin America. The richest "1% are getting richer and the 99% are getting poorer. The wealth of the world's 475 billionaires is now worth the combined income of the bottom half of humanity." (Nixon, 2012; also see Fuentes-Nieva and Galasso, 2014; Hardoon et al., 2016)

Global and transnational corporate managerial elites are highly gendered. The 'transnational capitalist class' (Sklair, 2001) is in practice very much a male transnational capitalist class (Donaldson and Poynting, 2006). Men's domination continues at the highest corporate levels, with relatively little gender change at that level over time. Gender divisions of managerial control are maintained partly through men's domination of engineering and ICT industries, as well as education and training, even with greater dispersal away from Western centres, to India, for example (Poster, 2013). Various transnational business masculinities have been identified (e.g. Reis, 2004; Connell and Wood, 2005; Hearn et al., 2008). Meanwhile, in many countries there have been significant increases of women in the professions and middle management (Walby, 2009). Relatedly, globalizing democratization and educational processes tends to increase women's representation in governmental, policy and educational institutions.

Global restructuring has led to the movement of capital, finance and industrial production. This in turn has facilitated the creation of large-scale, often precarious, employment, often for women as cheap *labour,* in some global regions in factory and sweatshop work, for example, in *'Special Economic Zones' in China, export-processing plants (maquilas) in Mexico,* and similar newly industrializing areas designed for foreign investment (MacLeod, 2009). Movements of women into the labour market have involved both rural-urban migration within nations and migration across national boundaries, and the disruption of local gender orders and the relations of production and reproduction there. Childcare and other reproductive care work are restructured to become the everyday responsibility of relatives and others in local communities, mirroring patterns long established in some parts of the world, for example, southern Africa. Gendered labour migrations based on shifts in reproductive labour include global care chains, for example, beyond Eastern Europe, and global nurse care chains, for example, from the Philippines. In some cases, gendered migrations and relocations are linked to the global sex trade, with some regions becoming more specialized providers, largely of women, and other regions of consumption, largely for men. Global shifts also affect men unevenly, with the loss of assumption of lifelong employment for many men in regions, including those in the global North, formerly reliant on manufacturing or extractive industries. Within the global South large-scale temporary migration of men from the Indian sub-continent has been attracted to, for example, the construction industry in the Gulf states.

A further area of gendered and contradictory global change concerns

consumption flows, online image manufacture, and transnational branding. With the large and growing inequalities, what may be a routine purchase of, say, trainers, in one part of the world may become a reason to mug or kill in another part (Ratele, 2014). Transnational commercialization of sex, sexuality and sexual violence is another aspect of globalization, with expansions of the relatively new configurations of the flesh/online sex industry. Virtualization processes present sites for both reinforcements and contestations of hegemony in terms of bodily presence/absence of men. ICTs bring contradictory effects for men's and women's gendering, sexuality and violences, as men act as producers and consumers of virtuality, represent women in virtual media, and are themselves represented.

All these aspects of globalization, that is, gendered globalization, are severely complicated by financial crisis, that is, gendered financial crises (Elson, 2010; Bettio et al., 2013; Griffin, 2013; Pollard, 2013; Walby, 2015). This applies in the gendered structuring of the moves to financialized capitalism, and the consequent very uneven growth and development, and intensifying financial linkages, all gendered, all the way down. Economic crisis highlights gendered aspects and biases in policy development. Finance ministers, financial boards, economists and banks have generally maintained a 'strategic silence' on gender, even though their policies have uneven effects on men and women (Young et al., 2011). Generally, deflationary policies, policies based on the assumption of the male breadwinner, and state cutbacks, rather than higher taxes, tend to have less effect upon men, more upon women (Villa and Smith, 2010; Conley, 2012; Fawcett Society, 2012).

To make sense of all this means moving beyond limiting patriarchy, like hegemony, to a *particular* society or nation. In so-called Second Wave feminism the concept of patriarchy was both central and critiqued within feminism. Its usefulness as a concept is as a guide to looking at gender relations beyond the personal, the interpersonal, identity, the local, and towards the societal, the systemic, the global, the transnational. Moving beyond national, societal and cultural contexts has, for me, been prompted by immersion in various transnational studies and projects over recent years. Through this, I have found it useful to see gender hegemony in terms of not just patriarchy but transnationally, as transnational patriarchies, or transpatriarchies for short: thus, talking simultaneously about patriarchies, intersectionalities and transnationalizations. The concept of transpatriarchies speaks of the structural tendency and individualized propensity for men's transnational gender domination; it focuses on non-determined structures, forces and processes, not totalizing unity or fixity.

Transnational patriarchal processes, transnationalizations, occur *beyond*, *between*, and *within* nations. The transnational carries overlapping meanings, both reaffirming and deconstructing the nation:

- *moving across* something or *between* two or more national boundaries;
- *metamorphosing*, problematizing, blurring, transgressing, even dissolving national boundaries; and

- *creating new configurations*, intensified transnational, supranational, deter-ritorialized, dematerialized or virtual entities (Hearn and Blagojević, 2013).

Transnationalizations take many forms and have many implications for men, gender relations and labour markets. They comprise acutely contradictory proces-ses, with multiple forms of difference, presence and absence for men in power and men dispossessed. Movements from the national to the transnational can be more voluntary or more involuntary; structural, institutional, organizational or individual; or through complex webs and networks. In simultaneously affirming and deconstructing the nation, transnationalization is a more useful term than globalization or internationalization. Structured patriarchal gender domination shifts from being located in or limited to domestic, national or societal contexts towards transnational contexts. These are historical, geographical processes, moving from the domestic and the individual to nation-state to the transnational: new forms of trans(national)patriarchies. Within transpatriarchies, the gendered distribution of wealth and well-being, the presence/absence of sustainable gender egalitarian social arrangements, and long-term environmental (un)sustainability are all strongly interconnected. Men's practices are heavily embedded in social, economic, and cultural relations so that men's transnational dominant or complicit practices are easily equated with that seen as normal.

Transnational processes and transpatriarchies entail intersections of gender relations with *inter alia* citizenship, ethnicity, location, migration, movement, natio-nality, racialization, religion, space. Seen thus, there are many transnational patri-archal arenas. They range from transnational business and global finance corpora-tions and governmental organizations, with almost total dominance of men in top transnational corporate management, to military institutions and the arms trade, international sports industries, and biomedical industries and transfers, through to arenas of migration, religion, mobility and virtualization, environmental change, and knowledge production (Hearn, 2015: 20–21).

Concluding comments

Transnationalization involves transnational spaces, physical, social, virtual. Changing relations of national and transnational space have different implications for power, prestige, money, and wealth. This raises the question of different con-nections between men, transnationalization and social stratification, empirically and theoretically. Different groups of men move transnationally, between nations, becoming more or less situated in and between different national and transnati-onal realms, with very different consequences depending on their political-econo-mic power and prestige. Some men are fixed in a national/local space; others are forced into transnational space; some seek affluent transnational 'freedom'; some

construct national space through transnational endeavour. Such transnational locations and movements do not necessarily reduce social stratification, but rather impact it in concrete ways.

Transpatriarchies operate partly in the flesh, partly virtually, creating new forms of extended power for certain groupings of men. Apart from extensions of transnational patriarchal power, as through new technologies or corporate concentrations, they facilitate processes of transnational individual and collective non-responsibility of men; problems created are held to be the business of others elsewhere, as part of a long history of patriarchal imperialism and colonialism. Such changes bring processes of loss of entitlement and privilege for some men. Such losses, or perceived losses, of power amongst certain groupings of men interplay with processes of recouping patriarchal power (Hearn, 2009). In such ways local masculinities increasingly need to be understood within the contexts of trans(national)patriarchal hegemony of men. Challenging both the relations of men and masculinities, and the relations of local and transnational patriarchies, are key tasks for CSMM.

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