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1) CROMENET EU NETWORK. Critical Research on Men in Europe

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CROMENET. Critical Research on Men in Europe

Abstract

This article sets out some key methodological principles in developing a European research framework for studying men's violences. This involves attention to gendered analysis and gendered power relations; gender collaboration; interconnections between social arenas; ethical and political sensitivities; examining and problematising roots and explanations of men's violences; building on and reviewing the contribution of Critical Studies on Men; use of multiple methods, methodologies and epistemological frames; and, addressing intersections of multiple dimensions of power and disadvantage. Together, these principles and perspectives assist in developing a comparative and transnational orientation, by attending to cultural variations, convergences and divergences in time and space, and intersecting forms of power relations in the study of men's violences in a European context.

Keywords: abuse, Europe, men, masculinities, methodology, research, violation, violence

Estudiando las Violencias Masculinas: Algunos Principios Metodológicos Clave en el Desarrollo de un Marco de Investigación Europeo

Jeff Hearn, Irina Novikova, Keith Pringle, Iva Šmídová, Marjut Jyrkinen, LeeAnn Iovanni, Fátima Arranz, Voldemar Kolga, Dag Balkmar & Marek M. Wojtaszek

CROMENET. Critical Research on Men in Europe

Resumen

Este artículo desarrolla algunos principios metodológicos clave con el objetivo de desarrollar un marco europeo de investigación dedicado al estudio de las violencias de los hombres. Esto implica prestar atención al análisis de género y a las relaciones de poder vinculadas al género; a la colaboración entre géneros, a la interconexión entre los ámbitos sociales, la sensibilidades éticas y políticas; examinando y problematizando las raíces y explicaciones sobre las violencias de los hombres; construyendo y revisando la contribución de los Estudios Críticos sobre Hombres; la utilización de multiplicidad de métodos, metodologías y entornos epistemológicos; y, dirigiendo intersecciones de multiplicidad de dimensiones sobre el poder y la desigualdad. Conjuntamente, estos principios y perspectivas participan del desarrollo de una orientación comparativa y transnacional, a través de atender variaciones culturales, convergencias y divergencias en tiempo y espacio, e interseccionando formas de relaciones de poder en el estudio de las violencias de los hombres en el contexto Europeo.

Palabras clave: abuso, Europa, hombres, masculinidades, metodología, investigación, violación, violencia

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Men's violence is one of the most massive global social problems. A huge amount of feminist and related critical scholarship has shown the range and amount of men's violences that need to be recognised, including violence to women, children, men (other men, each other, themselves), transgender people, older people, and their interconnections (for example, [Hanmer et al., 1989](#); [Lundgren et al., 2001](#); [Martinez et al., 2006](#)). Men's violence takes many gendered forms. It includes physical and sexual violence from and to those known and unknown, emotional and sexual degradation, rape and sexual assault, sexual trafficking, homicide and, in some cases, suicide. The extent of violence can be relatively minimal or extensive and life threatening, one-off or persistent, emotionally more or less damaging, explicit or implicitly sexual or sexualised. Attacks by men on women and children can be random or highly organised.

There is a high degree of transnational commonality around some aspects of such practices. At the same time, there is the importance of understanding men's violence in its specific social, cultural and political contexts its concrete nature, dynamic development and wider social and societal context ([Ruspini et al., 2011](#)). This entails attention to interpersonal, ideological and structural questions. There is a need to recognise the multi-level, multi-layered nature of explanation; this includes combinations of individual, family and structural explanations. There is also a need to gender explanations: to examine how gender and sexuality operate at interconnected levels of individuals, families, and social structures and cultural patterns.

In recent years comparative perspectives have been applied to many fields of study. Comparative research can be pursued for many reasons, to: gather basic empirical data; test theories developed in one context to another; develop more comprehensive models; examine influences of cultural conditions; feed into transnational policy development, such as EU policy. One of the most convincing reasons for adopting a comparative approach is the potential offered for deconstructing the assumptions that underpin social practices and policies in different countries. Such a process of deconstruction facilitates a reconstruction of more effective policies and practices. There is growing awareness that such practices and policies increasingly interact transnationally, at both European and, indeed, global levels: consequently research may

explore the processes and outcomes of those interactions and connections.

In addition, distinctions need to be made between: comparative research, comparing different countries, societies, cultures and systems; transnational research on men's violences; and research on men's transnational violence in terms of cross-border violences, such as in trafficking, pornographisations, militarism, abduction, "paedophile" rings, "honour" killings, and so on. These include actions by men, as individuals and as collectivities, both directly as in their practice of violence and less directly in their management, monitoring, sponsorship and facilitation. This links with developments in transnational feminist and profeminist scholarship, including critical research on men and masculinities (Connell, 1993, 1998, 2005; Pease & Pringle, 2001; Novikova & Kambourov, 2003; Kelly, 2006; Cornwall et al., 2011).

In this article we examine key methodological principles in developing a research framework to study men's violences in the European context. This is the result of transnational cooperation amongst 18 researchers across Europe funded by the European Union. The group was brought together through the work of Sub-network 2 of Coordination Action on Human Rights Violations (CAHRV)¹. This cooperation built on the work of the European Thematic Network on Research on Men in Europe, "The Social Problem and Societal Problematisation of Men and Masculinities" (Hearn et al., 2004; Pringle, 2005; Pringle et al., 2006).²

Both the CAHRV Sub-network and the earlier Thematic Network comprised women and men researchers researching men and masculinities in an explicitly gendered way. The central focus of the Thematic Network's effort was the investigation of the social problem and societal problematisation of men and masculinities. The reference to 'social problem' referred to *both* the problems created by men, and the problems experienced by men. The notion of societal problematisation referred to the various ways in which the 'topic' of men and masculinities has become and is becoming noticed and problematised in society – in the media, politics, policy debates, and so on. This focus was set within a general problematic: that changing and improving gender relations and reducing gender inequality involves changing men as well as the position of women.

We argue that in developing a research framework and strategy to study men's violences in the European context, the following methodological principles and perspectives are fundamental: gendered analysis and gendered power relations; gender collaboration; interconnections between social arenas; ethical and political sensitivities; examining and problematising roots and explanations of men's violences; building on and reviewing the contribution of Critical Studies on Men; use of multiple methods, methodologies and epistemological frames; and, addressing intersections of multiple dimensions of power and disadvantage. Together, these principles and perspectives assist in developing a comparative and transnational orientation, by attending to cultural variations, convergences and divergences in time and space, and intersecting forms of power relations.

Key Methodological Principles and Perspectives in Developing Research Strategy

Gendered Analysis and Gendered Power Relations

Research strategy needs to attend to the centrality of gender and gendered power relations. This is not only in terms of the substantive focus of the research, but also in terms of the gender composition and structure of research networks. Issues of gendered content and processes need to be addressed throughout research, including the production of data and the interpretation of data and gaps in data. While most, or even in some views or argumentations all, violence is gendered, the gendering of research on violence is discussed less often.

One crucial issue that distinguishes different approaches to gender is whether gender is seen as one of several fundamental social divisions underpinning social life, individual experiences, and the operation of other social divisions (such as age, class, 'race', ethnicity, religion), on the one hand, or as just one of a string of social factors defining an individual's response to a situation, on the other. Studies that refer to women or women's experiences do not necessarily constitute a fully gendered approach. They may, for example, treat women (or gender) simply as a variable, rather than as constitutive of, or located in, some

social structural formation. And moreover they may not analyse men as just as gendered as women. An adequately gendered approach would include at least the following features:

- Attention to the variety of feminist approaches and literatures; these provide the methodology and theory to develop a gendered account;
- Recognition of gender differences as both an analytic category and experiential reality;
- Attention to sexualities and sexual dynamics in research and the research process; this includes the deconstruction of taken-for-granted heterosexuality, particularly in the study of families, communities, agencies and organisations;
- Attention to the social construction of men and masculinities, as well as women and femininities, and including understanding masculinities in terms of relations between men, as well as relations with women and children;
- Understanding of gender through its interrelations with other oppressions and other identities, including those of age, class, disability, 'race', ethnicity and religion;
- Acceptance of gender conflict as permanent, and as equally as normal as its opposite, as well as examining resistance to this view;
- Understanding that gender and sexuality and their relationship are historically and culturally acquired and defined; and
- Understanding that the close monitoring of gender and sexuality by the state (the official biography of individuals) is not accidental, but fulfils the purposes of particular social groupings.

Research on men's violence has to be gender-present ([Hanmer & Hearn, 1999](#)). To scientifically present violence as gender-absent or gender-neutral would, theoretically at least, require it to be random in its doing and receiving in relation to women and men, and require it to play no role in the maintenance of gendered social boundaries and social divisions. It is very difficult to give examples of violence with such possible randomness or lack of relation to gendered social boundaries and social divisions.

Gender Collaboration

Research on men's violences needs to bring together women and men researchers who research men and masculinities in an explicitly gendered way. Such a meeting point for women researchers and men researchers is necessary and timely in the development of good quality research on men in Europe. Such work offers many opportunities for collaboration and learning across countries and between colleagues.

Research on men that draws only on the work of men is likely to neglect the very important research contribution that has been and is being made by women to research on men. Research and networking based only on men researchers is likely to reproduce some of the existing gender inequalities of research and policy development. This is not a comment on gender essentialism but rather on the need to draw on the full knowledge and expertise available. Gender-collaborative research is necessary in the pursuit of gender equality, the combating of gender discrimination, achievement of equality, and anti-discrimination work more generally. This is not to suggest that all research teams should comprise women and men researchers.

Interconnections, and Separations, between Social Arenas

A key principle is to see the interconnections between men's violences and other social arenas: home, work, social exclusion/inclusion, health, care, and so on (Hearn & Pringle, 2006). For example, varieties of violence connect with the health and welfare of those involved — both those violated and the construction of bodies of violators and others. Violence involves the use of the body and the affecting of the bodies of others. Many such interlinks co-exist in the gendered structure of society — in the symbolic realm, in the division of labour and in individual gender life trajectories. Social institutions, such as the family, education, law, politics, labour markets, can have contradictory relations to violence. The institution of the family or household can both be a place where care is practised and a place where various types of violence occur.

Violence does not operate as a separate sphere of practice. There are impacts of work/employment on violence (including gender differences

regarding work), and vice versa; impacts of domestic and family relations on violence, and vice versa; impacts of social inclusion/exclusion on violence, and vice versa; and impacts of men's health and women's health on violence, and vice versa.

Ethical and Political Sensitivities in Collaborative Work

Studying sensitive but also powerful topics, such as gendered violence, calls for addressing specific ethical issues on the research process and method(s) used. Ethical issues concern especially professional integrity and relations with and responsibilities towards research participants, sponsors and/or funders. Possible problems, such as methodological, technical, ethical, political and legal problems, need to be taken into consideration at every stage of the research on a sensitive topic.

The importance of good collaboration and work process, and appropriate ethical practices cannot be emphasised too strongly in the development of high quality comparative, transnational research. This question operates in several respects and at several different levels, and is an important ethical issue in its own right. This applies all the more so when the attempt is made to act against violence, violation and abuse, in this case men's violences and abuses.

This is also a practical question in terms of getting tasks done with the benefit of the greatest input and contribution from all concerned, from different ethnic(ised), gendered, sexual, linguistic, national and other differenced socio-political contexts. Without this, there is a great danger of some participants dominating the research process, leading to a limited understanding of men's violence. Indeed the ability to work collaboratively is a *sine qua non* of successful transnational research work, and especially so on such difficult and sensitive topics as gender power relations, violence, violation and human rights.

Furthermore, it is also a matter of the content of research knowledge and of epistemology: for, without good collaborative practices the epistemology of dominant one(s) may dominate the epistemologies of others. These points apply for all participants, and particularly for those in leadership positions. In particular, it is vitally important to develop facilitative and supportive research working, research practices, and research leadership.

Our experience of working on European, EU and other comparative, transnational research on men and masculinities suggests a number of pointers for developing such research practice. These matters of research process cannot be separated from the content of research: in this context, comparative, transnational research on men, masculinities and men's interpersonal violences.

Thus we suggest these positive guidelines:

- Give strong attention to ethical questions in the gathering, storage and distribution of data and other information.
- Be respectful of all researchers and what they bring to the research; this extends to understanding of difference, and of others' research and national and regional locations.
- Be aware that the major regional differences within Europe (and beyond) mean that assumptions that single models should be applied in all parts of Europe should be treated critically and with great caution. While there may have been more research and more research resources in Western Europe, researchers there have much to learn from Central and Eastern Europe, including about the latter's historical situations. As is often the case within structural and uneven power relations, those with less resources often know more about those with more resources, than vice versa.
- Be aware of major national, legal and cultural differences within Europe, around openness/secretcy, financial accounting and many other matters.
- Value self-reflective approaches to the development of multiple methods, and in the conduct of researchers, meetings and other activities.
- Be aware that much research is done by goodwill and indeed overwork, and with few or no additional resources; thus excessive demands can mean that time and resources are taken from other academic and related activities, and other research projects; this is an issue of ethical allocation of time and resources between different activities, which is especially important in working on questions of violence and violation.
- Express positive support and gratitude, not excessive criticism.
- Be aware that most people are working in their second, third or

fourth language, and that extra attention may need to be given to clarity in the working language.

- Take care in writing emails and other communications; where possible, write clear short emails and other communications; do not use obscure phrases or make ungrounded suggestions in email and other communications.
- In collective research discussions give feedback in good time, and not late in the process of research production.
- Develop an appropriate and fair collective publishing policy, so texts and information are not used inappropriately by others as their own.
- Be aware of internal differences within research projects, especially between those who are more funded and those who are less (or not) funded, and between universities and similar institutions that are better resourced (especially in Western Europe) and universities and similar institutions that are less well resourced (especially in Central and Eastern Europe). This involves a thorough grounded understanding of the conditions under which different researchers are working: some are working on permanent contracts, some temporary contracts; some are well paid, others are not; some are in supportive working environments, others are in environments lacking support. Researchers are subject to other social divisions and differences, such as by age, class, disability, ethnicity and racialisation, gender, sexuality.
- Develop projects that are fair in terms the distribution of resources, including between those with greater coordinating functions and other research functions, between those who are more funded and those who are less funded, and between universities and similar institutions that are better resourced (especially in Western Europe) and universities and similar institutions that are less well resourced (especially in Central and Eastern Europe); This is especially so with the under-resourcing of research and the overwork of many researchers doing much work unpaid or in “overtime”.
- Develop a violation-free mode of organisation and working.
- Aim to produce a working environment that people are satisfied with, that they look forward to working with and are pleased to be in.

Examining and Problematising Roots and Explanations of Men's Violences

The examination of causes, explanations and 'roots' needs to be considered, both in broad and multiple ways, without seeing them in over-simple and deterministic interpretations. Debates on why men do violence – the 'roots' of men's violences - has been long and varied. It has moved through shifts in disciplinary and discursive constructions, and in the placing of men's violence in relation to 'men' and 'violence'. Explanations of men's violence may be developed from a wide range of academic and disciplinary traditions. These include biological and sociological, psychological and psychoanalytic, sociological, anthropological, political and economic. Within such different traditions, there are different conceptual, analytical and empirical building blocks (Hearn, 1998a). Within human rights frameworks, instead of 'roots' of violence, the terminology is often much based on 'causes' of violence that can sometimes, but not in all cases, be interpreted as obliging states that have signed the relevant UN conventions to address such violations through prevention and intervention (Kelly, 2006, p.10).

A simple framework for analysis of explanatory levels of men's violence to women is that outlined by Gondolf (1985), drawing on the work of Bagarozzi and Giddings (1983) and Gelles (1983). Gondolf's framework is drawn up in relation to 'wife abuse', but it is useful for considering the broad terms of debate around men's violence more generally. He presents three major theoretical explanations as follows:

Psychoanalytic themes [that] focus on stress, anxiety instilled during child rearing ...; social learning theories [that] consider the abuse to an outgrowth of learned patterns of aggressive communication to which both husband and wife contribute ...; socio-political theories [that] hold the patriarchal power plays of men oppressing women to be at the heart of wife abuse (Gondolf, 1985, p.27).

More specific forms of explanations include: cognitive and cognitive-behavioural approaches; reactive theories (frustration, stress and blocking of social roles); family culture, subcultures and cultural theories; systems theories; violence as structured oppression; cross-

cultural societal studies; hegemonic and dominant masculinities, and their empirical and theoretical critique. These all should be considered critically (Hearn, 1998b).

Some writers, such as Lees and Lloyd (1994) and Edleson, Eisikovits and Guttman (1985) have combined other theories to produce multi-causal approaches. The latter argue that terror is the major feature of the battered woman's life, rather than the beatings which might occur spasmodically, drawing on empirical studies of violence to known women in five areas (violence in the man's family of origin; chemical abuse and violence; personal characteristics; demographic and relationship variables; information on specific violent events). More recently, other hybrid and multi-causal explanations that combine several factors or realms have been developed,

for example, economy, labour market exclusion, isolation, housing situation, men's inability to fulfill breadwinning, stress, and patriarchal male peer support (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2002, 2005); or social isolation, unintegrated support networks, unequal access to resources, centralized authority, and lack of access to non-violent networks (Michalski, 2004) or macro, meso, micro and ontogenetic levels (European Commission, 2010). (Hearn, 2013, p.9).

An interesting and important example of the complexities of explanation concerns the relation of some men's propensity to drink alcohol, especially excessively, and use of violence. Some small-scale studies have noted consumption of large amounts of alcohol by many men before physical violence to known women (Bergman & Brismar, 1992), but caution is needed in explaining violence by alcohol, or drug, use as the independent cause. Whilst there is an association, Horsfall (1999, pp. 85-86) notes difficulties in seeing alcohol as the direct cause of violence, for example, both may have similar etiology through other personal, social or structural conditions. A US national random survey showed more heavy drinkers were violent to their partners, though much violence was done whilst sober (Kaufman, Kantor & Straus, 1987). The 2010 WHO report, focusing on macro-level issues, concludes:

Alcohol is an intoxicant affecting a wide range of structures and processes in the central nervous system which, interacting with personality characteristics, associated behaviour and sociocultural expectations, are causal factors for intentional and unintentional injuries and harm to both the drinker and others. These injuries and harm include interpersonal violence... homicide, drink-driving fatalities and other unhealthy criminal behaviours. (WHO, 2010, p. 6)

The report suggests that associations of alcohol and violence vary comparatively, with strong linkages in the “Eur-C countries” of Belarus, Estonia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. This points to the significance of different levels of analysis in explanation.

Building on and Reviewing the Contribution of Critical Studies on Men

There is now a substantial international body of critical, feminist and profeminist work on men, masculinities and men’s practices. Some of the implications of this general research can be extended men’s violences. The approach here argues for Critical Studies on Men (CSM) that are: comparative, international and transnational, interdisciplinary, historical, cultural, relational, materialist, deconstructive (Connell et al., 2005; Kimmel et al., 2005).

The variety of disciplinary and methodological frameworks available for the study of men, masculinities and men’s practices include approaches from: biology, stressing sex differences; essentialism searching for the “real” masculine; role theory; gender-specific socialisation and identity formation; history; anthropology and cross-cultural studies; feminist theories; patriarchy theory; multiple masculinities and hegemonic masculinity; focus on habitus; gay theory; queer theory; social constructionism and discourse theory; deconstruction; postmodernism; postcolonialism; transnational globalised conceptualisations; as well as humanities perspectives.

There are tensions between approaches that stress gender dichotomy and inevitability to gender adversities, as against those that emphasise change, processuality, flexibility and self-reflection for different

genders. There are also variations in the extent to which these studies take a critical stance towards men and masculinities, as opposed to the much more ambiguous and sometimes even anti-feminist activities of 'men's studies', which can become defined in a much less critical way as 'by men, on men, for men'. CSM examine men as part of historical gender relations, through a wide variety of analytical and methodological tools and approaches. The notion of men is social and not to be essentialised and reified, as in some versions of the equivocal term 'men's studies'. Men are understood as historical, cultural and changeable, both as a social category and in particular constructions.

Critical Studies on Men have brought the theorising of men and masculinities into sharper relief, making men and masculinities explicit objects of theory and critique. Among the many areas of current debate, we would draw attention to three particular sets of questions that have preoccupied researchers: the concept of patriarchy; similarities and differences between men and between masculinities; and men's, or male, sexualities and subjectivities. In each case, there are tensions between generalisations about men and masculinity and specificities of men and masculinities, including the notion of hegemonic masculinity.

Masculinities operate in the context of patriarchal relations. The development of a dynamic conception of masculinities can be understood as part of the feminist and gendered critique of monolithic conceptions of patriarchy. Thus the notion of masculinities fits with a more complex and diversified understanding of patriarchy (Walby, 1986, 1990; Hearn, 1987; Holter, 1997) or patriarchies (Hearn, 1992). In reviewing the field, Connell (1998) summarised major themes in contemporary studies on men as: plural masculinities; hierarchy and hegemony; collective masculinities; bodies as arenas; active construction; contradiction; dynamics.

There is also a lively debate on the limitations of the very idea of 'masculinities', including around the confusions of different current usages in the term (for example, Donaldson, 1993; Nordberg, 2000; Whitehead, 2002). The very concept of 'masculinity/masculinities' has been critiqued for its ethnocentrism, historical specificity, false causality, possible psychologism and conceptual vagueness (McMahon, 1993; Hearn, 1996, 2004). Whilst Connell (1993, 1995) has emphasized the cultural specificity of masculinities, and even of the concept itself,

the term has been applied in many and various ways. Connell has also described hegemonic masculinity as a “configuration of gender practice” rather than a type of masculinity, yet the use of the term has sometimes been as if it is a type (also see Carrigan et al., 1985). Cross-cultural research has used the concept of ‘manhood’ (Gilmore, 1990) and historical research the notions of ‘manliness’ and ‘unmanliness’, in the UK (Mangan & Walvin, 1987) and Sweden (Andersson, 2003; Tjeder, 2003).

Generally we prefer to talk more precisely of men’s individual and collective practices – or men’s identities or discourses on or of men – rather than the gloss ‘masculinities’. However, the latter term is still used at some points in this article, as it remains the shortest way to refer to how men act, think, believe and appear, or are made apparent. The concept has been very important, even though some researchers use the terms very differently, in serving several definite academic and political purposes. Perhaps above all, recent studies have foregrounded questions of power.

There is some development of critical studies on men addressing men’s violences. In such critical approaches the focus on men’s power and domination is central. Violence is located as one element of that power and domination, even though there are major discussions and debates about the explanation of those violences. In order to understand men’s violences, it is necessary to understand the social construction of men and masculinities, not just the abstracted nature of violence. There is an increasing literature that places the analysis of men’s violence to women, especially known women, within the context of the analysis of men and masculinities more generally, rather than within the context of violence or ‘domestic violence’. The explicit focus on men is emphasised by Pringle (1995) in his review of men’s violence to women. He notes first that ‘men tend to have a need to dominate and control’, and, second, that ‘structural factors play a part in the generation of men’s physical and emotional violences’ (p. 100). Pringle stresses that such violence is behaviour *chosen* by men, it is the product of choice within a *structural* context of hierarchical power arrangements. As Tifft (1993) has explained, the prevalence of battering is directly related to the ideological and institutionalised strength of such structural gender arrangements.

The application of masculinities theory to men's violence to women has been developed to some extent. One of the broadest analyses of the relation of crime and masculinity within a framework of masculinities theory is James Messerschmidt's (1993) *Masculinities and Crime*. He has argued that crime, including violence, is available as a resource for the making of masculinity, or at least specific forms of masculinity. Messerschmidt sees various forms of criminal behaviour, crime and violence as structured action and differentially available resources for "doing masculinity" (West & Zimmerman, 1987), when other resources are not available (according to class, ethnicity/"race" and sexuality). He thus posits a compensation model of masculinity, so that violence is seen as a resource when, for example, marriage, steady employment with reliable pay, having and providing for children, or educational success are not available as "masculine-validating resources".

Various, mainly qualitative, studies have explored these possible "compensatory" dynamics, for example, in studies of unemployed and marginalised men and young men. Less attention has been given to quantitative studies of these processes. The production and reproduction of masculinities is detailed by Miedzian (1992) in her description of the significance of violence in the rearing of boys and sons. She does not simply chart the socialisation of boys but also sees the construction of masculinity of boys and young men within wider society as intimately interconnected with violence. Stanko (1994) has spoken of the need to look simultaneously at masculinity/violence in analysing the power of violence in negotiating masculinities.

While this may appear to be clearer in considering men's violence to each other, such a 'simultaneous yet negotiated' analysis needs to be extended to man's reproduction of violence/masculinity in relation to women.

Violence seems sometimes, indeed often, to be directly linked to *masculinity* with only the difference whether this relation is constitutive or subtle. This might support the idea of *hegemonic masculinity* and a relatively non-differentiated understanding of violence. However, the relation between masculinity, or rather, masculinities, and violence is more complex.

First, there are many men who condemn or despise violence against women and children. This, however, does not necessarily (or even perhaps probably) imply a fully egalitarian view of gender relations. Rather this may possibly involve a viewpoint such as ‘a man has to make his wife obey without using physical strength’, that is, through his (male) authority.

Second, the construction of masculinity is contradictory: there are complex connections between “responsibility” and “violence”, between “honour/respect” and “violence”, between “autonomy” and violence”; in each case, both elements might contradict each other or go together (violence in the name of honour, responsibility, education, or even respect), and the specific combination contributes to the construction of masculinities and defines what kind of violations against whom are acceptable and what kind are not. At the same time, this also raises important questions of how to address other men’s, or male, “non-violent” practices that are still tightly bound to (legal or non-criminalised) violent practices, such as in military and war, or as clientele in the sex trade.

Third, attitudes concerning men’s, or ‘male’, violence in different forms and the practice of non-(physical) violence can constitute distinctions between masculinities. The superiority of (non-violent) masculinity can be (re)constructed by understanding that this form of masculinity does not need to use of physical strength or direct interpersonal power over others. In this sense, the condemnation of violence might, in some contexts, also be men’s, or male, practices to reassure or revalorise other or dominant forms of masculinity. There are indeed power relations between men and masculinities, which regulate what kinds of violence are accepted and who has the power to condemn violence for which kinds of men and in what contexts. Thus, there are various power relations between men (and not only between offender and victim) and different ways of handling of violence (accepting, expecting, convicting) as part of the regulation of power relations between men more generally.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) have critically reviewed the concept of hegemonic masculinity, in part in relation to violence. They suggest that what should be rejected includes the continued use of psychological trait theory, and too simple a model of global gender

dominance. Both of these elements (and their rejection) are relevant to the analysis of men's violence to women. Several reformulations were presented, including more holistic understanding of gender hierarchy; the importance of the geography/ies of masculinities; the return to the emphasis on social embodiment; and the dynamics of masculinities, including contestation and democratisation.

A further promising development is to understand men's violence to known women at least in part through relations between men, as men. For a man to understand his relationship with other men may be a means to unlocking the emotional dynamics of his abuse of women, as a compensatory and regulatory mechanism in his relations with other men. The processes by which men construct women through relations with each other, as men, and use those constructions to regulate relations between men, may be at the core of the persistence of such violence (Hearn & Whitehead, 2006). Such violence may appear to be a paradox, since it is inconsistent with the heroic role of provider to and protector of women. Yet it appears as a paradox, only as long as masculinity is understood in the context of '... the study of men conceptualised solely as the study of personal identity, of masculinities' (Hanmer, 1990, p.34). When models emerge which are rooted in what men have in common, as men, across social divisions (Whitehead, 2005) or which are concerned with the actuality of men's practices, men's violence to known women may be seen as functional in maintaining masculine identity, while appearing on the surface to undermine it.

Use of Multiple Methods, Methodologies and Epistemological Frames

There is a need to go beyond quantitative measures that are primarily descriptive and lack in-depth analysis. There is a need to build foundations for culturally-sensitive studies that gather new comparable cross-national data and address issues of patterns, trends and differences in many areas. It is assumed that no one method is able to answer the spread of research questions. A range of methods needs to be employed, including: national representative surveys, survivor accounts, perpetrator accounts, individual biographies, Critical Discourse

Analysis, agency data interviews, and/or analysis of case files. While attending to statistical and other information, qualitative and grounded methods and analyses need to be emphasised and developed.

Methodological contributions need to be from across social sciences, demography, anthropology, and so on. All forms of approaches and epistemological frames to understanding knowledge should be utilised including positivist social science, feminist standpoint theory, post-structuralist, postcolonial, critical social postmodernism approaches, but all should be reviewed critically. Methodology needs to attend to both material inequalities and discursive constructions.

Processes of cultural variation impinge directly not only on any research topic (including men's violences) but also on the research process itself. This occurs in a whole range of ways – not least the fact that different research traditions in different countries value various forms of research differently. For instance, thinking about Denmark, Sweden and the UK, it seems clear that qualitative research is valued more highly within “mainstream” social sciences in the UK than in Denmark or Sweden. Moreover, where qualitative research is carried out, one can find considerable cultural variations in how it is done, especially as of course there is no clear dividing line between qualitative and quantitative research. So, for example, in a cultural context where quantitative research is seen very much as the “norm”, it may well be that much qualitative research is carried out there along more quantitative principles than is the case in a context where qualitative research is more broadly accepted. These kinds of variability have important implications for what is researched and how it tends to be researched in different countries and contexts. The picture is even more complex when one takes into account variability between research approaches across disciplines as well as across countries.

The same considerations apply to theoretical and analytical understandings of men's violences – and indeed of men's gendered practices more generally. There are massive potential variations in the way in which men's practices can be understood analytically and theoretically – not least the highly political and emotive issue of men's violences. This is because there are indications (see [Hearn & Pringle, 2006](#); [Pringle et al., 2006](#)) that different theoretical and analytical approaches vary partly according to country and cultural context. This

may partly (but only partly) explain the fact that the emphasis of gender research on men in the Nordic countries has historically been placed on topics such as employment, work in the home, and health, rather than on men's violences to women and children; whilst a different balance has tended to occur in countries such as Germany and the UK (Pringle, 2005).

Until rather recently, there was a relatively limited development of feminist work on men's violence to known women that was inspired by post-structuralism, postmodernism, and feminist poststructuralisms and postmodernisms. As such and according to many of these approaches, violence, including men's violence, is not a discrete area of study, and nor is it a separate object cause or 'explained' by some other subject or cause. Instead, violence is multiple, diverse and context-specific; it is also formed in relation to and in association with other social forms, such as sexuality, family, marriage and authority. Violence is not a separate thing, but is constructed in diverse social relations and discourses (Hearn, 1998b). However, violence is never 'only a discourse' when thinking about its object and its effects: violence is very much a physical, mental and emotional experience(s) to its victim and in a different way for its perpetrators. Thus research that is limited to an anti-foundational postmodernist ideology may reduce the acts of violence to discursive elements or processes. For these reasons, there is now much greater recognition of the need for research to be concerned with both material, embodied actions, experiences and relations, and their construction in discourse, with what may be called a material-discursive approach.

Addressing Intersections of Multiple Dimensions of Power and Disadvantage

The question of difference and diversity is important in relation to men's violence to (known) women in terms of age, disability, economic class, gender, race and ethnicity, and sexuality. For instance, black feminists have highlighted the neglect of experiences of black women in much of the research on men's violence (for instance, Bhatti-Sinclair, 1994). Thus earlier research on (men's) violence in 'white' contexts and communities would need further emphasis and focus on and through the

aspects of research and researchers of/from 'non-white' communities. The cultural settings in Europe concerning ethnicity are very diverse, and increasingly so. Therefore, emphasis on these aspects is very much needed in the current and future Europe. This arises also the question that 'who' ('white' or 'non-white', 'originally European' or immigrants/ethnic minorities, and so on) are involved in the research processes, and what does it mean for the outcome of the research settings, their contextualisations and outcomes.

At the same time, there is a danger that when following the cultural/ethnic/race 'path', research becomes essentialist, and starts to 'explain' the violence in a 'cultural' and non-gendered way. This is an aspect that needs to be emphasised in the process of developing of a 'European' strategy to research on violence. According to Hearn (1998b, p.33),

[s]tructuration theory, in emphasising the intersection of social structures and agency/actions, also raises the theme of difference and diversity (Messerschmidt, 1993). These issues of difference and diversity between forms of violence, between kinds of men's violence, and experiences of different social groups defined by other divisions and oppressions are a major theme of current research (see for example Rice, 1990; Kirkwood 1993; Tift, 1993; Pringle, 1995).

Issues of difference and diversity, by age, ethnicity, race, religion, sexuality, and other social divisions, need to be highlighted, thus interlinking men's violences with economic and material circumstances, in terms of work, family, health, education, and so on, and the complex intersections of forms of social inclusion and social exclusion. This relates to the broad questions of gender power relations and societal constructions of masculinity, as well as the impact of poverty and other inequalities upon men's violences.

Types of situations where issues of ethnicity and gender intersect in various ways to increase the likelihood of violence occurring and/or to increase the likelihood of violence not being prevented or halted include: (i) racism, especially militant racism; (ii) projects of state and non-state nationalism and pan-nationalism (e.g. in the Baltic States, in the Balkans, in US and UK foreign policy); state and non-state terrorism; (iii) the unwillingness sometimes of state and non-state

agencies to intervene in gendered violence in minority ethnic group families; (iv) over-eagerness sometimes of state/non-state agencies to intervene in gendered violence in minority ethnic group families (at other times avoidance); (v) relative lack of attention sometimes paid to gendered violence in majority ethnic group families and amongst more powerful groups compared to that in minority ethnic group families (Walby, 2009).

Situations where multiple dimensions of power/disadvantage (for instance including age, gender, ethnicity/"race", religion, sexuality, disability, kinship, class) intersect may often be ones where violence is most likely to occur, even if not all the dimensions of power flow constantly in the same direction. For example, the commercial sexual exploitation of children, in one perspective, can be seen as the outcome of a complex interaction of various dimensions of oppression and violence: at least gender, age, class, ethnicity/"race", sexuality. We are thinking here primarily of dominant, even taken-for-granted, ways of being men, rather than the concept of so-called "paedophilia". It is indeed heterosexuality that most often though not always - enters problematically into processes of violence and oppression.

This involves examining the specificity of intersectionalities, in such a way that:

- The likely vulnerability of both women and men in less powerful social locations;
- The less resources of both women and men in less powerful social locations;
- The greater likelihood of the prosecution of men in less powerful social locations;
- The lesser likelihood of the prosecution of men in more powerful social locations;
- Gender power relations are not neglected.

Violence and violations are not simply means for or structurings of other forms of power, domination and oppression. They are forms of power, domination and oppression in themselves that structure organisations. While such a perspective can mean that violence as violation may blur into power relations, a key distinction is that power relations are not necessarily violating.

Conclusion

Challenges in Comparative and Transnational Research

A shared methodological framework for a research strategy for studying men's violences needs to adopt comparative and transnational orientation in examining men's practices, gender relations and social policy responses in their specific social and cultural contexts. Consequently, it seeks to understand them as both socially and culturally constructed and with real material forms, effects and outcomes for people's lives. This involves taking into account the complex intersection of gendered inequalities with other forms of social disadvantage.

Yet many challenges around methodology in research on gender violence remain, in particular how to plan and accomplish such research transnationally. Kelly (2006) discusses some methodological questions and points out challenges to combine human rights framework and social research, for example, in studying gender violence transnationally. The premises of these frameworks and their embedded positions and ideologies differ in many ways. According to Kelly, the human rights framework is based on universality, commonalities and setting boundaries, whereas in current social research much attention is increasingly paid to diversity, differentiation and cultural contexts (Kelly, 2006, p.2). This creates tensions, even though such tensions could be overcome by (re)constructing of methodologies as well as procedures in doing research.

Major possible difficulties in comparative research include practical and empirical problems, such as obtaining comparable empirical data. Cultural and linguistic problems include how descriptions depend on national and cultural writing styles and linguistic understandings, so that comparisons are of not only systems but also linguistic, cultural practices. Administrative and statistical systems usually do not correspond with each other. Major difficulties posed by differing meanings attached to apparently common concepts used by respondents and researchers are likely. This signals a broader problem: for diversity in meaning itself arises from complex variations in cultural context at

national and sub-national levels – cultural differences which permeate all aspects of the research process.

Practical responses to such dilemmas can be several. On the one hand, it is perhaps possible to become over-concerned about the issue of variable meaning: a level of acceptance regarding such diversity may be one valid response. Another response is for researchers to carefully check with each another the assumptions which each brings to the research process. In addition, the impacts and interaction of different cultural contexts is of major significance for the internal cooperation and process of future initiatives in research development.

The importance of attention to different historical and political contexts of different regions, countries and parts of Europe cannot be overstated. There are dangers in transplanting ideas and theories from one part of Europe to others, in seeing comparison as an ‘even surface’. Caution needs be exercised in terms of developing a single methodological measure across all Europe. Cultural differences in Europe, as elsewhere, need to be taken into consideration when researching gender violence transnationally. Major differences are related to history, forms of organising societies and their welfare models, and power relations between different groups of people, such as ethnic majorities and minorities. Diversity among citizenships often impact on how violence is understood societally: culturalised and ethnisised citizenship can lead to essentialism in interpreting violence by certain groups, for instance ‘honour killings’ or forced marriages are sometimes explained, even excused, on cultural grounds.

Some Exemplars

In the light of these considerations, we provide here three examples of possible comparative and transnational research approaches to men’s violence, before identifying some final research priorities.

- *Comparative surveys on gendered violence*: Accomplishing such surveys can often meet various problems based on differences in cultural and social situations in different areas. In spite of such problems, comparative survey studies of men and masculinities in the context of gender power relations may be developed. One

example is the approach developed by Connell and colleagues (Connell, 2004, 2005), initially in an Australian context. This combines diverse quantitative measures with more qualitative assessments of situational context and embodied dimensions, informed by poststructuralist approaches. Men's violences are considered in the broad context of conflict and peacemaking and other aspects of gender relations.

- *Comparable cases of men's violences*: The study of parallel cases on forms or locales of men's violences simultaneously across several or many countries, for example, men in prison (short-term, long-term, lifers), men arrested for 'domestic violence', men in men's anti-violence programmes, young men and violence in and around sport. This can draw on quantitative, qualitative and ethnographic approaches, and build on matched cases. Similarities in some parts of the procedures or basis for the organisations can offer an important common ground for comparative research, which still leaves space for embedded cultural and social differences to be taken into account in comparing the cases. Another possibility for comparative research on gender violence is key incident analysis (Kroon & Sturm, 2000).
- *Studies of men's transnational violences*: Studies of men's transnational violences can include the sex trade, use of information and communication technologies, 'paedophile rings', violence in transnational interpersonal relations, abductions, 'honour killings', human trafficking, militarism, and related violences. These involve both transnational violent phenomena and demand transnational collaboration in doing research.

Research Priorities

1. Focus on men's violences to women, men, children, transgender people, by full attention to men's relations with men.
2. Develop quality assurance in research on men's violences in terms of it being conducted in the full knowledge of international, critical gender scholarship and research on what is already known.
3. Link research on men's violences to social inclusion/exclusion, and intersectional approaches to cultural and other differences.

4. Link research on men's violences to human rights agenda, its potentials and its limitations, including its feminist critiques.
5. Link research on men's violences to current critical debates on masculinities and men's practices.
6. Include physical, sexual and other forms of violences, including the relations of men's violences and men's sexualities.
7. Develop transnational, as well as comparative and international, research, including research on men's transnational violences.
8. Develop policy-driven research on what reduces and stops men's violences.
9. Attend to both questions of research content on men's violences and questions of research process in researching men's violences, and also to their interrelations.
10. Increase investment and build support for investment in research in Central and Eastern Europe, which remains the most under-funded area for research into men's violences.
11. Focus on ethical issues during and throughout the whole research process, and develop collaborative, facilitative and supportive research environment from the beginning of the process.
12. Develop relational approaches between: forms of men's violences; men's interpersonal violences and men's institutional violences; social divisions/exclusions/inclusions; violence and other social arenas.
13. Develop research that explores the dynamics of men's violences transnationally by giving a primary role (not necessarily the only primary role) to qualitative approaches.
14. In developing research strategy to explore the dynamics of men's violences in a transnational, transdisciplinary fashion, create and maintain considerable "spaces"/fora - both initially and throughout the project - to ongoing discussions and consultations between the researchers involved about the methodologies/methods they adopt and about developing frames for accommodating/dealing with/taking advantage of variations in such methodologies/methods. This cannot be emphasised too much.
15. When and where researchers are brought together to explore such issues, it is vital that research strategy creates clear "spaces" or fora - both initially and throughout the process - whereby analytical

and theoretical variations can be discussed and clarified, and frames developed to accommodate, deal with and harness such variations. This is especially so with transdisciplinary research, and is essential where research is to be transnational and transcultural.

Notes

¹ The CAHRV project (Project no. 506348) ran from 2004 to 2007, as part of the European Commission Framework 6 research on “Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-based Society”. Within CAHRV, Sub-network 2 focused on “the roots of interpersonal violence: gendered practices, social exclusion and violation” (see [Hearn et al., 2007](#)). The other researchers in the Sub-network in addition to the current authors were Gunilla Bjerén, Harry Ferguson, Ursula Müller, Elżbieta H. Oleksy, Cornelia Helfferich, Ilse Lenz, Elizabete Pičukāne and Victoria Rosa.

² The Thematic Network operated from 2000 to 2003, within the EU Framework 5 Programme. About half the 18 researchers in the CAHRV Sub-network were part of the previous Thematic Network. The overall aim of this Network was to develop empirical, theoretical and policy outcomes on the gendering of men and masculinities in Europe.

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